Thai Politics Bibliography

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A


Prasit was co-founder of the Bangkok Post newspaper (see also MacDonald 1949). This is his (regrettably) short autobiography. Besides having been the first manager of the Thammasat University’s printing house, he was also a member of the Free Thai organization, and he was closely involved in the coup d’état Pridi Banomyong (whom he calls ‘my supreme guru’) attempted with the help of other Free Thai
members and parts of the navy, on 26 February 1949. The purpose of this so-called ‘Grand Palace Coup’, named after the plotters’ chose to start it with capturing the Grand Palace, was to wrestle power from the military and Phibun Songkhram, respectively. However, the coup was poorly executed, crushed by Sarit Thanarat, and Pridi went into exile, first in China and then in France, never to set foot on Thai soil again until he died in 1983.

Prasit himself was almost killed by the the police: “Shots came from the boat. Two bullets hit Khun Tavi [Dr. Tavi Tavedhikul, former Minister of Commerce and manager of the Asia Bank, who had tried to talk Pridi out of the coup] in the throat and the other in the chest. Our plan to flee Thailand ended in disaster. The policeman who fired and hit Khun Tavi was Sgt Muan. Also in the boat with him were Pol Capt Tawsak Yomnak, an acquaintance of mine, and several other Special Branch police officers. As soon as the shooting started, my brothers and the others jumped into the klong. I stayed with Khun Tavi, sponging the blood flowing from his throat with my pha kaoma. But then Sgt Muan fired another two rounds into Tavi, and he was dead. Sgt Muan pointed his carbine at my temple. I thought my end had come. But when he pulled the trigger, nothing happened. His cartridge was empty. I could hardly believe I was still alive, saved by a miracle. Sgt Muan reloaded, and took aim again. But at that point, Capt Tawsak ordered him to lower his carbine. So my end had not come after all” (p. 96f.). Instead, he spent almost nine years in prison.


This booklet also contains the two-page 18th amendment of the Act on Organization of Ministries, Sub-Ministries and Departments (No. 18), B.E. 2542 (1999) which was made necessary to include stipulations on the offices of the Administrative Court and the Constitutional Court.


• Adul Adulyapichet, ed. 1986. *Official listings: Thailand.* Bangkok: Tawanna Holdings. (xxx300.959.3.032 cl)


Albritton obviously wants to start his contribution to the study of Thai politics with a bang. He claims nothing less than to provide a “new paradigm for Thai political analysis” (p. 2). This, perhaps, is even dwarfed by his reinterpretation of Thai society. In his view, Thailand is no longer a developing country: “Thailand is a modern, industrialized nation” (p. 3), i.e. on a par level with the United States or Germany (he refrains, however, from revealing his concept of modernity or from explaining how one can call a country ‘industrialized’ when 60 % of the population still work in agriculture, when there is a sizeable petty-service sector, and when the country has hardly any technological base).

Regarding politics, Thailand, according to Albritton, has seen the advent of “‘ideological’ parties” (p. 4; he mentions Phalang Dharma as an example) and political parties with “national constituencies” (p. 5; Chart Thai, Democrats; in a separate section some attention is paid to the often-mentioned problem of regionalism). Moreover, there has been a “dramatic shift in democratic practice” as far as voters and voting is concerned. And this is not being explained by the use of vote canvassers and vote buying but by the rural voters’ “high level of interest and attentiveness” (p. 8), presumably concerning political parties’ policy platforms and their policy-making work at the national level. On polling day, this is translated into a voting based on the “adherence to parties” (p. 9): “Whatever the problems for Thai democracy, the fault lies not with the capacity of Thai citizens for democratic practice” (ibid.). Furthermore, “Clearly, problems for Thai democracy do not lie with the capacity of Thai electoral institutions” (p. 10). All in all, Thai “political institutions (are) fully compatible with the notion of ‘developed’ democracy” (p. 14). Certainly, MP-candidates, their financial backers, the government, and the ECT could save an awful lot of money if they only adopted the author’s perspective. And newspapers as well as publishing houses could save an equally awful quantity of paper if they only managed to reorient their authors in a way that would open their eyes for them to see the well-functioning democracy existent in Thailand.

An intriguing question is how this very fundamental difference between the author and long-time empirical observers as well as practitioners of Thai electoral politics (academics, politicians, the former PollWatch, or the present ECT) could arise. Is it
that those observers are so blinded by their traditional approach that their blatantly contra-factual views are immune to reality, and that only a newcomer was able to break through this wall of ignorance? How come that I have overlooked the strong role of political parties and the strong party-orientation of rural voters in Chachoengsao for so long? When Arghiros (1995: 31) writes, “that communal and particularistic exchange relationships â€” in other words, reciprocal obligations â€” would continue to carry most influence over the voting behaviour of the majority of rural dwellers”, is he ignorant of reality? Similarly, something must be seriously wrong with what Callahan/McCargo (1996: 391f.) observed, namely that “money, achievements and personal qualities [of individual MP-candidates] are critical in determining electoral outcomes. [which are] largely divorced from national political issues”. Finally, Anek 1996: 206f.) must have misunderstood something when he states that, “rural voters care very little about the election platform of the candidates, their party affiliation, or their integrity or work as members of the house or of the cabinet.”

Albritton, finally, tries to use rational choice theory (i.e. Downs’ version of 1957) to put vote-buying into a more positive light (at this point, hua khanaen disappear from the analysis). He writes, “If little or no utility is calculated, it is even rational for the voter to receive some compensation in return for the trouble to vote” (p. 13). Utility, one may say, is not calculated because voters do not or not sufficiently (we live in a transitional period) observe national-level politics, and they do not quite understand what voting or MPs are there for. Their local social environment, on the other hand, is very tangible. In RC-terms: decisions are made on the basis of information which is distorted or imperfect to such a degree that it renders the resultant decisions irrational. This result seems inevitable if a local opportunity structure is used by ignoring the national opportunity structure elections and voting are parts of.

The author also states, “that modest vote-buying distorts democracy only to the extent that it coerces voters to take actions that are calculated to have negative utility. This outcome appears to apply in a limited number of cases to Thai election campaigns” (ibid.). The problem here is that vote buying is done mostly on the basis of existing social ties and the lack of information about the political system and the processes elections and voting are parts of. Although voters may not be coerced in a physical sense when hua khanaen and vote-buying are used, but the resulting utility is still negative. In other words, the utility is much less than it would be if voters were integrated, as members of the public and of political parties, into the country-wide political system called ‘democracy’. Under present conditions, though, MPs can, at the national policy-making level, largely do whatever they want. In terms of democracy theory, this appears as a lack of responsiveness as well as of accountability (at Parliament, this takes the form of a small number of laws passed, and a very low intensity of the MPs’ work). And this outcome, one may very well say, is calculated. That is, both local leaders (e.g. as gatekeepers) and MPs maximize their utility at the expense of village-based voters. ‘Admitting’ them to the ‘public’ or to political parties (which are highly exclusionary in Thailand, perhaps, to an extent, except for the Democrats) would drastically reduce their freedom of action, and that means, their utility. And this situation is not given in “a limited number of cases” but
rather generally. In RC-terms, the ‘villagers’ voting decision’ is irrational (this goes far beyond the assumption of a ‘bounded rationality’) because voters do not have the information necessary to clearly formulate the available options, calculate the respective utilities, and then make an ‘informed decision’. The power differentials mentioned above play their part.

Albritton actually confirms this outline when he writes, “the exchange of money [this may include patronage, but it excludes policies] represents the only utility they can calculate from the politics of national office” (p. 14). People, in other words, are de facto excluded from the democratic system of government; without allowing them to participate politically, they are merely used to produce an institution deemed necessary in a democracy, that is Parliament. If it “is the essence of individual sovereignty in a democracy” to maximize utility (the author here follows Downs), and if, as has been demonstrated, rural voters cannot and/or are kept from maximizing their utility in the frame of the national political system called ‘democracy’, then, it follows, they lack this (politically speaking) individual sovereignty. And this, one may add, is the overwhelming impression one gets when empirically working on politics in rural Thailand.

- Allison, L. 1998. “Sport and Civil Society.” Political Studies 46 (4):709-726. (Georgia, Thailand, South Africa)
- “Political development”, though mentioned in the title, is absent from the report.
- Amara Raksasataya. 1977. “Cultural Patterns and Democratic Superstructure: An Asian Quest for New Models.” Photocopy. 26 leaves (xxxpaper?)
- Amara Raksasataya. [1979]. “Public Administration in Thailand: Philosophy, Policy and Implementation.” s.n. 12 leaves. (xxxpaper?)


• Ambassade du Roy de Siam envoyée A l'Excellence du Prince Maurice, arrivée A La Haye le 10 septembre 1608. Leiden, 1608.


The less than six pages on ‘Siam’ (the other countries dealt with are The Philippines and Indonesia) give an overview of political development between 1930 and 1992; they are based on Anderson (1977) and (1990). The author’s position is that democracy started as a “struggle for political hegemony” by the “Thai bourgeoisie” trying to protect their interests. With the stabilization of “bourgeois electoralism”, however, the range of policies may be expanded to include more and more social policies as well. “In this sense, electoral democracy holds out some genuine prospects in the longer run.” Basically, this represents the wide-spread view that the social state, and even more so the welfare state, are results of political inclusion, mainly by the expansion of the audience (individual level: politicization) that exercises its voting rights according to its observations of both the political parties and the government, both of which, in turn, observe the observations of the audience. Hence the adjustment of policies. The view that the uprising in May 1992 “was led by cellular-telephone-wielding capitalists and parliamentary politicians” does not seem to correspond to reality. See also the contributions of Suchit and Anek in the same volume


Similar to Suchit’s contribution in the same volume, Anek views the current state of Thailand’s political system as being characterized by a strong difference between urban or middle class voters and those who live in the countryside. This represents
the dominant view held by most Thai and foreign observers (for an empirical illustration see LoGerfo 1996). It is said that both groups follow different conceptions of democracy. Whereas the middle class stresses political principles, policies, and the national interest, rural voters aim “to bring greater benefits and official attention to themselves and their villages” (202). This makes the middle class angry because they perceive the resulting government as “corrupt and unqualified” (203).

The body of the article, then, consists of two descriptions regarding, first, the logic of voting behaviour in rural areas (summarily and inaccurately attributed to “the poor”) and, second, the middle-class view of democracy (with a special perspective on middle class-military relations since Chartchai). Both conceptions are said to be incompatible. More than that, they are said to be of equal value: “The rural interpretation is as legitimate and rational as that of the urban middle class” (222). Consequently, the middle class must not try to “remake” rural voters via their “favorite solution”, namely educational projects. Instead, the middle class should accept the rural dwellers’ goal of improving their lives but make them “change the means villagers employ to achieve it” (223). They “are to be convinced that principle- or policy-oriented voting brings them greater benefit than what they may get from local patrons” (ibid.). Also, efforts must be directed towards rural development in order to turn poor farmers into “middle class farmers or well-paid workers” (ibid.).

Rather than viewing rural voters as proponents of an alternative model of democracy, as Anek seems to suggest, one may see their behavior as a reaction on a specific element of the middle-class concept of democracy, i.e. elections. Elections open up new opportunities for rural people without them having to understand or adopt the entire model. Accordingly, there does not seem to be one alternative or competing model developed by Thailand’s rural population, but rather a myriad of separately localized reactions on the original model. Villagers integrate this new opportunity into their existing local structures. As Anek puts it, “Rural people do not regard their voting as separate from other sociocultural obligations” (221). In other words, they are acting outside the society’s political system the function of which is to generate collectively binding decisions. The decisions are binding for them as well, but rural people have hardly any part in determining them since they do not join the system’s ‘public’ nor it’s ‘politics’ (political parties).

In fact, Anek himself does not take his relativism too seriously, i.e. he does not propose that the middle class should adopt or at least tolerate the villagers ‘model’, or that the middle class should give rural people an opportunity to participate in developing a model of democracy suitable for both groups. Instead, there is no doubt that the middle-class concept of democracy (which is the name for a functionally differentiated political system comparable to other such systems, e.g. the economy, law, medicine, education) has to be expanded to be operational in the entire territory of Thailand. To achieve this aim, rural voters must be shown that their rational voting decisions are actually irrational because they are based on seriously incomplete information. Had they only known how democracy at the national level works to bring benefits to the citizens, they would have created and selected this option as the one promising the highest return. And if this strategy does
not work to convince villagers to change their means, then (or probably at the same
time), Anek suggests, let us use rural development to ‘remake’ those villagers into
members of the middle class who would more or less automatically adhere to the
same model of democracy as the established middle class at the center already does.

Anek, a former dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, was
an advisor to former Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasat (Democrat Party; now
banned from politics for five years because of a wrong asset declaration). He is now
a party-list MP for the Democrats.

Introduction with Reference to the Southeast Asian and East Asian Cases.” In
Democratization in Southeast and East Asia, ed. by Anek Laothamatas, pp. 1-20.
Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books and Singapore: ISEAS.
Magazine 16: 505-523.
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 5). Re: The
Thais should try to use consumer goods which originate or are produced in Thailand
[1st November 1939].” In Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents 1932-1957, ed. Thak
Chaloemtiarana, pp. 248-249. Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand,
1978.
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 6). Re: The
tune and the words of the national anthem [10th December 1939].” In Thai Politics:
Extracts and Documents 1932-1957, ed. Thak Chaloemtiarana, pp. 249-250. Bangkok:
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 7). Re: All the
Thais should join hands to help build the nation [21st March 1940].” In Thai Politics:
Extracts and Documents 1932-1957, ed. Thak Chaloemtiarana, pp. 250-251. Bangkok:
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 8). Re: The
anthem of His Majesty the King [26th April 1940].” In Thai Politics: Extracts and
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 9). Re: The
Thai language and alphabet and civic duties of good citizens [24th June 1940].” In
Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents 1932-1957, ed. Thak Chaloemtiarana, pp. 251-
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 10). Re: The
dress code of the Thai people [15th January 1941].” In Thai Politics: Extracts and
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 11). Re: Daily
Activities of the Thais [8th September 1941].” In Thai Politics: Extracts and
- “Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on State-ism (No. 12). Re: Aid
and protection given to the young, the old and the infirm [28th January 1942].” In


For readers who start being interested in Thai political parties, the author provides some basic descriptive information on the party system and its problems although no attempt is made to theoretically link this to democratic development. The sections on legal provisions as well as on the election system and administration have been made obsolete by the new constitution (put into effect in October 1997) and the organic laws on political parties, elections of MPs, and the election commission. McCargo’s works on Chamlong Srimuang/Phalang Dharma Party are as ignored as is the important book by Murashima/Nakharin/Somkiat on The Making of Modern Thai Political Parties. However, the author points to some recent Thai-language MA-theses on political parties submitted to the Department of Government, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. One may want to check whether they contribute something to our understanding of the subject.

Centralization is said to result in inefficiency because of a long line of command and a lack of local involvement. Decentralization is seen as solution to this problem, and it is also good for democracy. The argument that has traditionally been used to support bureaucratic dominance, i.e. that people are ignorant, is turned around to argue that people who are given opportunities will be motivated to participate. TCs and TAOs are considered (contrary to what many NGOs believe) as people’s organizations, although they are formalized; TAOs are “a full-fledged form of local government.” Policy action by TAOs cannot be based on a “sense of belonging to the same community” as this is directed towards the village. At the tambon level, economic and political conflicts abound. Action, therefore, can only be based on mutual benefits. In this respect, informal people’s organizations have advantages in community forest conservation since their identity is based on this purpose. Still, TAOs could do a good job if there was “strong leadership with vision and wisdom”. The author does not say, however, where this is supposed to come from. He also poses the related question whether TAOs are actually both capable and willing to
manage community forests (a question that can be applied to any policy area). However, there is no answer in terms of the political-administrative as well as motivational and staff-related conditions of local-level policy formulation and implementation. Instead, the existence of mutual benefits is again mentioned, and it is demanded to provide secure land titles so that people would be interested to care for adjacent forests.


Can local government reform lead to “democratic decentralization”? Arghiros approaches this question by analyzing two forms of local authorities, i.e. the Subdistrict/Tambon Administrative Organization (SAO/TAO) and the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). Concerning the SAOs, the author identifies four
obstacles on the way to reach the desired aim. (1) Thailand’s highly centralized bureaucracy does not support local empowerment; rather, it tries to make local bodies function along established bureaucratic lines. Local participatory patterns cannot develop because the bureaucracy promotes its own “hierarchical and nonparticipatory institutional culture.” (2) Elected positions are dominated by the local economic elite. Moreover, the democratic mechanisms of responsiveness and accountability cannot function because elections are distorted by vote-buying. (3) Women are almost excluded from local office which precludes the development of policy and project ideas other than male preferences for the construction of roads, etc. Arghiros regrets that attempts at legislating measures of “positive discrimination” were unsuccessful. (4) SAO-members lack in administrative capacity. Existing training courses are non-participatory and cannot reach the aim of enabling local politicians to manage their authorities’ affairs well.

As for PAOs, they are dominated by provincial businessmen, mainly from the construction sector. Similar to SAOs, elections are largely meaningless. Furthermore, PAOs do not have any influence on the central government’s representatives working in the separate provincial administration (sala klang). Arghiros correctly predicts that the introduction of smaller and single-member constituencies by the 1997 Constitution will probably lead to more provincial councilors becoming MPs by using their established district-level voter base.

General problems hampering the development of local government are the dearth of “civic advocacy organization” and the lack of a “sustained, critical interest” of local residents in the work of their local authority. For all these reasons, the author warns us not to expect too much from efforts directed at strengthening local government. In particular, democratic decentralization may take fifteen or more years to succeed.

Although Arghiros shortly mentions social factors of electoral success, but he does not provide a balanced analysis and instead opts for emphasizing monetary rewards (vote-buying). Provincial politics seems to be a field of individual political actors pursuing their material interests. No collective element enters into the author’s description. One could get the contra-factual impression that local political groups or cliques or phak phuak do not exist. This neglect is similar to what we find in King/LoGerfo (1996), Ockey (1996), and Robertson (1996), but unlike the publications of Sombat Chantornwong (Kanmuang ruang kanluaktang of 1987 and Luakktang wikrit of 1993). Finally, contrasting bureaucracy with community participation may work with the small SAOs. However, much bigger entities such as PAOs, municipalities, and district-level local governments (interestingly, Arghiros suggests that consideration should be given to set up such authorities) can hardly live without proper administrative procedures (although they can certainly live without the present Thai-style bureaucracy).


Daniel Arghiros asks whether Anek Laothamatat’s “new political economy” has replaced the hegemonic “bureaucratic polity” (Riggs) at the district level. Are there business associations in provincial Thailand that have enough internal coherence and economic-political clout as to enable them to lobby and influence the district and provincial administrations? Can we see these associations “as representatives of a new force of liberal civil society”? In dealing with these questions Arghiros presents a detailed description and analysis of the Brick Manufacturers’ Association (BMA) in one district of Ayutthaya province. The author’s data were collected mainly during the years 1989-1990 and 1995-1997 (his dissertation was completed in 1993; a book based on this research appeared in 2001 under the title Democracy, Development and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon).

The BMA is, according to Arghiros, a collective entity with a strong identity, symbolized in the members wearing its uniform on official occasions. The association lobbies the bureaucracy (and donates to its causes), bribes the police to overlook overloaded lorries, and provides information and loans to its members. However, this does not mean that members do not have business conflicts with each other. There are also political conflicts. It is said that “the leadership” wanted to increase the bargaining power of the association by supporting members who wanted to run for local office, be it that of kamnan (in 1997, four of the district’s 17 kamnan belonged to the BMA) or that of provincial councilor. In the latter case, members’ loyalties were divided, i.e. some members had pre-existing loyalties with competing candidates from a different occupational group, namely Sino-Thai merchant-contractors. Perhaps, in this context the concept of phuak as an informal political-economic collective structure could have been introduced and discussed in comparison to the formal interest-group BMA. In general, it does not always seem to be easy to distinguish between informal personal ties and ties that occur as an outcome of formal organization. Moreover, election campaigns obviously depended only in relatively small part on the BMA’s support, and the decision to run for office was made individually and not as an outcome of collective decision-making in the BMA. Candidates only sought the BMA’s support as part of their overall election campaigns.

This does not mean that an increase in office-holding members was not welcomed by the BMA. Much to the contrary. The provincial and district bureaucracies are still pre-dominant, and thus the BMA cannot function by being a business organization alone, but must have members holding political office in order “to gain standing in the eyes of the bureaucracy”. In this sense, “Anek’s ‘new political economy’ has failed to emerge at the district level.” Nevertheless, groups such as the BMA can be seen as the “arrival of business-based civil society in the provinces”, indicating “the dilution of state hegemony”, although this is restricted to local economic decision-making. Finally, it must not be overlooked that this change does not reflect a
broader popular participation in political processes at the district level. Rather, it is
accompanied by "the partial disenfranchisement of the majority" because they do
not have the financial and political-structural means of getting access to the political
decision-making process (moreover, they are also subject to the influence of hua
khaanaen and to vote-buying). This last observation reminds us that corporatist
arrangements may open up channels for special interest groups to gain preferential
access to political-administrative decision-makers (thus the increased importance of
what Scharpf has called "negotiation systems"). However, they certainly do not serve
as means to democratize local (or national) politics by expanding opportunities for
public participation.

- Arghiros, Daniel. 2001. *Democracy, Development and Decentralization in
  Provincial Thailand*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press. (Nordic Institute of Asian
  Studies, Democracy in Asia series, no. 8) ix+308 pp.
- Arghiros, Daniel. 2002. “Political Reform and Civil Society at the Local Level:
  Thailand’s Local Government Reforms.” In *Reforming Thai Politics*, ed. Duncan
  McCargo, pp. 223-246. Copenhagen, Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
  (NIAS).
  extended metropolitan region: The socio-economic and political implications of rapid
  change in an Ayutthaya District, central Thailand.” In *Uneven Development in
- Armstrong, Gregory Alan. 1981. “Some Aspects of Policy Formulation,
  Implementation and Decentralization in the Thai Nonformal Education Development
  *Journal of Social Sciences* (Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University)
  Studies on Literature and History of Thailand and Myanmar*, pp. 53-61. Bangkok:
  Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University; Universities’ Historical Research
  Centre, Yangon.
- Aroonrut Wichienkeeo and Gehan Wijeyewardene, translators and editors. 1986.
  *The Laws of King Mangrai (Mangrayathammasart)*. The Wat Chang Kham, Nan
  Manuscript from the Richard Davis Collection. Transcribed in modern Thai by
  Aroonrut Wichienkeeo. Canberra: A Publication of The Richard Davis Fund and An
  Occasional Paper of The Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific
  Administration, Thammasat University, 1962)
- Arun Ractham. 1978. “The Nai Amphoe as the development linker and his role in the
  Thai bureaucracy in terms of organization development as a new approach.” Ph. D.
  dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. 470 pp.


B

- **Back to Square One.** Bangkok Post. 1992 xxx pp.


Superficial German Ph. D. dissertation on the military in Thailand. The work is based on secondary material without reference to Thai-language sources. Conceptualizing politics as a separate sphere in which the military then “intervenes” seems to start the analysis from the wrong end as we are actually dealing with a differentiating out of the political system, a process that also includes integrating the military into a democratic model of political behavior in which soldiers have equal political rights in their capacity as citizens and in which they assume a subordinate role as members of the institution “military” vis-Ã-â-vis the leading political institutions, i.e. parliament and government.


• Bell, Peter F. 1970. The Historical Determinants of Underdevelopment in Thailand. New Haven: Yale University, Economic Growth Centre. (= Centre Discussion Paper No. 84)
• Bidhya Bowornwathana. 1984. Public Health Bureaucrats in Rural Thailand. Bangkok, Thailand: Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. (xsthesis?)
This is the description of a kamnan election in Chiang Mai in April 1995. The three candidates are said to have spent 60,000, 100,000, and 400,000 Baht (the winner) in their campaigns. To varying degrees, MPs and some provincial councilors as well as villagers lended financial support. Patronage and vote buying were prominent campaign methods used by the winning candidate. Equally important was an 8:4 split among the 12 village headmen in favor of that candidate. Besides actively supporting him, the eight PYB were successful in blocking the other camp from campaigning for votes in their villages. This was achieved in collusion with district officials and leads the author to the question, ‘Is there no guaranteed freedom of assembly?’ Even the intervention by the pollwatch committee could not bring about a fair election. Consequently, although the major opponent managed to get about 90% of his fellow villagers’ votes, he lost because he could not make any significant inroads into the winner’s camp villages. All this led to a strong polarization in the tambon and to an equally strong resentment on the part of the defeated candidate’s supporters. Bowie criticizes the vagueness of laws governing local elections and the absence of formalized appeal procedures. There also seems to be an interpretation of the law that contradicts its actual stipulations, e.g. regarding the “neutrality” of village headmen.


• Breazeale, Kennon, ed. 1999. *From Japan to Arabia: Ayutthaya’s Maritime Relations with Asia.* Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project. 250 pp. (For the individual articles please see the entries under Charnvit, Wyatt, Nagazumi, Suna, Andaya, Lapian, and Yumio/Takako.)


There has been a lot of talk about Thai democracy and its development, especially regarding the question of how stable Thai democracy has grown. Yet, it is not easy to transform this talk into a viable research agenda. In international democracy research, models of democratic consolidation are one tool used to determine a country’s degree of democratization. Bünte introduces one such model or conceptualization, i.e. the one proposed by Wolfgang Merkel (based on his MA thesis listed above). Merkel’s multi-level model of democratic consolidation includes four aspects, namely (1) institutional consolidation (the development of central political institutions and their legitimacy, both in terms of an “elite settlement” in their favor and the popular perception that this order is a good one); (2) representative consolidation (this concerns interest groups and political parties; the latter should not be fragmented, and there should not be anti-democratic parties); (3) behavioral consolidation (i.e. the elimination of veto-actors, especially the
military and business); (4) civic culture and civil society (this regards the reduction of conflicts, tensions and cleavages which takes pressure off young democracies). Bünte describes the model and then uses the literature on Thai politics to illustrate it.


C


It is reconfirmed that knowledge is not independent of social location. This is illustrated by the differences of thinking and communicating about ‘democracy’ that we can observe in different social categories, i.e., the military, NGOs…|The relevance of this article could have been increased if Thai-language primary and secondary sources had been included into the analysis.


Callahan’s book on the May events consists of previously published material (Callahan 1994a+b and 1995a+b), except for Chapter 4. It is not the author’s aim to provide readers with “the truth” about what happened. Since meaning is not a simple reflection of the “facts” but socially constructed, it is important to throw light on the events from different perspectives (“discourses”). Although Callahan writes about democracy, he wants to avoid using the term “democratization.” He feels that this concept is too teleological and that the “checklists” that usually follow from this approach are too sterile given the military-caused bloodshed. Moreover, the author somehow associates “democratization” with forbidden concepts such as modernization or Westernization. He also does not want to reproduce the occident/orient dichotomy (authors in this line of thinking often imagine the existence of Said’s “Orientalism in “Western” social science on foreign countries and are scared of falling into the imagined trap of becoming tools in the hands of neo-colonialists and neo-racists bent on subjugating defenseless Third World countries). Rather, the events of May 1992 are seen as providing an occasion for a cultural analysis of how different groups imagine democracy. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to determine the author’s intentions or thoughts since they are at times obscured by an unclear writing style.

Callahan’s first chapter deals mainly with something Thais are very fond of: astrology. According to the author, astrological predictions explain why military leaders did not back away when faced with massive demonstrations and why they, afterwards, felt neither responsibility nor guilt but considered the entire affair as merely stemming from “bad luck.” The author admits that many observers dismissed the leaders’ statements simply as excuses. However, he insists that they really believed in that astrological stuff. Regrettably, he does not try to include other elements of Thai culture in his analysis. For example, it is well known that the necessity to save one’s face often leads to scurrilous excuses or outright lies. It is also not unknown that the rejection of any personal responsibility and its social dispersion belong to the core of Thai culture. (However, if I as a German were held responsible for the killing of dozens of unarmed protesters, I would not exactly be happy either.)

Furthermore, it is claimed that the military coup-plotters chose 23 February 1991, 11.30, because this was astrologically predicted as the most auspicious time for the undertaking. It is not mentioned in this context that prime minister Chartchai, on
that day, had ordered the air force to provide him with a plane to take him to Chiang Mai in order to let the King sign a letter of appointment putting a retired military rival (Arthit Kamlang-ek) into the position of deputy defense minister. Obviously, this was a blatant provocation of the active class-five clique (after many months of conflicts between the government and the military). They also suspected that one of theirs, namely Supreme Commander Sunthorn Kongsompong would be dismissed on the same occasion. (Since his death in 1999, accusations have been raised that he used his position in the NPKC to become “unusually rich” a government committee is investigating the case.) In other words, no time was to be wasted “from their perspective” to put a stop to this game. This explanation, which essentially does without astrology as an explanation, is not altogether absent from the book. It is not mentioned in this context, however, but only in passing and hidden in note 103 on p. 137. Callahan does not bother to confront these divergent explanations, or weigh their relative importance.

The rest of the first chapter deals with TV-censorship, a video “produced by state TV” distorting the truth, and with an equally distorting fax.

In the second chapter Callahan points out that concepts such as “public opinion” or “public” are comparatively recent additions to Thai political culture and remain structurally unstable. He mentions the social processes that led the political system to internally develop a functionally specialized sphere called public (perhaps, he could have included the standard reference in this field of study, Habermas’s book on the public sphere). As a result, demonstrations and protests are still called “mobs.” This expression not only connotes disorderliness, unlawfulness, aggression, a lack of controllability, and a lack of political rationality. It also implies that mobs are not authentic expressions of political discontent and that they do not represent the participants’ political opinions. In Thai discourse, mobs mainly consist of people hired by a “third hand” in order to further its particular interests. (The Ministry of the Interior, politicians, and the military have substantial experience in making such use of the country’s “citizens.”)

Of course, the May 1992 demonstrators were not of this kind. On the contrary, participants were mostly motivated by their convictions and their observation of political events. Nevertheless, no attempt was made to find a more positive term. Instead, variations of the negative expression were chosen as, for example, “middle-class mob”. This was accompanied by an attempt to re-define the meaning of this term in a way that it could also refer to rational and responsible political actors.

From the perspective of the military, however, the old meaning remained valid, and it justified the use of violence. Callahan contextualizes this with a description of the military as an institution that “almost necessarily” introduces violence into the political sphere of action. In Thailand, this basic fact of political-military life is made even more significant by the decades old ideology of national security (that has partly been based on the regional threat of communism and an insurgency that existed until the early 1980s). It has gained additional weight by the military’s self-perception of being the savior of the nation, and by reference to the official state
ideology of “Nation, Religion, King.” All this leaves little space for oppositional political mass movements. They may be branded as “un-Thai,” often even as “anti-Thai.” (An old-style favorite of right-wingers has been “communist”; a modernized version is “NGO.”)

From Callahan’s description, one gets the impression that the acting generals can not actually be held personally responsible for the killings they ordered. After all, they merely communicated in the frame of reference of the existing discourse and, in their actions, reproduced the existing structures. The reader’s understanding is not helped when the author switches attributions for actions among “the military,” “the army,” and “Kaset and Issarapong” (two of the most important military actors, the first one from the air force, the second from the army). The attribution “Kaset and Issarapong” indicates both personal points of reference as well as their membership in class five of the military academy. Callahan himself notes that other members of the military did not like the demonstrations either but rejected the use of force against them. He also mentions that navy personnel protected fleeing protesters from army-personnel who were giving chase. Obviously, there is no “military” as a homogenous and monolithic bloc. Neither is there a unitary military way of perception and interpretation that, when it deemed action is necessary, provided for only a single option: shoot to kill. One may ask whether Callahan’s text would be different had he decided not to use “the military” as a main point of reference, and not even “the army,” but the “class five’s” (at least certain members) thirst for power.

It is useful that Callahan describes a document (its full text is reproduced in an appendix) in which General Issarapong tries to justify what the army units did, and mentions the application of a military action plan that was originally designed to suppress armed communist uprisings in Bangkok (paireepinartâ€”“destroy the enemy”). In this way, both “the military’s” ideological attitudes and an obviously grotesquely flawed organizational programming come into view. This last point gains weight by the observation that initially it was the police who were tasked with controlling the demonstrations, but that they were not prepared to perform this difficult assignment, either organizationally or in terms of equipment and personnel. A truly astonishing degree of incompetence on the part of the supposedly professional police and military seem to have contributed considerably to the sad events. This seems to have included serious problems with information-gathering: how can one act appropriately when one is basically in the dark about what is happening?

Chapter 3 starts with the observation that the protests did not end when Chamlong was put in jail. Therefore, there must have been other motivational forces at work leading to the mass mobilization other than merely Chamlong’s charisma. Callahan’s explanation does not refer to any “crisis of legitimacy” (as we have tentatively summarized Murray’s description). Instead, he emphasizes the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their development is described at length, based on a very small number of NGO sources. The author assumes the existence of an “oppositional consciousness” as the main factor for creating identity. (For
unexplained reasons, he uses action-oriented feminist theory to make his point, instead of more general social-science approaches; also the difference between opposition and boundary-drawing is blurred.) He encounters problems with distinguishing between “non-governmental” and “anti-governmental” attitudes and organizations. Then, the NGOs’ role after the coup of February 1991 is described. Particular importance—“both strategically and tactically”—is attached to the NGOs’ non-violent approach. This section is based on interviews the author conducted with the NGO-elite, people probably not inclined to understate their role.

It seems problematic that Callahan attributes the mobilization of the protests exclusively to the NGOs’ information networks and to the corresponding networks of personal relations between NGO members and their acquaintances. Other motivational forces and channels of communication are excluded or, at least, are not considered. In the author’s reading, there is no place for “ordinary people” reading newspapers, having political opinions, being angered about TV censorship, talking to each other at their work places, or phoning each other and then using the information gathered for reaching the decision to go to see for themselves. At least, there is a quotation in which an NGO representative expresses his satisfaction regarding the support their cause received from “the masses.”

In this context, a distinction could have been introduced between the organizational aspects of the protests on the one hand and the mechanisms of mass mobilization on the other. Callahan criticizes that, in the military discourse, the protesters remained faceless and were degraded to constituting a “mob.” However, it cannot be said that his own account gives them a recognizable face. On the contrary, they remain anonymous and are reduced to people who were brought to the demonstrations via the NGO networks. It may seem somewhat strange, but the protesters as individual subjects, who certainly had their own “imaginations” of what happened during May 1992, are assigned only a very marginal position in this book. There are a large number of references to (mostly English-language) newspaper articles, to interviews with the NGO-elite, and to the perspective of “the military.” Yet, it was obviously not of great interest to find out what interpretations the participants in the demonstrations themselves had to offer.

After the author’s stated intention to provide a cultural analysis largely gets lost in the third chapter’s historical-structural description (including a number of normative statements), the fourth and final chapter returns to culture. Callahan wants to analyze how people construct what they remember. He first takes a look at an art exhibition about the events. The less than startling result is that the military is not depicted as the hero but as the villain. His second example concerns different definitions of those who went missing in the aftermath of the shootings. It may not be too surprising to learn that state agencies tended to favor a restrictive definition which soon led to a reduction in the number of the missing. Again, what “ordinary participants” or “ordinary people,” who did not participate, remember is not considered important enough to warrant examination.
This interesting piece is the result of an 11-day period of interviews “with election candidates, campaign organizers, canvassers, voters, Pollwatch volunteers, and government officials” (p. 380). The body of the article describes six steps of campaign management which, the authors claim, “followed a broadly similar pattern throughout the country” (readers are referred to Callahan 1999 for comparative information regarding the other regions of Thailand). The six steps were, (1) candidate recruitment (by the political parties), (2) central campaign organization (by the individual candidate), (3) the recruitment of *hua khanaen* (vote canvassers), (4) the organization and management of those *hua khanaen*, (5) campaign rallies, and (6) vote-buying. The role of PollWatch is also described. In conclusion, it can be said that, “money, achievements and personal qualities [of the individual candidate] are critical in determining electoral outcomes… *which are+ largely divorced from national political issues*” (p. 391 f.).

Finally, when the authors state that, “Vote-buying became a matter of concern to academics and urban elites at the time of the March 1992 election” one would like to add that this does not seem to be entirely correct. In fact, this concern by the groups mentioned already started during the Chartchai government, and it picked up steam during his last months in office. As a consequence, the MoI organized a big seminar on how to deal with this problem, supported by the Asia Foundation, on 11/12 January 1991. Further actions were made impossible by the coup of 23 February 1991. Shortly afterwards, the MoI started its Democracy Propagation Project aimed at eliminating vote-buying (see Nelson 1998: ch. 6; Anek 1996: 214).


• Chai-anan Samudavanija and Suchit Bunbongkarn. 1985. “Thailand.” In Military-
civilian Relations in South-East Asia, ed. by Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Harold Crouch, pp. 78-117. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

• Chai-anan Samudavanija and Sukhumbhand Paribatra. 1984. “Factors behind Armed

• Chai-anan Samudavanija and Sukhumbhand Paribatra. 1986. “Internal Dimensions of

• Chai-anan Samudavanija and Sukhumbhand Paribatra. 1987. “In Search of Balance:
Prospects for Stability in Thailand During the Post-CPT Era.” In Durable Stability in
Southeast Asia, ed. by Kusuma Snitwongse and Sukhumbhand Paribatra, pp. 187-
233. Singapore: IEAS.

• Chai-anan Samudavanija and Sukhumbhand Paribatra. 1990. “Political Contestation
in Thailand.” In Political Contestation. Case Studies From Asia, ed. by N. Mahmood,

• Chaichana Ingavata. 1990. “Community development and local-level democracy in
Thailand: the role of tambol councils.” Sojourn 5: 113-143.

• Chaichana Ingavata. 1981. “Students as an agent of social change. a case of the Thai

• Chairat Charoensin-o-larn. 1985. “Understanding Postwar ‘Reformism’ in Thailand: A

• Chaiwat Bunnag. 1983. “Les coups d’état militaires dans le contexte historique et
politique thailandais (1932-1981).” Doctorat de 3° cycle en sociologie, Paris VII. 537
pp.


• Chaiyan Rajchagool. 1994. The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy:
Foundations of the Modern Thai State from Feudalism to Peripheral Capitalism.
Siam, 1855-1932.” Ph. D. thesis, Manchester University, 1984 273 pp.) (= Studies in
Contemporary Thailand, Volume 2)

• Chakarin Komolsiri. 1995. “Globalization and Local Voices: Globalists, Fusionists, and
Resistors among Thai Intellectual Elites.” PhD thesis, State University of New York at
Binghamton.

• Chakrapand Wongburanavart. 1978. “Administrative Attitudes of the Public Officials


• Chamnan Prasertchoung. 1987. “An assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices of local political leaders in Thailand and their effect on the success of primary health care.” Dr. P. H. Hawai. xiii+260 pp. (Kanchanaburi province)

• Chamnan Rodhetbhai. 1990. *Role of Monarchy in Thai Political and Social Development with Special Reference to King Bhumibol Adulyadej*. New Delhi: Centre for South, Central South-East Asian and South-West Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. ix+419 pp.


“This book is the result of the International Conference on ‘King Chulalongkorn of Siam’s First Royal Visit to Europe in 1897’ held by Chulalongkorn University European Studies Programme (CUESP) on 6-7 November 1997’ (p. 135). See the articles by Rolin Jacquemyns, Nish, Kullada, Chalong, Piyanart, and Chompunut.


Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University; Universities’ Historical Research Centre, Yangon.


• Child, Jacob T. 1892. *The Pearl of Asia: Reminiscences of the Court of a Supreme Monarch or Five Years in Siam.* Chicago: Donohue and Henneberry.


This book was not sold but given by the author, a former director general of the LAD and permanent secretary of the Ministry to the Interior, who is no a party-list MP for Thai Rak Thai Party, to foreign visitors. It is not an academic work, but useful to get to know en detail the formal structure of Thai local government from an official point of view.


Chula Chakrabongse. [1956]. The twain have met; or an eastern prince came West. London: Foulis. 299 pp.


Thrombley/Siffin (1972: 13), in their bibliography on Thailand, described this book as “essentially a romantic and adulatory interpretation, and a poor history. Some useful factual interformation, but little that is novel and significant.”


• Given the topic of this article, its relevance could have been increased, if Thai-language primary and secondary sources had been included into the analysis.

The author argues against those who see democratization in Third World countries as an outcome of globalization, here conceived as the simple diffusion of Western models. To prove his point, the long and jargonladen introduction is followed first by an overview of Thai political development from 1932 to 1992. Secondly, various social groups’ conceptions of democracy are presented. These groups are big business, crime bosses (chao pho; their inclusion might be based on a misconception of their status, role, and importance), the middle class, labor, and NGOs. Finally, pertinent ideas of some intellectuals (Thirayut, Anand, Anek) are also shortly analyzed.

This is a detailed, critical, and useful account of political reform and the drafting of a new constitution between 1991 and 1997. However, the author’s intention to argue “for the relevance of a broadly Marxist approach to social and political change” seem to have been buried under the amount of descriptive and interpretative detail. Something similar must have happened to the concept of the state mentioned in the title. This is regrettable because the restructuring of the Thai state has arguably been the most prominent issue in recent years, covering political reform via the rearrangement of existing and the addition of new state institutions, privatization (not the least as part of the global policy-making process), good governance, decentralization, civil service reform, and the political neutralization of the military. This is followed in significance by the growth of the public; some would prefer to say ‘civil society’, but this goes much beyond the political sphere we are concerned with here. Compared to these areas, the development of political parties seem to be stalled (largely preventing willing members of the public to enter into the political decision-making process), and the expansion of non-state political space reaching beyond but including parts of the Thai territory or population” “primarily in the form of building an Asian public” “still seems to be in its infancy.


This thesis is an exploration of how the idea of democracy is used for hegemonic and governmental purposes in Thailand. Taking as my prime empirical material the propagation of democracy by state agencies, I argue that in the 1960s a significant shift occurred that connected the question of democracy to the ‘doctrine of political development’. I argue that this articulation was characterized by a thematic contradiction between claims of popular sovereignty and state projects aiming to create the citizens worthy of such sovereignty. I also explore how this contradiction manifests itself in the contemporary politics of Thailand. The entire discussion is framed by the suggestion that we might think of democracy in terms of elite projects to subject the citizen to imaginary forms of their own rule, or what I call democrasubjection. [preliminary abstract provided by the author]


This 9th (interim) Constitution of December 15, 1972 was issued by Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Executive Council, that is the coup group which Thanom used to topple his own government on November 17, 1971. The official publications appeared in the Government Gazette, Special Issue, Volume 89, Part 192 dated 15 December 2515. The text of the constitution is preceded by seven pages of short descriptions of the previous eight constitutions, written by Amorn Chandara-Somboon. The Juridical Council translates its Thai name now as ‘Council of State’.


This translation, that has been prepared by a commercial translation office, is not too reliable. It starts on the cover page where the year of this constitution is given as ‘1998’. What should read ‘Thailand has a democratic system of government with the king as head of state’ has been translated as ‘Thailand has a democratic system of government under the rule of a monarch’ (Art. 2); the Thai word for local government is given as ‘Local Administration’. An very important change of meaning occurs in their translation of section 145 (4) where ‘polling station’ as level for calling new elections in the case of irregularities was translated as ‘election constituency’.
Finally, in Article 284, the important word ย่อม has not been translated, and ‘have autonomy to’ is translated as ‘are free to’.

- “Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. B.E. 2540 (1997).” [Bangkok]: Office of the Council of State, n.d. 142 pp. This translation was also published in the Council’s journal, Administrative Law Journal, special issue, vol. 16, 1997, pp. 100-211 (the actual date of publication is 1999). The same translation was published by the Office of the Constitutional Court and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation as a Thai/English edition. For online access see, amongst others, the web site of the King Prajadhipok Institute at http://www.kpi.ac.th.

This translation is certainly better then the above. Still, there are some points of contention. For example, what has been translated as ‘one’ kingdom may probably better be called unified kingdom. In the second article (here called ‘section’) a translation has returned to the final version that was strongly advised against during the preparation stage, i.e. that Thailand ‘adopts [the Thai text simply reads ‘has’] a democratic regime of government’! This regrettably puts Thailand in one category with military, fascist, and communist regimes that are called ‘regimes’ because they are considered undesirable from a democratic point of view and should therefore be replaced by a ‘democratic system (or form) of government’ which seems to be a more appropriate translation from the Thai original ‘kanpokkhrong [government] rabop [system, form] prachathipattai [democracy]’. Article 283 opens with, ‘Any locality which meets the conditions of …’ In this case one may find the translation in the above version more corresponding to the Thai-language text, i.e., ‘Any locality which has the characteristics of …’ Again, no difference is made between ต้อง [ให้มี] and ย่อม [มี]. Both are translated as ‘shall (give, have)’ although many people would think that the second word is (much?) less binding than the first one which is certainly important to know when interpreting the meaning of the articles. Finally, it is difficult to understand why the Council of State does not provide a detailed table of contents listing the chapters, parts, and sections (articles) as this would have greatly facilitated using this translation.

Australia: Centre For Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University. (=Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, No. 30) 338 pp.


- *Correspondence Concerning the Affairs of Siam*. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, August 1894. London: Harison & Sons, 1894.


In its first part, this article describes the senate before and after the constitution of 1997 came into effect. In its second part, the organization of the first senate elections and its results are dealt with. Croissant’s conclusion is that there remain considerable deficits regarding the institutionalization of “meaningful” (according to Hadenius) elections. This is said to be especially true with respect to the “correct” performance of elections.

The author’s main source of information for the senate elections are the websites of *The Nation* and the *Bangkok Post*. No first-hand experience or research results seem to have gone into writing this piece. Maybe, this is the reason why, in the first sentence of the article, the author informs the reader that senate elections were held on March 4 and April 29. Later, he mentions a third round in passing whilst the
fourth and fifth round seem to have escaped his attention. Instead of assuming a political science perspective and trying to understand the Thai electoral structure, Croissant takes sides by merely repeating the Bangkokian elite’s common moralistic condemnation of politicians by saying that, “the established cheating structure of Thai elections” was again effective. Needless to say, he also repeats the usual clichés regarding vote-buying and political parties without noticing the existence and function of provincial *phuaks* and systems of *hua khanaen* (political parties are said to command “electoral machines” in rural areas).

Especially surprising is Croissant’s statement that, “for the first time in Thai electoral history, the legal provisions were in fact applied, results annulled, and candidates brought to court and sentenced because they violated the election law.” What he probably refers to is the suspension of winning candidates by the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) based on their misinterpretation of section 145 (4) of the constitution. On the page following this quote, the author notes that the ECT suspended the candidates. However, he does not reconcile these rather different views. And he criticizes the “weak constitutional basis” of the ECT’s decision by overlooking that the constitution drafters deliberately lowered the legal requirements so that “convincing evidence” would be constitutionally sufficient for the ECT to act upon. The courts (and their much stricter criteria for passing judgements) were excluded from this process because they had been ineffective in dealing with violations of the election law.

Croissant then wonders how the ECT was able to distinguish between valid and invalid results in different areas of the same constituency. In fact, the ECT did not have to do this at all simply because its decision-making did not at all concern results in certain areas of a constituency but the candidates’ behaviour. As soon as the ECT thought they had “convincing evidence” of misbehavior (by the candidate or by others in his or her favor, with or without his or her knowledge), the individual candidate’s election result in the entire constituency was nullified. The ECT did this although section 145 (4) of the constitution (on which the ECT based its decisions) actually targeted what happened in the polling stations on election day and by no means the candidates’ campaign actions in a constituency. No analysis of these issues is provided, although Croissant at one point mentions that “considerable (?) pressure” was put on the ECT to first acknowledge the winners and only deal with violators later, after them taking their seats had enabled the Senate to convene.

The first part on the senate more generally also has its fair share of misunderstandings. It is incorrect to say that the senate was introduced in 1946 because it was abolished soon afterwards, i.e. in 1951. It was only with the constitution of 1968 that the senate was re-established. According to Croissant, the government had no influence on the composition of the senate, and it was only with the amendments of 1992 that the PM got the right to suggest who should be appointed senator. One wonders who actually the author thinks previously selected the senators. It is also not explained how the senate got its image as a government-directed ‘rubber-stamp’ when, following the author, it was a strong “veto” institution. Further, what does it mean to say that the military and the civil
bureaucracy deprived the elected representatives of “vital matters of political decision-making” via the senate? And I can not recall that the “re-positioning” of the senate was indeed “one of the central concerns of the constitutional reform of 1997.” The constitution went into effect on October 11, not on October 16, 1997.

Finally, Croissant says that impeachment procedures cannot be initiated by parliament but by at least 50,000 voters petitioning the senate. This is incorrect since one quarter of the total number of MPs can initiate an impeachment procedure as well. Moreover, whether or not a procedure is started does not so much depend of the senate’s “political will” but, first, on the cases for which the constitution stipulates the possibility of an impeachment and, second, on the investigation of the National Counter Corruption Commission to which the senate has to transfer any request for initiating an impeachment process (see Section 303 of the Constitution).

- Croissant, Aurel and Jörn Dosch. 2001. “Old Wine in New Bottlenecks? Elections in Thailand under the 1997 Constitution.” Leeds: Department of East Asian Studies, University of Leeds. (Leeds East Asia Papers No. 63) 28 pp. This publication is obviously based on the first author’s German-language paper described above. The mistakes are repeated; some new ones concerning the House elections have been added.


D

• Davies, R. D. 1902. Siam in the Malay Peninsula. Singapore: Fraser & Neave Ltd.

An overview is provided of the system of Thai government (executive, legislature, judiciary, regional and local government), the electoral system, the party system, and individual political parties (Democrat Party, Palang Dharma, Chart Pathana, New Aspiration Party, Prachakorn Thai, Chart Thai, Social Action). Information concerning the political parties is divided into history, organization, policy, membership, financing, leadership, and prospects. Regarding the NAP, Dayley remarks that, ‘Given that the party’s recent growth was built largely on political
opportunism, factional politics and mass defections could challenge its future success.' As this abstract is being written (September 2000), Dayley’s statement seems to accurately describe what has been happening over the past year or so. The major beneficiary of defections, Thaksin Shinawatra, is mentioned as having been in the process of forming a new political party (Thai Rak Thai).

There are a number of statements readers familiar with Thai politics may find surprising or debatable, for example that Thailand as a ‘political entity â€¦ dates back centuries’; that people become politicians after a ‘successful business career’; that the constitution of 1997 went into effect in May 1998 (instead of on October 11, 1997); that ‘Thai political leaders and elites drafted a new constitution’ (one of the most interesting aspects of drafting this constitution was that political leaders were all but excluded from the process); that the Thai political system has ‘two executive institutions: the monarchy and the government’; that the monarchy is the ‘preeminent political institution’, or that the Cabinet is ‘the locus of political power in Thailand’. Moreover, that the new constitution ‘provides for a limited expansion of authority at the local level’ misses the fundamental nature of decentralization required by the constitution.

Finally, stating that there is a ‘conservative rural electorate’ in contrast to ‘the more reform-minded and internationally oriented voters’ of Bangkok directs the readers towards assuming the existence of individualized, nationally-oriented political worldviews and the support of policy options none of which presently seem to exist at the local level to a meaningful degree. That we are rather confronted with a structural problem of political development along a center-periphery divide could have been made clearer by the author when he shortly refers to the problem of vote buying and the phenomenon of hua khanaen (vote canvassers). He even mentions that ‘existing social relations that tie voters to educational, governmental, religious, and other local leaders’ are being exploited by those vote canvassers to mobilize votes for a particular candidate. One may ask then why the voting decisions of rural Thais are not made in a politically rational way (by them being structurally, i.e. de facto, and not only de jure included into a nation-wide democratic political system), but mostly seem to be determined by non-political local social ties?

- De Fels, Jacqueline. 1976. Somdet Phra Chao Tak Sin Maharat, Le Roi de Thonburi. Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales; These pour le doctorat de 3 è cycle, two volumes.


• Department of Policy and Planning, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. [1991]. *Statistical Profile of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 1990*. Bangkok: Department of Policy and Planning, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

• Department of Publicity. 1940. *How Thailand Lost Her Territories to France*. Bangkok: Royal Thai Government. (xxxcheck)


- **Directory of Public-interest Non-Government Organizations in Thailand.** 1990. Bangkok: Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University (CUSRI); Social Research Institute, Chiangmai University (SRI); Research and Development Institute, Khon Kaen University (RDI). 490 pp.


Electoral Law (1941)]. 53 pp. This publication reprints the “Electoral Law B. E. 2475 [1932] Amendment Act (No. 3) B. E. 2479 [1936]” both in Thai and in an English translation.


Thai democracy is not only of interest to Thais alone. A number of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) try to contribute as well (not without being seen with suspicion in some Thai quarters). However, not much is publicly known about the work done by organizations such as The Asia Foundation, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, or the National Democratic Institute. It is therefore very welcome that Norbert Eschborn, then representative to Thailand of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), provides a description of his organization’s work in Thailand. He places this work into the context of German development cooperation in general and the KAF’s principles in particular. As for the foundation’s Thai projects, they concern three areas, namely democracy promotion (partners are the Population and Community Development Association, the Institute of Public Policy Studies, and the secretariat of the House of Representatives), legal reform (partners are the Office of the Council of State, the Office of the Constitutional Court, and the Office of the Administrative Courts), and administrative modernization (partners are the Office of the Civil Service Commission and the Thailand Innovative Administration Consultancy Institute).

Some information is given on Thaksin Shinawatra’s Constitutional Court case, the Constitution of 1997, the Constitutional Court, the structure of administration and administrative law, and on legal history. A brief section on civil law is followed by some remarks on problems concerning the access to law and privileges of the power elites. The authors conclude that for replacing the “rule by law” with the “rule of law”, citizens and politicians alike will have to accept law as a means for societal reform.


• Fishel, Thamora V. 1997. “Mothers, Teachers, and Hua Kanaen: Gender and the Culture of Local Politics in Thailand.” In Women, Gender Relations and Development in Thai Society, Volume 2, ed. by Virada Somswasdi and Sally Theobald, pp. 445-466. Chiang Mai: Women’s Studies Center, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University.


• Fitzsimmons, Thomas, ed. 1958. Thailand: its people, its society, its culture. New Haven: HRAF Press. (=Country Survey Series). Chapter 6 is on the “Dynamics of Political Behavior” (pp. 119-147), chapter 7 deals with the “Legal and Theoretical Base of Government” (pp. 148-169), and an overview on the “Structure of Government” is given in chapter 8 (pp. 170-193).


• Ghosh, Suchita. 1997. Thailand: Tryst With Modernity. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD. xi+243 pp. This book includes various chapters on Thai political history and politics. It was written by using what material was available in various Indian libraries.


• Goldschmidt deals with the background and the history of NGOs, the socio-political and economic context of their operation, network building, human rights campaigns, and he assesses their success and the development of new organizations in the 1990s.

Many years ago, the author served as the country representative of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Bangkok. In this capacity he extensively dealt with NGOs. However, more recent developments (including newer literature on the subject) are largely ignored in this chapter. The discussion of civil society has become a very prominent concept during the past few years and is completely overlooked as are related themes such as protests (‘mobs’) and calls for public participation and public hearings. As a consequence, the relevance of this article regarding an understanding of contemporary processes of change (i.e. the promise made in the title of this book) is rather limited.


• “Government Communique Regarding the Proroguing of the People’s Assembly, April 1st, 1933.” In Kenneth P. Landon. 1939. **Siam in Transition**, p. 251. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. (Reprint 1968)


• Grey, Denis D., ed. 1988. The King of Thailand in World Focus. Bangkok: Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand. 187 pp. This is a collection of ‘newspaper, magazine and wire service reports’ on King Bhumibol Adulyadej which appeared between 1946 and 1987.


Durrenberger, pp. 47-46. New Haven, Conn.: Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University Press.

International Development, Center for Development Information and Evaluation. (=USAID working papers, No. 210) (xxxcheck)


2) 306 pp. (originally a Ph. D. dissertation at the Universität der Bundeswehr, München, 1995)


Besides providing abstracts of the chapters, Hewison neatly categorizes the approaches used to analyze Thai politics into modernization-theoretical, neo-
pluralist, institutionalist, and Marxist lines of thinking. He also shortly describes the “ebb and flow of political space” from 1920 to the present (based on Hewison 1996b). This section is easily compatible with any theoretical approach as is the conclusion that a more broadly defined political power challenges the “conservative state” and is, in this way, “clearly central to the development of political systems (sic) which no longer exclude the majority of the population.” The expression “conservative state”, then, seems to be meant as a more agreeable substitute for the outlawed ‘bureaucratic polity’. Similarly, the statement that there is a “continued dominance of ‘old’ forces in rural areas” seems to suggest that the bureaucratic polity is still alive in the countryside and that we ought to include a center-periphery distinction more systematically (though perhaps temporarily) into a contemporary political theory of Thailand. It seems odd that Chatichai Choonhavan (and, by implication, Chalerm Yoobamrung), in his function as PM from 1988-1991, is cast in the unusual role of somebody who accepted that he “had an historical role to play in enhancing democratic development, and he challenged continually Thailand’s conservative state.” This is a nice way of referring to Chatchai’s and Chalerm’s brinkmanship in a sustained effort to provoke the military. It also seems to suggest that a political actor can challenge something of which he has for decades been a constituent part as if he was acting from the outside.


This book originated from a workshop organized in 1993 by the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Western Australia. It collects 15 articles: Power, opposition and democratisation (Hewison); Power in transition: Thailand in the 1990s (Pasuk/Baker); The military, bureaucracy and globalisation (Chai-anan); The monarchy and democratisation (Hewison); Buddhism’s changing political roles (Jackson); Politics and business (Handley); Political parties (McCargo); Electoral politics (Surin/McCargo); Village schools (Missingham); Working-class power (Brown); The politics of environment (Hirsch); NGOs (Prudhisan/Maneerat); Mass media (Thitinan); The medical profession and political activism (Bamber); Role of
provincial business in Thai politics (Parichart). See the annotations to the individual
contributions.

  Business People in Northeastern Thailand.” Perth: Asia Research Centre, Murdoch
  University. (=Working Paper No. 16)
  Profile of the Economic and Political Roles of a New Generation in Khon Kaen,
  Thailand.” In Money and Power in Provincial Thailand, ed. by Ruth McVey, pp. 195-
  220. Singapore: ISEAS; Chiang Mai: Silkworm.

Kevin Hewison and Maniemai Thongyou report the results of their interviews
(conducted in 1992) with 20 new-generation business people in Khon Kaen
(“Developing Provincial Capitalism: A Profile of the Economic and Political Roles of a
New Generation in Khon Kaen, Thailand”). First, however, they make some general
remarks on the relationship of business and politics in the provinces. The importance
of the regular business class, they warn, must not be overlooked by emphasizing the
“small and infamous group” of chao pho. Yet, they themselves seem to assume that
there is quite a number of “local chao pho” who “are often all-powerful in the
provinces”.

The authors claim that “money has become the single most important factor in
electoral success”. Since they do not say what precisely this is supposed to mean in
the socio-political context of rural and national-level Thailand (and whether they
consider this to be an abnormality or a fact that has to be morally condemned), their
statement may as well be taken as pointing to Thailand’s similarity with Australia,
the US, or Germany. Exclusive politics based on notables may primarily rely on the
actors’ established social status. Inclusive democratic mass politics in the context of
a monetized economy, however, cannot function without the spending of large
amounts of money (in present-day society, can states operate without a budget, or
can the authors live without a monetary income, making money the “single most
important factor” in their survival?). Moreover, distinctions between local/national
and urban/rural elections could have prevented the authors from assuming that the
need for money alone makes the domination of politics by business people
unavoidable. Their table 8.1 shows this dominance. However, they could have added
that civil servants are by law not permitted to run even in local council elections; e.g.
a teacher in a local school or a development officer in the provincial hall cannot even
become municipal councilors in their hometowns without quitting their jobs. In
Germany, there is no such restriction; thus the dominance of civil servants in local
councils and state and national parliaments. Running in an election to the municipal
council, one may add, really does not require that much money.

From the answers of their respondents, Hewison and Maniemai conclude that
“officials are no longer considered to have great political clout.” Introducing such a
time-related empirical statement may be difficult to justify given that they asked
new generation businessmen what they thought about current affairs.
Methodologically more problematic is that the authors’ two core questions on which
this assertion is based only gathered data on the respondents’ opinions of who is most important in business (thurakit) and politics (kanmuang). It is therefore not surprising that the answers refer to businessmen and politicians. It would have been necessary to include a question asking who the respondents thought is most important in the civil service of the province. After all, ratchakan clearly refers to a separate category of people who are not supposed to enter into respondents’ perceptions when the question is expressly about politics (the two core questions are given in footnote 40 on p. 218; it seems that the authors have translated Tamada’s distinction of itthipon and amnat into “business” and “politics”; in the same volume, Arghiros, on p. 131, refers to amnat as being about the officially sanctioned power of civil servants, i.e. ratchakan and not kanmuang).

The authors remind us that, in assessing business peoples’ political influence, we will not only have to consider what formal political positions they occupy, e.g. municipal or provincial councilor. It is also not sufficient to look at the actions of formalized organization, such as chambers of commerce, or official channels of influence, such as the KoRoOo. In addition, we will have to keep in mind that there may be vast networks of informal communication between business people and political and bureaucratic functionaries in which influence on political decision-making may be exerted. They could have added that political influence may, in no small measure, also depend on the nature of the local phuak to which politically interested businessmen probably belong.


Hicken uses an analytical approach to answer the question why there were so many political parties during the period of 1979 to 1997. Such “inflation of the party system” can, in principle, be attributed to two coordination failures. First, candidates in individual constituencies may all run on their own instead of joining together in a small number of parties. Second, constituency and provincial-level political groups may fail to link up at the regional and national levels (which would result in a reduction of the number of parties). Hicken shows that the main problem does
indeed not occur at the levels of constituency and province but at the regional and national levels. He suggests that the political groups’ reluctance to join into bigger organizations has largely been due to two factors. The first is “the size of the prize”, i.e. the power of the prime minister has been rather limited in the Thai political system. To gain a substantial piece of the power and budget-pie, it has been sufficient to be part of a coalition government rather than to depend on capturing the position of prime minister. The second factor is that even if a political party managed to get the majority of seats in parliament after an election, this has not necessarily meant that the prime minister would come from that party. In fact, this was the case after only three out of eight elections. The impact of constitution-induced structural changes after 1997 on the number of political parties will require a separate analysis that we hope to present in a future volume.


Huxley, Andrew. 1999. “What was Paliland Political Philosophy Like in 1800 CE?” Paper, 7 th International Conference on Thai Studies, Amsterdam, 4-8 July 1999. 21 pp.

I


Ingersoll, George Pratt. Secretary of State Reports of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Siam 1920-1929. Microfilm No. 729, Roll 6, United States Archives, No. 892/01A/33.


• Intha Sribunruang. 1975. “If We Don’t Fight We’ll Die Anyway: Last Interview with Intha Sribunruang.” *AMPO* 7 (4): xxx - xxx, 1975


Jaturong Boonyaratkhasoontorn and Gawin Chutima, eds. 1995. Thai NGOs: The Continuing Struggle for Democracy. The perspective, role and experiences of Thai
NGOs in social, economic and political development. Bangkok: Thai NGO Support Project. 188 pp.


Kachorn Sukhabanij. 1957. *The Thai Beachhead States in the 11th and 12th centuries*. Bangkok: Prachandra Press. (reprinted from *Silpakorn* 1,3-1957 and 1,4-1957) (Haripunjaya, Sukhothai) (xxxcheck)


- Kanok Wongtrangan. xxxx. “Executive Power and Constitutionalism in Thailand.” In ASEAN Constitutional/Legal Systems. (xxxccheck)
Most observers seem to basically agree on what happened between February 1991 and May 1992. Firstly, the NPKC conducted a military coup against the ‘democratically elected’ Chartchai-government in order to preserve their power, or rather that of the dominant class-five generals. They then engineered the promulgation of a new constitution designed to prolong their power for many more years after they had formally returned to a democratic form of government. This was to be achieved by giving a non-MP the opportunity to assume the premiership and by not only giving the Senate considerable clout but also by staffing it primarily with military buddies. At the same time, members of the airforce (coincidentally led by NPKC heavyweight Kaset Rojanin) started setting up a new political party which ironically was named samakkhi tham (unity and justice). Its aim was to collect pro-
military MPs and gain big enough a number of MPs after the elections in order to have the first right to form a coalition government; they were successful.

From the very beginning, this process was accompanied by a broad anti-military current campaigning strongly against the NPKC’s supposed plans. From this perspective, Suchinda’s appointment as prime minister after the elections of March 1992 was not only seen as fulfilling all predictions as to what the military was up to. More than that: it was seen as an outrageous provocation. For these reasons, extra-parliamentary demonstrations with the double purpose of amending the constitution and of forcing Suchinda’s resignation seemed to be perfectly justified. Faced with these demands for democratization the military, in the end, did not see any other way out but shooting dead dozens of unarmed protesters. And, still, the military’s efforts were in vain. After scores of people were left dead and wounded in the heart of Bangkok, and after Suchinda’s forced resignation, all of the constitutional amendments demanded since the takeover by the NPKC were passed. In terms of political structure, what we can observe is a further reduction of the military’s role in politics, a further step in the process of civilizing and democratizing the political system of Thailand.

Khien Theeravit (a retired professor of political science at Chulalongkorn University’s Faculty of Political Science, a former director of CU’s Institute of Asian Studies, and now a senior research scholar of the Thailand Research Fund; he was also a member of the Constitution Drafting Assembly of 1997) is almost absolutely in disagreement with this mainstream-version of the events between February 1991 and May 1992. He confirms that, from his perspective, there were interest groups and primarily politicians who, from the beginning, turned against the NPKC’s intentions. He even concedes that the ‘public’ paid more attention to these issues than on previous occasions, although what exactly the ‘public’ is remains conceptually unclear, and NGOs do not figure as actors in their own right. Khien also mentions, though only in passing, that the NPKC-constitution was passed against ‘staunch opposition’. But he stresses that everyone who took part in the elections of March 1992 had, by this very participation, accepted the content of the new constitution. All groups inside and outside parliament, who were against that constitution, simply had to come to terms with this situation. Deplorably, though, they just did not muster enough patience to work, in the given legal context, peacefully for amendments of the constitution. Instead, those forces instigated the masses to raise up against the government.

It is rather irritating that Khien, as a rule, talks of anti-government protests although, most obviously, they were not at all directed against the government as such but against Suchinda in his capacity as an unelected military general and NPKC-coup plotter occupying the position of prime minister. Had the political parties forming the governing coalition appointed an elected MP to the premiership, there would have been the usual criticism, depending on the person appointed. But there would not have been mass demonstrations. And had the same parties used the break in the demonstrations (11-16 May) for honouring their agreement regarding constitutional amendments, reached in a meeting initiated by House-speaker Arthit Urairat, there
would not have been any bloodbath. Only the massacre brought the coalition parties to their senses, and they even did not dare dismissing Suchinda themselves, but they had to rely on the king’s intervention to get rid of him.

Khien’s fixation on anti-government protests leads him to say that, after all, there must be a government, and no government was absolutely bad! Suchinda, for example, was determined to solve the suffering of the rural poor by measures of rural development. To pursue this aim, he had established a high-ranking committee with recognized experts in this field. Unfortunately, though, he was hindered in implementing his noble intentions by Bangkok’s selfish population (I am not making this up, and for the sake of fairness it should be mentioned that there indeed are some remarks critical of Suchinda in this book).

The fact that, in the end, the amendments were passed clearly demonstrated, according to the author, that in case of ‘political conflicts’ it was not Parliament which played the decisive role but ‘the mob’! The leaders of the protests (in Khien’s view primarily Chamlong Srimuang) were responsible for the ‘predictable’ consequences of their actions (in other words, the killing of unarmed civilian demonstrators in the heart of Bangkok by military units trained and equipped to combat heavily armed adversary forces is what one has to expect and to avoid).

It is exactly this question of responsibility which should have led Khien to seriously discuss what options for action the public, NGOs, and oppositional political parties have when a military clique first ‘usurps’ (his expression) power in a coup and then tries to constitutionally cement the power so gained for many years. It is simply not up to the academic task to retreat to a convenient legalistic standpoint and then to even urge ‘patience’ on the side of those whose democratic rights were taken from them by the military usurpation of power.

Given the current political science discourse (both on Thailand and supranationally), one could probably have expected that special attention was paid to terms such as middle class, public, or civil society, in the context of more general questions concerning political development and democratization. However, Khien does not seem to be familiar with the political-science literature in this field but rather represents a more conventional Thai way of thought. The important question of legitimacy is treated superficially; legitimacy was, according to the author, in the end all but ‘elusive and subjective’. Besides, the ‘general public’ did hardly care about whether a government was legitimate or not since they were always more concerned with economic problems. This may be overlooked by academics and the mass media. However, the poor Thai people were too hungry for being able to wait.

By now, readers may have gained a sufficient impression of the direction of Khien’s account. The book (the original Thai version is based on a series of articles first published in Matichon weekly newspaper) is an easy read, but it is not always easy to bear. This is mainly due to the fact that its content is not very well developed academically. Also, things which belong together are touched upon in different chapters and in awkward order. For example, the lead-up to the events of May 1992,
particularly the discussion surrounding the constitution drafting after the NPKC had usurped power in February 1991, is considered only in chapter five. Moreover, Khien discusses the constitutional issues as such when he should have concentrated on explaining the social processes of building an oppositional movement since this is vital for any understanding of what happened afterwards. Finally, the author does not conceal his contempt for the demonstrators, especially for their leaders. They should have stuck to ‘the rules’ and exercised patience.

Of course, the killings are strictly condemned. Khien strongly criticizes that the government did not have sufficient mechanisms for crisis management, neither regarding the demonstrations nor in terms of information policy. Instead of using the TV for comprehensively informing the public of what happened, including discussions with political scientists, the respective station chiefs rather exercised an ad-hoc censorship. Comprehensive information and interpretation could have contributed to defusing the explosive situation. In the absence of this, many people had decided to go and have a look exactly because the TV stations broadcasted outrageously distorted reports.

- King Chulalongkorn’s Journey to India 1872 Bangkok: River Books, 2000. 84 pp.
Chuan Leekpai faced the expectation of living up to the “historical moment” by embarking on a strongly reformist course of action. Observers were disappointed when changes turned out to be only incremental, and they questioned his “clean image” when the land reform scandal surfaced. In its wake, a no-confidence motion, Chuan’s unconvincing defense, and the withdrawal of the Phalang Dharma Party led to the dissolution of parliament and fresh elections. They were won by the Chart Thai Party, and its leader, Banharn Silapa-archa (“the quintessential rural machine-patronage politician”), formed a seven-party coalition government. Cabinet members were criticized for having “shady backgrounds” and lacking the professional expertise to administer their portfolios. The military remained neutral and even accepted a change to its reshuffle list regarding the position of the Army Commander-in-Chief, made by former Army C-in-C and “civilian” defense minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyut. King concludes, “Democratically elected governments in Thailand still need to prove that they can be effective and efficient governments over the long term.” What exactly is meant by “democratically elected” when a government is based on the votes of villagers who have followed the recommendations of local vote canvassers (including “vote-buying”? And the promise contained in this combination of democracy and effectiveness/efficiency seems to be unrealistic given the fact that exemplary democratic governments (e.g., the USA or Germany) are beset by a multitude of socio-economic as well as policy problems they even had a part in creating.
Social Action, and Chart Pattana parties, and an equally brief description of new stipulations in the Constitution of 1997. According to King, political parties are in an excellent position to finally wrest policy leadership from the bureaucracy because the events of 1996/97 substantially decreased trust in technocratic competence, and democratic consolidation has strengthened the legitimacy of parties, elections, and parliament. However, they “may not be able to take full advantage of this historic opportunity” since they remain weak and can offer “little significant programmatic content.”


The article describes events of 1991-1995, i.e., the NPKC, the two 1992 elections including the May uprising, the downfall of the Chuan Leekpai, the July 1995 election, and the rise of Barnharn Silapa-archa. Some additional statements are grouped around four “keys to stability”: (1) the military (widespread and stable public disapproval of military rule limit the range of the military’s options but capable civilian leadership is required as well), (2) civil society (this “institution” has grown immensely during the 1980s and can help keeping governments accountable), (3) the political party system (integrated by personalities and not ideologies, little relevance for most voters who rather elect individual candidates, regionalist pattern, hardly any organizational structure, and certainly not reaching down to the urban and rural grass-roots level), (4) parliament (very limited resources in terms of personnel, expertise, and power to control government actions). Some cursory remarks are made on vote-buying predicting that it’s demise “will likely take decades.” One would like to know what is meant by saying that Thai “social structure (is) based largely on patron-client networks”, especially as this is used to explain the state of affairs the party system is in. What about the importance of cliques (phak phuak) or the differentiating out and expansion of function systems? Since when are pervasive seller-buyer, landlord-tenant, employer-employee, doctor-patient, judge-defendant, bureaucrat-citizen, teacher-student relations of a patron-client nature? Or are they irrelevant regarding “social structure”? The lack of a sociological theory of society is clearly showing. “Horizontal groupings” are reported as developing slowly. The exclusionary character of political parties could have been made clearer and then used to qualify the authors’ use of the terms “democracy” and “democratization” (meaning: the process of actual inclusion, not just the absence of military dictatorship and the taking place of superficially “meaningful” elections).

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was "one of the most publicly controversial agencies under the new Constitution"; eleven versions of the respective bill were made even before it reached Parliament, and six more parliamentary drafts were required before the act could be passed. Klein traces the commission back to the establishment of the House Affairs Committee in 1986 that, in cooperation with the Foundation for the Study of Democracy and Development, conducted a study on human rights violations in Thailand. Four years later, the House Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was established; in 1992 it was announced that Thailand would ratify the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights. At the same time, the cabinet ordered the Office of the Auditor General to draft a law to set up a national human rights body. This was accorded constitutional status in 1997; the NHRC finally started its work in 2001. James Klein provides a truly fascinating, detailed description and analysis of an example of long-term (15 years) policy-making and institutional development in the Thai polity.


• Krannich, Ronald L. and Caryl Rae Krannich. 1979. “Anonymous Communications and Bureaucratic Politics in Thailand.” *Administration and Society* 11 (2)


Kreuzer takes on the Herculean task of comparing the political culture, the armed forces culture, and the military elite’s political behavior in China, Japan, and Thailand. He does this by completely relying on secondary sources in English. As for Thailand, the material used is highly selective. Even major works, such as Girling (1981) and Morell/Chai-anan (1981), are missing from the bibliography as are other books and articles relevant to the subject (Anderson 1977, 1978, Chai-anan/Kusuma/Suchit 1990, Likhit 1992, Marks 1978, 1980, Murashima/Nakarin/Chalermkiet 1986, Prudhisarn 1992, and even Basting 1992). Consequently, the book’s part on Thailand is of rather limited value.


The article poses the question whether Thailand has indeed followed “the path towards parliamentary democracy” since 1932. To answer this question, the author uses most of the space to give a description of Thailand’s history since about 1855. Perhaps the major thesis here is that it was not the threat of colonialism that prompted King Chulalongkorn to undertake wide-ranging reforms in order to save his dynasty’s rule over Siam. Rather, he wanted to make “the Thai state” fit for an effective integration into the “world economy”. No use is made of the extensive literature on Thai political development; “theoretical perspectives” are also absent, and “democratization” is dealt with cursory at best.


In his foreword, the author ‘warns’ the reader that he has used a “journalistic approach” in writing this book. Moreover, he states, “I have not attempted to be exhaustive in research...” This is no understatement. Relying almost exclusively on clippings from The Nation newspaper, he seems to have systematically avoided reading at least some of the academic literature (not to mention primary sources) on the themes he touches upon, i.e. politics, sustainability, global ecology, the financial crisis, the constitution of 1997, patronage and corruption, quality of life, the environment, sustainable agriculture, and urbanization (especially the ‘Bangkok Plan’).


• Likhit Dhiravegin. 1984. Local Government Systems and Democratic Development in Thailand. Bangkok, Thailand: The Research Center, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University. (= Monograph Series No. 9)


This book collects the following pieces.

1. The Development of Thai Administrative and Governmental System: A Brief Review (pp. 3-14)
2. The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and the Chakkri Reformation (1868-1910): A Case for a Comparative Study (pp. 15-39)
3. Tokugawa Japan and Pre-Chulalongkorn Siam: Pre-Conditions and Potential for Later Rural Development (pp. 40-55)
4. Initial Conditions, Institutional Changes, Policy and Their Consequences: An Essay in the Comparative Economic History of Siam and Japan, 1850-1914 (pp. 56-78)
5. Contrasting Modernization in Chulalongkorn’s Siam (1868-1910) and Meiji’s Japan (1867-1912) (pp. 79-95)
6. The Role of Political Leadership in the Modernization of Chulalongkorn’s Siam (1868-1910) and Meiji’s Japan (1867-1912) (pp. 96-109)
7. The Power Elite in Thailand: A general Survey with a Focus on the Civil Bureaucrats (pp. 113-135)
8. The Socio-economic Power-bases of the Thai Bureaucratic Elite (pp. 136-149)
9. The Thai Bureaucratic Elite: A Study of Their Promotion and Career Advancement Patterns (150-173)
10. Political Attitudes of the Thai Bureaucratic Elite (pp. 174-209)
11. The Thai Legislators: A Study of Their Sociological Attributes (pp. 210-232)
12. The Bureaucrats’ Role in Thai Politics: The Bureaucratic Polity Confirmed? (pp. 233-247)
13. Political Development: Political Culture Approach and Its Application to Thai Case (pp. 251-263)
14. Thai Politics from June 1932 to the Coup of 1957: A Struggle between Bureaucracy and Democracy? (264-277)
15. The Thai Military and Coups d’état: A Background of Thai Politics before October 14, 1973 (pp. 278-293)
16. Social Change and Contemporary Thai Politics: An Analysis of the Inter-relationship between the Society and the Polity (pp. 294-331)
17. Political Leadership, Political Institutions and the Future Vision of Society: A Sketch of Political Development Program for Thailand (pp. 332-249)
18. Cultural Diversity: The Thai, the Chinese and the Thai Moslems (350-385)
19. Nationalism and the State in Thailand (pp. 386-409)
20. Thailand and the Security Problems (pp. 410-425)
21. Local Government System in Thailand: An Overview (pp. 429-469)
22. Centralization and Decentralization: Thailand’s Dilemma (pp. 470-483)
23. Local Government and Community (Rural) Development in Thailand (pp. 484-496)
24. Local Government Systems and Democratic Development in Thailand (pp. 497-509)
25. Aiming for Growth: The Politics of Imbalance (pp. 510-530)
26. Thailand’s Foreign Policy Determination (pp. 533-563)
27. The Super Powers and Southeast Asia: A Global Perspective (564-577)
28. ASEAN, Thailand, and the Major Powers (578-596)
29. Thai-Japanese Postwar Relations (pp. 597-616)
30. Trade and Development in Thai-Japanese Relations (pp. 617-640)
31. United States-Thailand Relations: Thai Perspective (pp. 641-654)
32. Japan as a Factor in Thai-American Relations (pp. 655-665)
33. The Development of Political Science in Thailand up until 1974 (pp. 669-686)
34. Socio-economic-political Development in Thailand after World War II and Approaches to Study (pp. 687-696)
35. Politics and Political Science in Thailand (pp. 697-711)
36. The Contemporary Thai Political System and Its Future (pp. 715-736)
   - Likhit Dhiravegin. 1986. The Political Profile of Industrial Workers. Bangkok: Thammasat University. (xxxchecken)


The author sent out teams to survey 76 Bangkokians and 93 northern Thais of whom 83 were classified as rural and compared to their Bangkok counterparts. “The less than startling conclusion” is that the individual respondents’ differences in “democraticness” are best explained by the urban-rural divide. Even more interesting is the high degree of ambivalence in the answers of the “rural” group, including high numbers of “don’t know” (this is especially pronounced in the answers
to the open-ended questions). In other words, knowledge or reasoned opinions about questions of democracy are in short supply in those people surveyed (some information on differences in the answering behavior of both groups during the interview would have been helpful for interpreting the findings; e.g. ‘don’t know’ answers to open-ended questions may be assumed to result from the respondents lack of familiarity with the interviewers, inhibiting them from expressing themselves freely; this assumption may be wrong, but one would like to know better). On the other hand, the same respondents had clear conceptions of what the duties of their MPs were. Characteristically, these conceptions differed from the Bangkokians’ view on the national-local and the impersonal-personal dimensions emphasizing the second element of both. Using a different theoretical approach, one might conclude that the democratic model of political behavior has not yet been expanded to include the entire population, especially excluding Thais living in rural areas.


In 1994, the author conducted a number of interviews with members of NGOs/civil society organizations and business associations, with journalists and academics in six provinces: Patthalung, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Songkhla (all in the South), Buriram and Sisaket (in the Northeast), and Chiang Mai (in the North). These provinces had seen between four (Patthalung) and 15 (Chiang Mai) acts of protests—“democratic struggle”, “local protest movements” in which between 10 and 40,000 people participated. A “pre-existing network of politically aware individuals” was “of overwhelming importance” to bring about the protests. These middle-class individuals—who provided most the organizing and mobilizing leadership of demonstrations that saw participants from a broader range of social categories—had built their networks in three contexts: PollWatch (formed to observe the elections of March 1992), the Union for Civil Liberties, and provincial institutes of higher learning. Provincial business people had hardly any role in the protests (except in Hat Yai, which was hard hit by the Malay tourists staying away because of the turmoil in Thailand).

When LoGerfo asks what may account for differences in the “timing, size, and number of protests” readers will probably expect that differences in the nature of the above-mentioned networks (number and status of people involved, their interactive structures, flows of communication, connections to Bangkok, existence of channels/reservoirs of mobilization) would be analyzed. However, the author only uses more general indicators such as different degrees of wealth, the existence of institutes of higher learning, and the size of the middle class in these provinces (the more, the earlier, etc.). In answering the question why protests only occurred in 25 provinces while 50 remained unaffected, LoGerfo’s briefly speculates about the lack of networks (which also accounts for a much smaller scale of provincial-level protests back in 1973), the level of repression, and dominance by pro-Suchinda MPs.
To reach the section that contains the above core results, readers unfortunately have to read through 13 pages (and 11 more pages of preliminaries regarding the provinces) of general and largely unsubstantiated statements about the role of the middle class (comprising account managers at a bank, policy analysts in the provincial administration, university professors, and factory owners with 500 workers) in the development of democracy. The middle class is said to have been “ambivalent” regarding democracy: in 1973, 1977 (?), and 1992 it supported democracy while it “welcomed the imposition of authoritarianism” in 1976 and 1991 (?). In order to explain this, LoGerfo ascribes “clean” and effective government as the major political concern of the middle class. The 1992 uprising, then, grew out of the middle class’s “interest-based preference for clean politics, anger at Suchinda’s violation of his promise not to assume the premiership, and a principled desire for a more democratic system” (p. 222). On p. 240, the author mentions three points that should be clear from his description, and he includes a repetition of this quote. However, while he indeed provides evidence for supporting the first two of his points (there was extensive protest action in the provinces; the leadership of the up-country movement consisted mainly of middle-class people), no substantiation is given for his core claim as to what motivated the participants in the May demonstrations (it should not have been too difficult for him to analyze the English- and Thai-language newspapers of the time or to interview people who were involved).

LoGerfo does not consider whether the May events may have had something to do with the rejection of the military’s role in politics (while it may be true that the middle class prefers clean politics, it is quite a different question whether this motivated people to turn up for the protests in May 1992). Perhaps, this is why he can arrive at the view that the middle class welcomed the NPKC’s coup of February 1991, although it meant the “imposition of authoritarianism”. He mentions that the middle class did not initially resist the coup “because of their disgust with Chatichai’s ‘buffet cabinet’”, but started getting suspicious in “autumn 1991” with the NKPC’s attempt to prolong their power via a new constitution, and then “erupted in a frenzy of protest in May 1992”. In fact, however, only one day or so after the coup, The Nation carried a front-line editorial headline “Return the power to the people!” The NPKC did not even try to establish an authoritarian military government but tried to please Bangkokians by appointing a largely civilian and technocratic cabinet under Anand Panyarachun (as LoGerfo correctly notes, the middle class surely likes competent government). The NPKC’s attempt to introduce press censorship met with strong opposition and had to be abandoned after only a few days. On 23 March 1991, a number of NGOs issued an open letter to the NPKC. In particular, they criticized Art. 27 (absolute power of the NPKC’s chairman and the prime minister) and that “despite the formation of a civilian caretaker government, the NPKC continues to exercise its power and interferes with the government affairs.” In the same letter, the NGOs recalled that the NPKC “has throughout reaffirmed its intention to protect and restore democracy”. There is a big difference between welcoming the “imposition of authoritarianism” and merely allowing the military to do the dirty work of getting rid of a disliked government, because there were no more democratic means of achieving this goal.
The tendency briefly described in the preceding paragraph continued through the constitution-drafting process, and this probably is the socio-political context in which the May protests have to be interpreted as the final response on the NPKP's and Suchinda’s actions since February 1991 (one would like to see some substantial work on these issues). Characteristically, as LoGerfo notes, the protests stopped temporarily when the government parties seemed to have promised to amend the constitution according to public demand. The protests only resumed and led to the killings after the government parties went back on their word. One may thus conclude that the Chartchai government was just as unacceptable to the middle class as wasâ€”from right after the coupâ€”the military’s interference in politics or government (even in constitutional disguise). LoGerfo should certainly have discussed all this carefully instead of merely ascribing to the middle class a preference for clean government (the “clean politics, level playing field’ syndrome”) that, then, led them to participate in the mass protests (by the way, if there is a unified middle class with a unified motivational structure, why is it that only a small minority of that class bothered to attend the protests; are the assumptions wrong or is it a general problem of collective action?).

Finally, it is remarkable that LoGerfo seems to have had access to very sensitive decision-making processes. Otherwise, how could he have put the following sentence on paper: “It was this working-class resistance, along with the strength of the provincial protest movement, which brought the King into the fray and led to the collapse of the Suchinda government” (p. 242).

published by both *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post* on the occasion of the King’s and
the Queen’s birthdays.

  University of California, Center for Chinese Studies. (= China Research Monograph
  No. 8) (xxxidentical with his diss.?)
- Lovelace, Daniel D. 1971. “‘People’s War’ and Chinese Foreign Policy: Thailand as a
  Case Study of Overt Insurgent Support.” Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate
  School. 259 pp.
  284.
  Archipelago and Eastern Asia* (Singapore) I:327-429.
  Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde. (= Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde
  Revolt to National Revolution?* Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde. (For part one also
  see Luther 78; part two is an enlarged an translated version of Luther 1970) (=
  Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde Hamburg, Nummer 98) [This monograph
  *Proceedings of the International Conference on “Underdevelopment and Subsistence
  pp.)
- Luykx, Nicolaas Godfried Maria. 1962. “Some Comparative Aspects of Rural Public
  University. 905 pp.

MacDonald was the founder of the Bangkok Post newspaper (in 1946). These are his memoirs. In his foreword to the autobiography of the co-founder, Prasit Lulitanond (see A Postman’s Life 1999), he describes its inception as follows: “The decision to start a daily English-language newspaper came to me, of all places, at a dinner at the Royal Palace. My work as station chief in Bangkok for the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), during which I worked closely with the Free Thai Organisation, was coming to an end six months after World War II. Prime Minister Khuan Abhaiwong and Pridi Banomyong, the Free Thai Leader, had suggested to His Majesty King Ananda Mahidol a farewell dinner and there we were having an after-dinner discussion of current events. Premier Abhaiwong, who knew I had become fond of life in the Kingdom, suggested that I stay on and may be get into the booming import-export business. I reminded him that before the war I had been a journalist, a working newspaperman. ‘Why not stay here and start an English-language paper? There used to be one before the war but the British publisher quit and returned to England,’ Nai Pridi added. I wasn’t sure about it, but in the days following the idea developed” (p. 4f.).


For unknown reasons, the author ignores the works of Thamsook (and others) on the subject.


This is a useful dictionary on Thailand in general, not only or even mainly on its history. It also contains almost one hundred pages of bibliography on a wide range of subjects (which makes selection a real problem). In an appendix rulers etc. are listed. Some entries one would expect to see considering the design of the dictionary are missing, e.g. elections, citizen, political participation, corruption, vote-buying, democracy/democratization, nak leng and chao pho, police, prostitution, slum, social problems, deforestation, non-government organizations, peasant/farmer, folk culture, status, hierarchy, seniority, tattooing, amulet, superstition (although animism and astrology are there), Three Seals Code, law (customary/modern), medicine (traditional/modern), historiography, chronicles, etc. There are also no entries about Chavalit Yongchaiyuth (although Chuan, Banharn etc. are listed), Sulak Sivaraksa, Prawet Wasi, Thirayuth Boonnie (although we find Saneh Chamrik), Thien Wan, or K. S. R. Kulap. Some descriptions need revision. For example, lakmuang is not just the “name of the foundation stone of Bangkok”. “Local Government” should be devided into “Territorial Administration” and “Local G.”, and the part on local government proper should be corrected. The literacy rate of 90 percent is certainly fictitious and needs at least a critical remark as to the validity of the statistics used.


On May 1992: Chapter eight deals with Chamlong’s role during the May events. The author starts with the statement that the demonstrations did not merely constitute a challenge of the state (a somewhat vague concept in this context) by a developing civil society. But the ‘business elite’ had taken the opportunity to turn against the military’s economic privileges. In addition to these two ‘groups’, NGO-activists, peasants, and slum dwellers took part in the protests (characteristically, workers are missing from this list, and one wonders whether they had no part and, if so, why not).

Why was Chamlong able to provide a mobilizing focus for these rather diverse groups to take to the streets? This more conventional question is complemented by another one which was asked especially by his adversaries: Did Chamlong act on the basis of political principles or did he merely follow his very personal political agenda? It demonstrates the complexity of Chamlong’s personality that McCargo needs eight points to weight the pros and cons of different possible motivations. In any case, according to the author, it was not adequate to put too much emphasis on the person of Chamlong, and he provides some insights into the divergent opinions which existed in the protest’s leadership. The decisive factor regarding Chamlong’s catalytic role seem to have been that he was very popular at that time. However, this would have remained ineffective if there had not been a very real public opinion and even more than this: a public need regarding Suchinda’s resignation from the prime ministership. And it was not Suchinda as a person who was opposed, but it was Suchinda as the foremost symbol of the military’s dominance in politics.


For the individual articles see Prawase Wasi, Thirayuth Boonmi, Michael Connors, Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, David Streckfuss and Mark Templeton, Johannes Dragsbæk Schmidt, James Ockey, Somchai Phatharathananunth, Kevin Hewison, Philippe Doney, Naruemon Thabchumpon, Sombat Chantornvong, Daniel Arghiros, Duncan McCargo, and John Girling.


The contributors are Ruth McVey, Pasuk Phongpaichit/Chris Baker, Sombat Chantornvong, James Ockey, Michael J. Montesano, Daniel Arghiros, Yoko Ueda, Kevin Hewison/Maniemai Thongyou, and James P. LoGerfo; see the abstracts of the individual chapters. In general, this book collects articles dealing with questions researchers asked about eight to ten years ago when provincial economic and political life became interesting to them (as well as to me). Although the quality of the answers cannot always satisfy, future researchers will certainly benefit from the experience of their predecessors. One lesson to be learned is that attention should be paid to the routine economic and political practices in Thai provinces, and that this cannot be done by emphasizing just one element of the whole picture, i.e. “money”. “Power”â€”in the wider meaning of “politics and administration”â€”is equally important. That is, efforts will have to be made to systematically conduct empirical research on local socio-political structures, local government authorities (this includes the role “money” plays in them), on informal socio-political networks called phuak, the provincial and district bureaucracy, the provincial election commission, provincial pressure or interest groups (be they business associations, trade unions, NGOs, or grass-roots protest groupings), and on how all these elements interact (this includes the relationship to the national level).

Moreover, we have seen some concern with the importance of what is often called “civil society”, but may more narrowly referred to as “(political) public” or “audience” (this distinction enables us to ask in how far the communication processes that occur in the former facilitate the growth of the latter), in developing the local political sphere. This issue connects to questions concerning the nature of political communication in the provinces: What means exist to inform people about what happens in their province? After all, motivations and courses of action rely on informational input and its processing, both individually and socially. Finally, we will have to ask how all this impacts on local problem definition and agenda-setting, on policy-making, service delivery, gaining material benefits through corruption, enabling or disabling public participation, political recruitment, the formation of local branches of political parties, and on the way elections are being conducted.

Furthermore, one should not forget to introduce a comparative perspective, i.e. it should be asked whether developments in provincial politics have structural equivalents in what we can observe in the provincial-level manifestations of Thailand’s economic, medical, education, mass media, and legal systems. After all, it is one of the most interesting phenomena of social change in the Thai provinces (and indeed in Thailand as a whole) that their everyday social life has over the past decades more and more been homogenized according to national-level models of
action (as evidenced in the growth of economic establishments, hospitals and clinics, schools and tertiary institutions, radio/TV and newspapers, courts, and elections). Introducing this kind of sociological approach (based on a specific macro theory of society) necessarily leads to a perspective that goes beyond national boundaries and is indicated by expressions such as “world society” or “globalization”. None of the political, medical, educational, mass media, judicial, and economic structures (not to mention technical inventions such as electricity, the car, and all sorts of appliances and machinery used at home, in factories, and offices) that forcefully and inescapably shape the everyday life of contemporary Thais (including Sino-Thais and a host of other ethnic groups) living in the provinces have their origin in the provinces, and not even in Thailand, but in Europe. Thus, the issue of “localism” becomes very tricky (and perhaps ideological) indeed.

In sum, there is an entire research agenda here that can keep scores of present and future Thai and foreign researchers busy for a long time. Hopefully, some will take on the challenge so that in ten years from the publication of *Money and Power in Provincial Thailand* an editor will be able to put together another book on the Thai provinces that will include a broader range of issues than McVey could collect due to the restrictions posed by the limited scope of academic material available to her.


McVey starts with a description of Thai provincial life (everywhere in Thailand!) as it was until the 1950s. She pays particular attention to the relationships between local leaders, civil servants, and traders. These groups are said to represent contrasting “social models” or “cultural styles” (9): the models of the *phu yai* (local personal relationships), bureaucracy (hierarchical relationships), and market (bustling with life). A legal model is said not to have existed at that time leading a reliance on personal relationships for justice. Foreign observers in the 1950s and 1960s are said to have overlooked that there indeed were social structures of various kinds in the provinces. They instead assumed that “the bureaucracy [was] the only locus of power” (9).

With the economic take-off in the 1960s, “serious money” started penetrating the provinces. In the 1970s, branches of Bangkok-based banks were to be found even in small market towns. They introduced a fourth “model of civilization” to provincial social life making “rural folk” hope for glamour, luxury, and wealth as “the key to prestige and success” (10). Since the legal system was still weak, banks had to link up with local and provincial strongmen. At that time, these strongmen had not yet entered public life because participation did not offer enough profit. This changed with the capitalist expansion and the bureaucratic-military complex’s loss of power. “Increasingly, businessmen stood for public office themselves” (13). When these provincial people exaggerated their profit seeking behavior under the leadership of Chartchai Chunhavan as prime minister, the Bangkok elite and middle class backed the NPKC’s military coup in February 1991.
McVey then puts in a long section on provincial chao pho (crime bosses-cum-businessmen-cum-politicians), perhaps because she sees them as “emblematic of the unacceptable face of Thai capitalism” (14), a point of view I find difficult to follow. The concluding part of this article contains some, rather tentative, remarks on the questionable importance of the middle class (the more recent catch word ‘civil society’ is mentioned in passing) and on the further course of Thai political development. Present transformations are seen as being “very narrowly based” (23) and excluding most of the rural population as well as workers. Whether the political model dominant at the center—a result of “the cultural consolidation of the political and economic elite” (20)—can be expanded to the periphery “will depend very much on how it is mediated by those who shape it in the provinces” (23).

Michael Smithies (in his review in The Nation of May 6, 2001) called McVey’s essay “challenging” and “a remarkably well-written analysis”. It is not easy to agree with this evaluation. I found it rather irritating that McVey describes Thai provincial life without providing substantiation. True, she lists many titles in her footnotes. However, they serve the purpose of pointing the reader to the academic production on Thai politics but they are hardly related to her story. Since McVey has certainly not observed Thai provincial life during all this time herself, one wonders on what kind of sources all her statements on how things were in the past decades and what people thought and felt during this time are based. Although this is the introductory article to a book about “money and politics”, and the author even found it useful to include a long section on chao pho, an analysis of provincial Thai politics is practically absent (no word about phuak, electoral structures and behavior, or about local governments). McVey’s description of provincial change, certainly as far as politics is concerned, is therefore rather incomplete and even distorting. To remain at the level of ad-hoc talk about “social models” or speculation about “the new Thai order” (23) and whether it can make “itself central to the way in which the Thai people imagine their world” (23) cannot satisfy given that sociology provides us with the theoretical tools necessary to deal with these phenomena and resultant questions in a much more substantial way. Furthermore, it is not sufficient to concentrate on money and mention politics and law only in passing. More systematic analysis and theorizing, that also includes all other functional areas of society (such as medicine and education), is asked for if we want to seriously aim at understanding contemporary central, provincial, local Thailand and the interaction of these levels. Under present conditions of societal development this has to include references to world society (‘globalization’).

• “Minutes of a Meeting of a Committee to Consider a National Economic Policy at Paruskavan Palace, March 12th, 1933.” (signed: Luang Arthasarn Prasiddhi,
Montesano suggests that there was substantial “provincial political change” in the late 1980s and early 1990s (this impression probably is the result of a change in foreign researchers’ attention whereas provincial socio-political structures may have changed little). More importantly, he asserts that the “disproportionate emphasis” researchers have put on chao pho (very agreeable) has prevented us from understanding that, in fact, it was the “socio-historical milieu” of the “market society” created by recent Teochiu Chinese immigrants in the decades after World War II that formed the “world-view and patterns of conduct” of its members and restructured politics. That is, when some of them moved beyond this...
market society into playing a role in Thai politics, they applied what they had learned as traders and thus “had a profound and continuing impact on the course of Thai political life”; in effect they “reshaped the political order”.

At the core of Montesano’s chapter are the detailed biographies of two Sino-Thai men, Surin Tothapthiang and Suchon Champhunot (he changed his name from Tang Ui Chiao only in 1957, after he graduated from Thammasat University). Surin used to be the chairman of the Trang chamber of commerce with business contacts reaching to the national level. However, he did not enter the political arena (thus, how can he be proof of the author’s point?). Suchon did, having been member of parliament for Phitsanulok province many times. He assumed the position of deputy finance minister in the Chartchai government and, after the NPKC’s coup in February 1991, was one of those investigated (but cleared) for being “unusually wealthy”. Suchon was also member of Suchinda’s short-lived cabinet.

Though these biographies certainly make interesting reading, they do not as such seem to provide support for the author’s thesis. Unfortunately, Montesano also fails to tell us what exactly are the “traits and practices that have more recently become central to Thai politics”, which, he claims, were “incubated” in market society (he mentions “the many uses of wealth and the value of a wide circle of connections”, and he seems to assume that the use of hua khanaen and vote-buying are “traits often associated with the chao pho”). Thus, readers are left in the dark both about exactly what aspects of the political order, of politics and policy-making Montesano wants to explain and exactly which elements of market society’s total stock of action structures are seen as causal factors. How did this causation work (theoretically and practically)? One wonders whether these elements were supposed to be simply implanted or whether they met with existing political structures to which they had to adapt (i.e. social systems can only operate self-referentially). What did the old structures look like, and what was the result of this adaptation? Were there any non-Teochiu actors in politics; what was their importance? What was the role played by changes in the macro-political environment in the shaping of the political order, of politics and policy-making (the author mentions that military-bureaucratic dominance was gradually replaced by parliamentary politics, thus structuring and opening up the political space)? Would the Thai political system look any different in terms of structure and action if only ethnic Thais had been involved in its shaping instead of having, until today, a high number of wealthy Chinese “often from the provinces” call the shots?

This last question concerning the role of ethnicity in “Thai” politics seem to be of particular interest and should be pursued further (although it may not agree very well with the official Thai ideology of assimilation and “Thai-ness”; some Thai or Sino-Thai authors have concerned themselves with the question of “Chinese-ness” in their supposedly “Thai” social environment). After all, some recent prime ministers, i.e. Banharn, Chuan (Montesano puts him into the “Hokkien-Cantonese stream”), and Thaksin have Chinese ancestors. Yet, this may not be all that important since only about 25% of all Thai citizens (an informed friend’s estimate) are ethnically pure Thais anyway.
• The especially chapters 10 and 11 on “The ideology of ‘democratic government’ headed by the King”, and “The understanding of democracy and human rights.”
“Consequently, one of the stated aims of the course [secondary-school social science], namely, to firmly believe in the democratic way of life, remains unfulfilled. Where would, in this system of teaching, a democratic, socially responsible, yet morally autonomous citizen hail from?” (150) This book is not only important to people interested in analyzing Thailand’s public discourse, but it is also required reading for any western lecturer who teaches sociology or political science at a Thai university and who wants to know what Thai high-school education in its social studies curriculum has done to his or her students that they do not have a clue what he or she is talking about and expects of them. On the public world see especially chapter 5, “Making public opinion”, and chapter 8, “Constructing the public world: the discourse of the 1990s.”


The introduction of Murashima on ‘Chat as an Integrating Political Symbol’ and on Thai nationalism during the reign of King Vajiravudh (pp. 3-50) is followed by chapters on the periods of 1926-1938 (Nakharin, pp. 50-93) and 1958-1963/1963-1973, i.e., the Sarit- and the Thanom-years by Chalermkiet (pp. 93-150). The same author wrote the concluding chapter on the Young Turks, the Democratic Soldiers, and the Policy 66/2523 (pp. 150-188).

There are six appendices (pp. 121-145) concerning Thai political parties and their leaders (1932-1990), elections of the Members of the House of Representatives (1933-1988), Thai political parties and their MPs (1957-1988), the occupational distribution of MPs (1933-1988), the occupational distribution of Members of the Senate (1932-1988), and the occupational distribution of cabinet members (1932-1988).


Murray’s account starts with the military coup d’état of 23 February 1991, followed by a description of the government headed by Anand Panyarachun and by portraits of Thai political parties. He also deals with the preparation of the NPKC-constitution, especially with the question of whether the House of Representatives could select an unelected politician or soldier to become prime minister (this possibility was blocked by a constitutional amendment on 10 June 1992, that is only after the military killed dozens of unarmed protesters). Due attention is paid to Chartchai Choonhavan’s so-called ‘buffet cabinet’ many members of which were investigated by an NPKC-appointed committee. They were suspected of having become ‘unsually rich’ during the time they were ministers, for example by granting concessions after having received hefty commissions and /or by receiving the infamous ‘gift cheques’. We then read about the elections of March 1992, the difficulties in finding a prime minister, and Suchinda Kraprayoon’s appointment and formation of a government which included many of those politicians he, in his capacity as the NPKC’s coup-leader, had fought. This leads us to the mass protests in Bangkok, which developed after 4 May 1992, the tumult including the killings between 17-20 May, and to the second interim government under Anand Panyarachun. Reading about the shameless manipulation of radio and television during the demonstrations makes us understand better why the fundamental mistrust of the liberal élite of Bangkok towards politics and the state led to constitutional provisions which transferred the ownership and administration of frequencies from the state to an independent commission. Finally, Murray deals with the election of September 1992, the role of PollWatch in the (non-)reduction of illegal election tactics, and the formation of a
new government with Chuan Leekpai as prime minister. His Democrat Party belonged to the ‘angels’ which, in contrast to the ‘devils’, had not supported Suchinda.

Murray does not claim to present a scholarly study. His book basically is a chronologically ordered and thematically arranged summary of a large number of newspaper clippings from the English-language Bangkok Post, The Nation, and the Far Eastern Economic Review. As such, this publication provides a valuable service to newcomers to the study of Thai politics as well as to long-time observers who, from time to time, need to look up what happened exactly when and why during this important period between February 1991 and Mai 1992. Naturally, this structure makes reading the text at times boring. On the other hand, the author included a great number of illustrations. Especially interesting are the political cartoons by Arun (The Nation) and Anop (Bangkok Post). They nicely reflect public sentiment at that time.

What happened in May 1992—was it about the support of democracy? Murray is sceptical, not the least since the meaning of this term is difficult to determine during times of highly agitated political protests. Also, support for democracy can go together with the pursuit of group interests. The author repeatedly notes that the protests were not directed against an unelected prime minister per se. After all, both Anand I and Anand II were greeted warmly. Rather, what was at issue was the substantial and lasting reduction of the military’s role in politics.

Why were the protests persistent, and why were the participants not intimidated given that they faced a fully-armed military? Certainly, so Murray, Chamlong Srimuang’s charisma contributed to the mass mobilization. However, of greater importance seem to have been that frustration had been building up on the part of citizens for quite some time, i.e. frustration with the authoritarian political system and its incapability of adjusting itself to the population’s changed political aspirations and demands. In sum, we may consider the May-events as being an expression of what has been called ‘crisis of legitimacy’.

However, referring to ‘population’ excludes the vast majority of the rural electorate. They were systematically prevented from gaining access to correct information about the events. But, probably, they would not have bothered anyway, in the election which followed the massacre, to re-elect as their representatives exactly those people who were politically resonsible for what happened in the fist place. The traditional social structures in rural Thailand, which largely determine the people’s voting behavior, remained largely unaffected.

Due to the design of this book, it does not seem to be useful to enter into detailed academic criticism. However, a few remarks are in order. Firstly, Murray says that the coup of February 1991 came as a kind of shock. I cannot confirm this. The coup had been anticipated for some time, and so the reaction rather was, ‘Ah, now they have finally done it.’ Still, it is correct when Murray observes that the junta seemed to be unsure of itself from the very beginning. He could have added that, when the
The coup finally took place, it was an *ad-hoc* action rather than a well-planned military operation. And having to appear on TV largely unprepared to explain to the population that they had just toppled their ‘democratically elected’ government, which action was partly based upon wrong assumptions as to what Chartchai was up to when he wanted to see the King in Chiang Mai, does account for a lack of self-confidence. Secondly, the table on p. 117 does not list the two MPs of the Muanchon and the Puangchonchoathai party. Thirdly, from the historical picture showing the King reprimanding Suchinda and Chamlong, Chamlong is missing although the caption says that the picture showed the King with Suchinda and Chamlong. The political significance of this talk would be clearer if this picture was printed as it was actually taken, that is also showing the presence of Prem Tinsulanonda.


A positive assessment is offered of the performance of the government headed by Chuan Leekphai (“seen by the press as overly cautious and legalistic, colorless, and aloof.”), and the land reform “scandal” that led to the no-confidence motion and to the dissolution of parliament, is put into parenthesis. The description of the July 1995 election provides information on political parties (candidate buying, canvassing networks), on election issues, the campaign, and the problems Poll Watch faced in its attempts to suppress vote-buying. Election results (with two helpful tables also detailing the regional affiliation of parties) and Banharn Silapa-aracha’s formation of a new government are described next: “horror” greeted the new cabinet. The author likens this cabinet to Chartchai Chonhavan’s government (also regarding the personnel involved), comparing both negatively with the governments of Anan Panyarachun and Chuan that are seen as having been more professional, transparent, and less prone to corruption. Murray emphasizes the dangers stemming from the “yawning gap” between politically modernized urban people and traditionally-minded rural dwellers with the latter nevertheless determining the country’s government via rural-based old-style political parties. That Newin Chidchob is repeatedly called a “godfather” obscures the meaning of this term. That political parties “for the first time in history” presented policy platforms does not seems to be correct. And to attribute rural people’s lack of interest in national-level politics to their “struggle [. ] for daily survival” contradicts economic reality and therefore cannot be a valid causal hypothesis for explaining political behavior and, more specifically, voting behavior.


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• “National Economic and Social Development Act, B.E. 2521 (1978).” Go to the web site of the Office of the Council of State: http://www.krisdika.go.th/


A broad description of Thai political development from a monarchy through an authoritarian “bureaucratic polity” to a semidemocratic “bourgeois polity” is offered. The body of the article deals with the time from about 1960 to present, particularly 1992-1996. Prospects for further democratization are seen in the “routinization” of democratic procedures, regular elections without interference by the military, an open press, a growing economy and middle class, and the lack of international conflicts as well as internal ethnic strife. Problems arise from the buying of candidates and voters, corruption, the prevalence of patron-client relationships, the weak party system (Do voters really succumb to vote-buying because parties are weak or is it not rather that parties are weak partly because of the complex of problems leading to the use of *hua khanaen* and vote-buying?), and the king’s age and health. Readers are left puzzled by some statements such as that the government bureaucracy has only recently started to “penetrate rural areas”, that *chao pho* “have gained control over much of the economic and political life of the nation”, and that rural people “see patronage politics as the quintessential democratic way” which even in this odd formulation does not seem to fit well with the author’s less than realistic view that voters in general are politicized to a high degree and that Thai parliamentary elections are “meaningful” because voters chose between “divergent ideas and candidates”.


The concept of ‘politics’, which originally refers to processes that lead to collectively binding decisions, is enlarged to an extent that makes it indistinguishable from the concepts of ‘action’ or ‘interaction’. ‘Political interaction’, ‘interaction’, ‘politics’, ‘interpersonal ties’, ‘personal exchange’, ‘sociopolitical behavior’, and ‘patron-client relations’ all seem to carry the same meaning.


• An easy-to-read, superficial and sparcely sourced overview to check whether Thailand meets the authors’ criteria for democracy (citizen participation, electoral competition, civil liberties). Thailand’s “prospects for democracy” are also considered. Again, there are puzzling statements such as, “Municipal councilors are elected by the people within the district, but they must answer to Bangkok.” (what is
this supposed to mean?) or, “Votes are traditionally bought and sold in Thailand.” (a daring reduction of history and complex social processes, even excluding any mention of hua khanaen in this context), or “The upper house has veto power over legislation.” (the senate can only slow down the process of approval). And how can one bring together the statement that “legislators lose interest in their constituencies until the next election” with maintaining that, “Most candidates live in their constituencies, so voters know who has brought home the pork in the past.”?


This work is supposed to be a contribution to efforts to develop an empirically based theory of the contemporary political system of Thailand. Deliberately turning against the major trend in writings about Thai politics, the starting thesis is that the ‘bureaucratic polity’ is still very much alive in the countryside. To put it another way, a case is made for the systematic inclusion of a center-periphery dimension (this goes beyond a simple geographical distinction) into theory building. In order to see what happens if one takes such a position, the author considers aspects of bureaucratic dominance, the provincial administrative organization, vote-buying and the use of influence in elections (including the role of rural voters, members of parliament, political parties, and canvassers), and the democracy propagation project of the then NPKC (1991). As a result, it seems that it does indeed make sense to pay careful attention to empirical processes before embarking on developing a new theory or even before rejecting an old label (and often, both the reception of theories and attempts at theorizing remain stuck at this level) in favor of introducing a new one. My supervisors felt that there should have been some more actors in my book, either in the form of a systematic actor-orientation or in the form of power relationships. Michael Connors would probably add to this that a systematic orientation towards classes (in the Marxist sense) was missing as well.


The events of May 1992 are recalled by reviewing three books, namely Murray (1996), Callahan (1998), and Khien (1997). This bibliography’s annotations to those books are based on this article.


An overview is given of the Thai system of regional and local government. This is followed by descriptions of the limited importance local government reform was accorded in the political reform process since 1994 and of the stipulations concerning local government in the constitution of 1997. This includes analytical remarks on individual paragraphs and the statement of the Council of State on the draft decentralization law. This is followed by short descriptions of laws on local government made necessary by the constitution. Finally, the Thai local government reform is put into a comparative perspective by referring to the France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.


This article’s content follows a template provided by the editors: historical overview, evolution of electoral provisions, current electoral provisions, electoral system, organizational context of elections, commentary on the electoral statistics, tables (pp. 277-309), list of power holders 1932-2001, bibliography (315-320). Readers may wonder whether Phibun’s second time as prime minister started on 4 April 1948 (p. 262) or on 8 April 1948 (p. 311). It was on 8 April 1948.


First, an overview is provided of the administrative context of decentralization, historical and conceptual issues, and the legal framework (including the Constitution, the Decentralization Act, the decentralization plan, and the implementation plan). Secondly, the chapter addresses the field of education and shows that decentralization in this case is made difficult by the existence of competing legislation (Decentralization Act versus the National Education Act) and competing intentions (between the decentralization committee and the education reform committee). Third, the chapter asks whether the Thaksin government is a threat to decentralization. This question cannot be answered easily because this government’s policies have been ad hoc, changing, unclear, and fragmented (since there are different groups of people involved in this area). Finally, it is stressed that decentralization is complete only when complemented by democratization. Under the prevailing political conditions in rural Thailand—the lack of viable public spheres, poorly developed means of political communication, and the dominance of local politics by exclusive cliques—the goals of decentralization, i.e. an improvement in services delivered to local citizens, better attention paid to local problems, and increased public participation in local policy-making, may not be achieved.


The chapter analyses Thaksin’s election strategy and describes the amendments to the election law made as a result of the Senate elections. Since the local socio-political conditions of national-level elections are not well-documented in the literature, the provincial election structure is outlined and illustrated with a description of the situation in Chachoengsao province. One of the most interesting innovations of the new election procedure was that vote-counting was moved from the polling stations to a central counting station in the constituency. The formal structure of these stations is described, and observations from constituency two in
Chachoengsao province are related. This chapter closes with the run-up to the Constitutional Court ruling about Thaksin, the ruling itself, and its aftermath, including how government work developed until the end of November 2001. The appendix to this article contains data on the new set of election commissioners, election statistics, and a list of members of the Thaksin Cabinet.


Thailand’s New Politics: KPI Yearbook 2001 looks at aspects of what has been called “political reform.” Especially since the “People’s Constitution” was passed in October 1997, it was assumed that Thailand was on its way to a more consolidated democracy. The authors in this volume contribute to forming a more realistic understanding of the issues involved. James R. Klein analyzes the evolution of Thailand’s National Human Rights Commission between 1992 and 2001; Norbert Eschborn describes what the Konrad Adenauer Foundation contributes to Thai democracy; Philip S. Robertson, Jr. highlights the democratic role of Thai labor; Allen D. Hicken explains why Thailand has so many political parties; Marco Bünte introduces a model of democratic consolidation and applies it to the Thai situation; finally, Michael H. Nelson deals with the decentralization process and takes a close look at the election of 6 January 2001 and its aftermath. This first KPI Yearbook opens with Nobel Laureate in economics, Amartya Sen, presenting his thoughts on “The Market, Democracy, and Development.” It is rounded off by documents on “good governance” and by reviews of publications about Pridi Banomyong, business and politics in provincial Thailand, and Bloody May 1992. (blurb; see also the entries concerning the individual authors)


“Newspaper Cuttings of Their Majesties The King and Queen of Siam’s Visit to Japan, April. 1931 (2474).” Letter File TKK No. 30. This file contains 55 pages.) of pasted newspaper clippings.) from Japanese English-language newspapers.


This article is about the changing leadership style of Prime Ministers from 1932-1995 (they are listed in a useful table). Ockey uses Mulder’s distinction between khunna (moral goodness), supplemented by phudi (good person), and decha (power), supplemented by nakleng (tough guy). He hypothesizes a shift in what people consider good and exemplary from the decha/nakleng-type leader to the one who has khunna and is a phudi. This shift is said to be stronger in Bangkok than in the provinces where new-type naklengs (Banharn) need to complement decha with generosity to gain approval. The amount of what appears to be speculative culturalist interpretation makes reading this article hard work, and one may overlook elements that are well worth to be considered more substantially. A statement on the respective influence of political structure, political culture (the author’s core concept), and personality on leadership selection would have been helpful.

Numerous patron-client references are made without exploring the vital importance of cliques (phak phuak), although “factional strife”, “loyalty to his (the nakleng’s) own group”, and “factions” are mentioned once each in passing. And that nakleng-type politicians face problems maintaining their power may be less attributable to a decline of patron-client networks as such and more to a change in political structure (increased functional differentiation, perhaps: the author mentions professionalism) that implies a different mechanism of leadership selection making such people increasingly obsolete. Finally, to portrait Chartchai Choonhavan as a morally good person loved by the people (presumably because he does not fit into the two categories easily but is certainly not a nakleng in the author’s sense) who was nastely ousted by a military deprived of spoils interprets reality a little too liberally (this view is toned down later in the article, though).
It is quite surprising to come across a political scientist writing a naïve sentence such as the first of this article, “In 1932, Thailand chose to follow the democratic path, and while there have been many detours and obstructions along the way, the crafting of a Thai democracy has remained the ultimate goal.”

The author’s central assumption is that there has been a change in the “power relationships between officials and local politicians” to the advantage of the latter. He illustrates this with a case that occurred in 1989 when a group of kamnan was suspended by the provincial governor of Phichit province. They launched, in cooperation with the MPs from their constituency, a campaign to have the governor transferred and were successful when he resigned from office and moved back to Bangkok after they had been reinstated.

The section on chao pho and later references to them suffer from an insufficiently precise definition of what kind of people the author is referring to. Ockey says that they share characteristics with nak leng (without being nak leng) and obtained their income mainly by criminal activities or corruption (gambling dens, prostitution, underground lotteries, smuggling, etc.). It also seems that great wealth is a defining characteristic. Later in the text, terms such as “local influential figures” and “local notables” seem to refer to chao pho with a smaller amount of wealth and power, and the kamnan mentioned above are put close to the famous chao pho Sia Leng from Khon Kaen province (“the most powerful chao pho control MPs; The kamnan of Phichit, as well as Sia Leng and others, are now in a position of equality to, and even dominance over, government officials.”). Readers get the impression that provincial Thailand is populated by a large number of chao pho “many” of whom play important roles in local politics; “chao pho have become the key to [election] victory in many provinces.”
The last quote points to a rather annoying feature Ockey’s contribution shares with McVey’s first chapter, i.e. his empirical statements about socio-political life throughout provincial Thailand are normally made without providing substantiation (he does not claim to have conducted extensive and detailed field research in a number of provinces, nor does he list a large number of case studies by other researchers, nor does he claim to have solid background knowledge gained by long-term observation of Thai politics).

In the section on “Democracy and Vote-Buying” the term hua khanaen (vote canvassers) is not restricted to various kinds of local leaders who use their politically non-specific, pre-existing relationships to a limited number of villagers (family members, friends, employees, religious disciples, debtors, parents) in order to solicit their votes for a particular candidate. Rather, Ockey without actually analyzing the socio-political structure in at least one province or providing the reader with a generalized model of provincial politics extends the term’s usual meaning to include “provincial-level” and even “regional-level” hua khanaen. These structures are said to “exist only during elections”, and “they can be organized and mobilized quite rapidly”. In this context, it would perhaps have been advantageous if Ockey had introduced the concept of phuak (clique; see my chapter on the election of Jan 6 in this volume). This would have enabled him to distinguish between informal but enduring (though probably unstable) political relationships in a province (perhaps often covering only parts of it, i.e. constituencies) and temporary hua khanaen employed only during election times. Many local leaders such as kamnan, phu yai ban, members of TAOs, members of the provincial council and of municipal councils belong to these phuak and act as hua khanaen during elections. Moreover, a more concrete empirical analysis (and the inclusion of the relevant Thai-language literature) may have prevented sentences such as: “Current campaign methods ensure that the most valuable hua khanaen are those involved in crime and corruption.”

As for a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the alleged change in power relationships between the bureaucracy and locally-determined office-holders, it would have been good if the long-standing and every-day structural relationship between the two sides at the district-level would have been considered. Since the state’s formal apparatus ends at the district-level, control functions, administrative tasks, and policy implementation have long heavily depended on the willingness of locally elected leaders kamnan and phu yai ban to cooperate with the chief district officer (nai amphoe) and the section chiefs (huana suan ratchakan) in the district administration. At the beginning of each month, the local functionaries will turn up for a meeting with the district bureaucrats in every district country-wide to receive information, hear pleas for action, voice complains, etc. One might assume that local leaders occupy the role of administrative “gatekeepers” (Powell) or “middlemen” (see e.g. R. A. Hall’s article on “Middlemen in the politics of rural Thailand: a study of articulation and cleavage” that appeared in 1980) and that this situation has provided them with power vis-à-vis the district-level officials.
A final question: Just how many chao pho are there in provincial Thailand? Although it is suggested that they are very numerous, important, and influential, only a few names pop up regularly, e.g. Sia Leng, Sia Huat, Kamnan Pho. Based on Ockey (or Pasuk and Baker, or Sombat), I would expect to come across many chao pho in Chachoengsao province. However, all I have been able to come up with are (some of the following categories of people overlap) a few nak leng-style politicians, a few Sia, many businessmen-cum-politicians, a few criminals, and many “local notables” (this may be the translation closest to the traditional definition of chao pho as people who are important or have influence “whatever its source may be” in a locality). I did not, however, meet a single chao pho (assuming that the traditional meaning has, over the past years, clearly been replaced by a meaning that refers to business-minded gangsters or people whose most characteristic economic activities are illegal and who have acquired great wealth by these activities). Are all the chao pho in Chachoengsao (and elsewhere) in hiding? Or is the actual problem one of conceptual imprecision, quantitative exaggeration, empirical and analytical insufficiency, and a romantic academic fascination with supposedly non-domesticated social actors?


The incorrect introductory sentence of this article does not increase curiosity (my italics): “In May of 1992, demonstrators succeeded in overthrowing the military government of General Suchinda Kraprayun and restoring democracy.”


• “Organic Act on Counter Corruption, B.E. 2542 (1999).” See the website of the National Counter Corruption Commission.


The first paragraph of the chapter “On the Government of the Thai” reads: “The government of Siam is despotic in the full significance of the term. The King is feared and respected almost like a God. Nobody dares look him in the face. When the courtiers attend audiences they remain prostrated on their knees and elbows. When His Majesty passes somewhere, everybody throws himself to the ground and those who would not do this surely risk to have their eyes punctured by the archers who precede and who launch quite skillfully earthen balls with the bow they always hold ready flexed.”


The author was an advisor in security affairs to Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1999-2001). He teaches at the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.


This booklet presents one- to two-page summaries of 15 Thai constitutions. There are also tables giving basic data on those constitutions, listing the prime ministers, and listing the parliaments. No sources are given although this booklet is by no means the first book providing those data. Also missing is any analytical and interpretative attempt to place the constitutions in their proper context of political development. Finally, it does not seem to make much sense publishing a booklet long after the 16th constitution has been promulgated in a long process of political reform without substantially referring to it (there is, though, a lame excuse for this omission in the introduction).


Pasuk and her British husband have produced a useful introductory overview of Thai economic and political development. It is based on a lot of secondary sources combined with the authors’ own moderately critical perspective. The Thai title reads, ‘Thai Political Economy of the Bangkok Period.’ Since the book is very much a summary of secondary sources, readers will have to consult these sources when they want to quote a statement from the text. Unfortunately, they are inconvenienced by the authors who provide sources, except for direct quotes, only as a summary list at the end of chapters. Readers who have a sufficient knowledge of the Thai language can turn to the Thai translation because it follows standard academic procedure and attributes sources directly.


Chapters 9 (Opening Up Politics, pp. 216-243) and 10 (Wrestling with Democracy, pp. 244-280) provide well-written, essentially journalistic, accounts of Thai politics that may leave some readers wondering about ‘amazing (politics in) Thailand’. Yet, the punchy cynicism is neutralized, on the concluding pages, by a happy end: old-style politicians are being replaced by well-educated young bloods, parliament has improved its work, the military has no obvious inclination to return to political meddling, and the press as well as the public at large seem to be more assertive. And the constitution of 1997 has given people “another moment of hope”.


Chapters 5 (‘Reform, Governance, Scandal’, 6 (‘Old Politics, New Politics’), 7 (‘Selling the Nation, Saving the Elephant’), and 8 (‘Walking Backwards into a Khlong: Thinking Social Alternatives’) are, more or less, about politics. This book is one more addition to the list of advanced journalistic attempts to enlighten non-specialist, but academically well-educated readers about what has gone wrong with Thailand’s economy, politics, and society (see also .
Pasuk and Baker assume that “in bringing about the “succession to military rule” there have been “three major players”, namely big businessmen in Bangkok (chao sua), provincial businessmen (chao pho), and the peasantry (chao thi).

Apparently, the middle class is not seen as a “major player” in contemporary Thai politics, a view which may come as a surprise to all those who think that the middle class has been the “decisive force” (Surin Maisrikrod) in Thai democratization. The authors present us with a broad-brush picture of how the classes of big businessmen in Bangkok (with particular regard to their relationship with the military) and peasants have developed over the past decades. Because of the description’s degree of generality we do not need to concern ourselves with these sections in this review but, instead, refer readers to Pasuk and Baker’s book-length treatment *Thailand: Economy and Politics*.

It is not clear to me whether the authors really think that provincial businessmen and chao pho belong into the same category. They start with saying that provincial businessmen are one of the major players in Thai politics. In the respective section of the article, the rise of provincial businessmen is briefly described before it is said that there are also “various types of illegal enterprise”, but that “probably only a minority of the provincial businessmen indulged” in them. This minority or rather its richest, most influential, and politically visible members (that is, most probably a tiny number of people that can only be found in a comparatively small number of provinces) seem what the authors refer to as chao pho. The remainder of this section, then, exclusively deals with these people. As a consequence, readers with an interest in understanding ordinary socio-political-economic structures and processes in the overwhelming majority of Thai provinces or in the role of ordinary provincial businessmen, for that matter will not find this section very helpful. Rather, they may wonder about the authors’ concepts, priorities, and data. With their starting point, Pasuk and Baker’s brief attempt to shed some light on the relationship between national-level and provincial businessmen cannot but fail. When they state that there is an “important tension amongst [these two groups of] businessmen”, what they actually seem to write about is a tension amongst representatives of national-level big business and a few business-oriented provincial gangsters who also play a role in politics. Finally, the ordinary socio-political structures (including elections) in which the peasantry plays its part can also not be dealt with by using the authors’ perspective on the extraordinary existence of chao pho.


The promise of the sub-title, i.e. that the authors would embark on a systematic examination of the relationship between the illegal economy and public policy, is not kept. Only scarce references are made to policy as well as to politics. The book mainly consists of descriptions of various fields of illegal economic activities. As such it is certainly useful.


Asian Scholarship, ed. by Joseph Fischer, pp. xxx-xxx. Berkeley: University of California Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, xxxx.)


• Pornchai Luernshavee. 1984. “L’armée thâ¨e et son rÃ´le dans la vie politique de la ThaÃ¨lande.” Doctorat d’Université Ã´s sciences politiques, Toulouse I.


• Pracherd Aksorluksna, Luang. 1933. “La Constitution Siamoise de 1932.” These Pour le Doctorat, Univ. de Paris.


• Prakob Chirakiti. 2001. “Developing Democratic Institutions and Processes in Thailand.” In Democratic Transitions in Asia, ed. by Uwe Johannen and James Gomez,

Contributions listed here only serve as examples. The author was, until he retired in 2002, with the Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg, Germany (the journal Südostasien Aktuell is edited at this institute). He has been an observer of Thai politics for more than twenty years, though mainly by relying on reading Bangkok Post and The Nation.


Pridi (1900-1983) was the civilian brain of the ‘People’s Party’ that overthrew the absolute monarchy in 1932. On the occasion of his centennial anniversary, Pridi was honored by a large number of articles in newspapers and activities as well as by the publication of some books. Baker and Pasuk’s collection is one of those. It contains the following 19 pieces.

- The Banomyong Family
- The Royal Grant of the Surname Na Pombejra
- Excerpts from:
  - Some Experiences and Opinions of Senior Statesman Pridi Banomyong
    (1981)
- Excerpts from:
  - Concise Autobiography of Nai Pridi Banomyong
    (1983)
- Commentary on Administrative Law (1932)
- Lectures on Administrative Law (1931)
- Announcement of the People’s Party No. 1 (1932)
- Provisional Constitution of the Kingdom of Siam, 1932
- Letter from Pridi to Phoonsuk, 3 July 1932
- Outline Economic Plan (1933)
- Some Aspects of the Establishment of the People’s Party and Democracy (1972)
- Excerpt from:
  - Concise Autobiography of Nai Pridi Banomyong
    (1983)
- Speeches (1934-36)
- Establishment of the Anti-Japan Resistance movement and Seri Thai (1981)
- What Happened inside the Recency Council (1972)
- Speech of Nai Pridi Banomyong (1946)
- Uphold the Aim for Full Democracy of the Heroes of 14 October (1973)
- Excerpts from:
  - My Chequered Life and My Twenty-One Years of Exile in People’s China
    (1972)
Similar to Sulak (*Powers That Be*, 1999; another book on the same occasion) Baker and Pasuk critically refer to “a fundamental rewriting of Thailand’s history of constitutions and parliaments. The role of Pridi and the People’s Party was carefully painted out. In one of the new versions, King Prajadhipok had been on the point of granting a constitution in 1932, but the People’s Party had sprung the coup to preempt him and claim the credit… In another version, the events of June 1932 were simply forgotten: the king alone granted the constitution and was the sole progenitor of Thailand’s parliamentary tradition. Pridi and the People’s Party simply did not figure. In 1980, the erection of King Prajadhipok’s statue outside the new parliament building put this history in solid form. The establishment of the King Prajadhipok Institute (dedicated to political education) in 1994 gave further confirmation” (p. xix).

- Prime Minister’s Secretariat. 1994. *Two Years of a Democratic Government*. Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister. (xxxxchecken)
- The oppositional forces described include the Communist Party of Thailand, the workers, the student movement as well as the Parliament.


This book, which is useful as a rough overview of events, covers Thai political development until 1986; the rather limited number of sources used also does not go beyond 1986. However, a 12-pages postscript provides some information on the time between 1986 to 1992.


This annual report starts with a long description of the encampment of the Forum of the Poor outside Government House from 24 Jan. to 2 May 1997 (the source for this description referred to in fn. 1 has meanwhile appeared as a book, see ประภาส 2541). Its second part deals with political reform, the constitution-drafting process, and it also provides a useful summary of the major reformist changes compared to previous constitutions. Finally, the author gives an account of the Chavalit-government, its problems in solving the financial crisis, of calls for establishing some form of national government, the passing of the new constitution in October 1997, and of Chuan’s taking over of the government. As regards the section on the new constitution one would perhaps have expected a less image-oriented picture and a
few remarks on problems encountered during the process. For example, first, one may call into question meaning and purpose of the label “people’s constitution” considering that seemingly very few people were substantially involved in determining the document’s actual content. Second, it seems that there was a rift between the usually very self-confident Bangkok-based academics in the CDA and their somewhat less sophisticated fellows from the provinces. Did this make any difference to the proceedings, to the interactions, and to the final outcome? Third, what was the extent of the people’s actual participation in the drafting process compared with the impressive (though unsourced) figures presented by the author? He makes them the basis for stating, “Clearly, an unprecedented level of opinion-airing and brainstorming went on and aided popular identification with the ensuing document.” (p. 273) This view is in stark contrast with the difficulties any researcher will probably encounter should he or she try to find people outside of (and perhaps even in) Bangkok who identify with the constitution, not to speak of this being ‘aided’ by those people’s participation in public hearings, etc. One may say, however, that the prolonged drafting process strengthened the identity of those members of the politically interested elite and the population in general (both in Bangkok and in the provinces) that support a democratic political order. Moreover, the comparatively intense and continued political communication during that period probably broadened their ranks. The reference to a ‘people’s constitution’ thus is not so much an empirical description of the drafting process (although the number and quality of people involved compared to earlier processes leading to new constitutions clearly was incomparably higher as people previously were completely shut out of those processes) but rather signals the degree of illegitimacy and potential mobilization efforts those forces, both in party politics and in the military, will have to expect that may want to substantially change or abolish this constitution. In this sense, we can speak of a gain in democratic consolidation.

Foundation; Suksit Siam. (Fifth edition Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation, 2000, pp. 83-97.)


Political development is said to pass through four steps: (1) authoritarianism, (2) transition to democracy, (3) consolidation of democracy, and (4) democracy. Quigley wants to examine whether democracy groups (which form part of civil society groups the number of which has dramatically increased during the past 20 years) help consolidate democracy, how, and to what effect. It is assumed that they provide non-elite leadership opportunities, create new political actors, and enable more previously excluded people to take part in the policy-making process. Particular problems of these groups are that they aim for “sweeping systemic change”, that their source of influence is the mass appeal their issue has, and that they are often integrated by “a charismatic of influential person who monopolizes decisionmaking.” Groups portrayed are the Confederation for Democracy, the Thongbai Thongpao Foundation, and Friends of Women. The empirical basis (1994), the author admits, is “somewhat sketchy”, and so his interpretations cannot avoid to at times seem less than well-founded. There should be a clear conceptual distinction between the actions of individuals, informal personal networks, and groups or organizations. It is said that democracy groups have influence because the government fears they would mobilize the masses if attention is not paid to their demands. This does not seem to be too realistic and based on the assumption that it was the CFD that received support in the May 1992 mass demonstrations when, in fact, it was the call for democracy (anti Suchinda, to be more precise) that the demonstrations were based on (however catalyzed by Chamlong’ hunger strike, or however organizationally supported and steered by the CFD). Regarding the TTF one might ask whether they mainly support the inclusion of people into the formal legal system (juridification) or the inclusion into the political system (democratization).

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*Savitri Suwansathit of the Ministry of Education reports on “The Thai Experience”* (pp. 73-76) and on “Human Rights Education in Thailand: Government’s Initiatives” (pp. 76-80). There is also a section on “Thailand: Proposed Points of Consideration for the Draft National Action Plan for Human Rights Education” (pp. 118-124).


Besides other things, this booklet contains comments by Thirayudh Boonmee (“People’s Politics in Thailand: Visions and Realities”), Sulak Sivaraksa (“Commonalities of Green and Buddhist Philosophy as Basic Guidance for Good Governance and Sustainable Politics”), Chatchawan Thongdeelert (“Green Movement or Green Party: Different Strategies to Promote the Green Agenda in Thailand), and a workshop report on Green politics in Thailand.


This is a book about Jit Poumisak. In its first section, a short biography is given. The second section comprises the author’s translation of “The Real Face of Thai Saktina Today” by Somsamai Srisudravarna, Jit’s pseudonym used for this work. The third section deals with “Feudalism in the Thai Past”. At the end, there is a bibliography of Jit’s publications. Regarding the original Thai version of “The Real Face…”, a photographic reproduction of the first printing that appeared in Nitisat, Vol. 7 (4), 1957, 356-491, was published on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of October 6 in 1996. (original paging)


Rural network politicians are defined as MPs whose influence in their constituencies derives from the distribution of money and patronage. The author describes their rise and relates it to the political parties’ lack of institutionalization, to the malfunctioning of the bureaucracy, the increased monetization and materialism in rural areas and to coercion as well as to cultural factors (*karma*, conflict avoidance, hierarchy). Instead of distinguishing between influence and its various sources, the author presses them together in a narrow patron-client approach. “Patron-client networks”, “webs of relationships”, and “local networks of influence” then all seem to denote the same thing. It is therefore not surprising that the vital importance of *phak phuak* (the local clique a politician belongs to) is completely overlooked. The author seems to suggest that government agencies in the provinces do not provide any services which makes local people “dependent” on their MPs and on *chao phos* (the decline in kinship support and the increase in perceived needs being contributing factors) -- a grossly distorted picture of reality. And it is odd to place MPs and *chao pho* qualitatively at the same level. Finally, it is difficult to follow the author’s description since most generalizations, interpretations, and historical information are given without substantiation or reference to the relevant literature.

With all the talk about the role of the middle class, of civil society, or the “people’s sector” in democratizing Thailand’s polity, the role of Thai labor is in danger of being overlooked. It is therefore good that Philip S. Robertson Jr. reminds us of the importance of Thai labor. His contribution is based on his experience as the country representative of the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS).

Robertson places the labor movement into the context of restrictive laws (Labor Relations Act, State Enterprise Labor Relations Act), and he describes labor’s role in passing the 1997 Constitution and making use of it. Of particular interest in terms of labor’s role in policy-making is the section that deals in detail with the failure to establish the Institute for Occupational Safety, Health and Environment by using the Constitution’s Section 170 (50,000 people can sign a petition proposing a draft law to Parliament). Another instructive case study concerns labor’s attempts to push the ECT to solve the long-standing problem of disenfranchisement of migrant workers. This is not only relevant because the Constitution makes voting compulsory but also because the core mechanisms of democratic responsiveness and accountability are eliminated when workers (or any other sizable group of voters) are denied the opportunity to vote for candidates standing in the constituency where they actually live.

How environmental problems are perceived in and dealt with by the political system, both at the national and local (BMA) levels including their interplay, and its environment is a prominent and an important subject of policy analytical efforts. Regrettably, this piece is rather superficial.


• Rubin, Herbert J. 1974. The Dynamics of Development in Rural Thailand. [DeKalb]: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University.


The author wants to give a review of research about regime change in Asia (Pakistan, Nepal, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, etc.). Theories and approaches considered include the theory of social change, cultural sociology, institutional theory, and political economy. It is perhaps the imbalance between the number of countries and approaches on the one hand and the number of pages (22) on the other that led to some debatable statements on Thailand. These include that the coup of 1991 is seen as directed against business circles, that the elections of 1975 and 1992 are interpreted as preliminary conclusions of the process of regime change, and that voting behavior is stripped of its vital social-relations dimension (hua khanaen) as well as of the key center-periphery difference (later in the text, however, there is an unspecified remark regarding the difference of regime change at the national and the local level). Campaigning and voting is reduced to vote-buying which the author then ‘explains’ by reference to a “‘mercantilistic’ understanding of politics”.

Using the book for getting information on Thai politics is made difficult by the author’s decision not to provide a frame of reference followed by country studies (for such an approach see Neher/Marlay 1995. Democracy and Development in Southeast Asia.) but to structure the book systematically. Consequently, readers will have to look through its numerous sections (on constitutions, the military, civil society, political parties, media, etc.) and search for those paragraphs dealing with Thailand or any other country they are particularly interested in.


• Ruschenberger, W. S. W. 1838. A Voyage Round the World; Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam, in 1835, 1836, and 1837. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard. 559 pp. (Exchange of ratified treaties between the United States and Siam in 1837.)


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“Sapha Tambon # 222.” Tambon and village administration under Local Administration Act No. 2 [1956] (the citation is lost; the source is Appendix K of a publication which is available at the Thailand Information Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok)

“Sapha Tambon # 275.” Order of Ministry of Interior [1966] (the citation is lost; the source is Appendix L of a publication which is available at the Thailand Information Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok)


• *Siam in 1930: General and Medical Features*. Executive Committee of the Eight Congress of the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine. Bangkok: White Lotus. (Originally published in November 1930 and printed by the Bangkok Times Press, Ltd.) 332 pp. (Chapter 1 is about “Government and Administration”, Chapter 2 on “History in Brief.”)


• Section II. (pp. 225-308) covers various aspects of Thai politics; they include the governmental system, political dynamics, foreign relations, public information, and political values and attitudes.
• Smith, R. B. 1966. *Siam, or the History of the Thais From the Earliest Times to 1569 A. D. Bethesda, Maryland: Decatur Press.*
• Smith, R. B. 1967. *Siam, or the History of the Thais From 1569 A. D. to 1824 A. D.*, Bethesda, Maryland: Decatur Press.
• Sombat Chantornvong 1984*Political Science in Thailand:Agenda for the Future.”
Sombat Chantornvong distinguishes between the nak kleng (daring and courageous, limited in their influence to small localities, no influence over civil servants, no economic power) and chao pho (considerable illegal activities, great economic wealth, patron of bureaucrats, political role, wider geographical area of influence). Sombat refers to a statistic prepared by the Research and Development Division of the Police Department, that lists 97 chao pho in coastal/border provinces and 71 in the rest of the country. Interestingly, only 25 provinces are said to be “invested with criminal chao pho”. Does this mean that there is not a single chao pho in the remaining 50 provinces? It would be good to know whether the police department’s definition is congruent with Sombat’s category; they may have put all the more important gangsters on that list without bothering about the social scientist’s need for conceptual precision. Conceptual problems also arise from the author’s own tendency to talk about chao pho in the context of “business people as a class” or “entrepreneurial class”, although he also refers to “underworld activities” as a defining characteristic. Moreover, at the beginning of the chapter, chao pho seem to be identified with the category of “local or provincial notables”. One may thus ask just who the chao pho really are, and what social and political roles they play in ordinary provinces (i.e. except the few provinces where the well-known chao pho Sombat mentions are active, but which cannot be taken to represent the average Thai province).


• Srikasibhanda, Sern. 1940. *Le Pouvoir royal en Thailande*. Caen: Ozanne. 143 pp. (Org. a doctoral dissertation in law submitted to the University of Caen.)

• Srisaka Vallibhotama. 1986. “Political and Cultural Continuities at Dvaravati Sites.” In *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, ed. by David G. Marr and A. C. Milner, pp. 229-238. Singapore: ISEAS; Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.


Subhasvasti Wongsanit Svasti

This book has been issued by the family of “His Serene Highness Prince SuphaSawat Wonsanit Sawsadi-wattana, son of HRH Krom Phra Sawat Sawsadi-wattana” (*Bangkok Post Sunday Supplement*, January 31, 1965; p. 577) to celebrate his
centennial anniversary. It reprints a number of English-language documents. The perhaps most interesting are the following.

- The Development of Siamese Politics [written for the British Ministry of Information at the end of 1941 or January 1942], pp. 69-123;
- Appreciation of Situation in Siam [written for Special Operations Executive in May 1943], pp. 125-222;
- Free Siamese Movement in Siam [Memorandum on a visit to Balankura by B/B 299; 1943], pp. 268-278;


The book covers the connection between economic development and democratization, events during the democratic period of 1973-76, the decline of the military, and the advent of both new power élites and civil society. The author also describes the weak party system and considers the prospects for establishing a sustainable democracy. In presenting this short overview of the country’s recent political development, Suchit largely draws on his experience. However, the usefulness of this publication could have been substantially enhanced had the author taken into account the main literature on Thai politics (both in English and in Thai).


Some information on electoral history and on problems of the electoral process, which are probably useful to newcomers to the field of Thai politics, are provided. It is attempted to answer the questions of how elections relate to elite circulation, whether their outcome represents the people’s will, and how elections contribute to democratization.

Answers are made difficult because, first, Suchit chooses to ignore the relevant literature (both Thai and English) and instead relies on the informal Thai discourse on politics as well as on two of his older works (co-authored by Phornsak Phongphaew) that appeared, in Thai, in 1979 and 1984. Second, the lack of a theoretically guided analysis leads to a rather unsystematic treatment of voting behavior, even putting observations that belong closely together into two separate and unconnected sections (mobilization, including vote-buying, and differences between urban and rural voters). The importance of personal relations, vote canvassers, patronage, and vote-buying (all four of them stand unconnected as well) for mobilizing rural voters is said to be due, among other things, to (a) the villagers’ poverty, lack of education, and lack of awareness in the political consequences of their actions, (b) to their lack of knowledge regarding the candidates’ policies, (c) to the fact that villagers were not interested in their representatives’ national-level role but emphasized their function of providing local benefits, and (d) the irrelevance of political parties in rural areas. It is further stated that a high turnout does not indicate a high degree of political awareness, and that candidates could change political parties and still get elected.

All this is merely listed without the author trying to put it into some analytical-theoretical order or, at least, evaluating the validity and weighing the relative importance of what one may initially see as independent factors or phenomena. What remains, then, is a moralizing rather than a theorizing stance, saying that, “elections continue to be manipulated by (. ) political bosses” (p. 200), thereby bringing rural influential people to power against the more politically sophisticated choices of urban voters. Suchit’s proposals to solve the problems repeat widespread opinions in the Thai discourse, that is setting up an independent election commission and encouraging the political parties to strengthen their rural presence. These remarks can be found in the last section which tries to answer the question of how elections contribute to further democratization. However, this question remains unanswered, not the least because there is no model of democratization in this article. See also the contributions of Anderson and Anek in the same volume.

It is highlighted that Bangkok has no single authority responsible for integrated policy-making and implementation. Instead, Bangkok’s administration is highly fragmented amongst the central government (the cabinet as well as various ministries), a number of state enterprises, and a largely irrelevant local government called Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Further centralization in the form of a central ministry responsible for Bangkok is dismissed as an inappropriate solution. Proponents of decentralization are said to act against ‘political realities that must be treated as parametric constraints.’ Neither an authoritarian nor an elected government would ever allow Bangkok to be governed by a directly elected governor and an assembly. Insistence on such demands ‘is assured of almost certain failure from the very beginning.’ That such strong predictions are not without risk was shown when, in the very year that this article was published (it was originally given as a paper in November 1982), the governor was, indeed, directly elected. And the year this abstract was written (1998) has seen one of the most lively and interesting elections to the BMA-assembly as well as to the district assemblies. The author’s own preference was for a further, committee-based sectoral fragmentation. Her proposal did neither provide for an integrating or coordinating body nor for a solution of the interrelated problems of political decision-making and democratic accountability.


This dissertation actually is not about decentralization but deals with a form of deconcentration instead, i.e. the preparation and the subsequent implementation of the provincial development plan. Only about 100 pages are about Thailand; the rest represents some sort of limited literature review, etc. Besides listing questionaires and in-depth interviews as tools of data-gathering, the author claims to have employed documentary analysis. But not one single Thai language source is given in the bibliography, neither from national-level agencies nor from those eight provinces selected for data-gathering. And the reason for not having incorporated a substantial period of observation for analyzing ‘planning’ and implementation processes remains unknown.


Sulak Sivaraksa. 1999. *Powers That Be: Pridi Banomyong Through the Rise and Fall of Thai Democracy*. Translated with introduction by S. J. Bangkok: Committees on the Project for the National Celebration on the Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong, Senior Statesman (private sector); distributed by Suksit Siam. 81 pp. (The original Thai version was published in 1983 [?].)

Pridi (1900-1983) was the civilian brain of the ‘People’s Party’ that overthrew the absolute monarchy in 1932. On the occasion of his centennial anniversary, Pridi was honored by a large number of articles in newspapers and activities as well as by the publication of some books. Sulak’s is one of those.

Sulak’s book is less directly about Pridi and more about the rise of a royal interpretation of Thai political history that discards the role of ordinary citizens and certainly of Pridi. Most importantly, it includes a strong mistrust towards anything democratic. Traumatic to Sulak, and to many other Thais of his generation, was the shooting dead of King Ananda. Pridi bore the brunt of the ruling circle’s attempt to find a scapegoat. In his slim book, Sulak describes how he was blinded by the hegemonic model of Thai history and how heâ€”“very slowly and over decadesâ€”moved to an enlightened understanding of things past. He writes, “Once I began to recognize the virtues of democracy, I slowly appreciated the ideas and contributions of Pridi. He was, and this point cannot be overemphasized, the first to sound the democratic bell in Siam. The first declaration Pridi delivered on 24 June
1932 in the name of the revolutionary People’s Party served as a wake-up call to the Thai masses, promising them a new, bright morning of liberty and justice” (p. 38).

The book also contains excerpts from the “First Declaration of the People’s Party” of 24 June 1932 (pp. 71-74) and a “Short Biography of Pridi Banomyong” (pp. 75-81).

- Sunait Chutintaranond. 1982. “Political Kinship Relations in Early Thai History.” Faculty of the Graduate School of Cornell University. v+141 pp.


• Sungsidh, on leave from the Faculty of Economics (where he used to be director of the Political Economy Studies Center), Chulalongkorn University, was called the “chief economic advisor” of Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasat (Democrat Party). “Dr Sangsidh said that the main advice he gives is to advocate economic self-sufficiency, a policy which, he says, is now quite widely accepted by officials.” He was also made, on the union’s invitation, board member of the Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA) (Bangkok Post, July 4, 1999, perspective). Sungsidh is now vice-chairman of the National Economic and Social Advisory Council.


The author’s English makes the book almost unreadable. Typical sentences are, “Thus, there was confusion in parliament for usurping all interests. These particularly concerned to money to barter for government support in the parliament. Money needed to pay these demands a reason that had the cabinet to corruption either from government budgeting or business involvement” (p. 144); “For the perfect function, the constitution has determined the extraordinary organisms of state different absolutely from the former constitution” (p. 171; the author here refers to independent organization such as the Election Commission of Thailand); “However, almost political parties were built after 1996 in order to serve emergent elections or reserve for another party to occupy if there was political variation” (p. 205). It goes without saying that the author ignores practically all academic literature that is concerned with Thai elections. The publication of this book was sponsored by Shinawatra Corporation.


Surin Maisrikrod. 1997. “The Making of Thai Democracy: A Study of Political Alliances Among the State, the Capitalists, and the Middle Class.” In Democratization in
Southeast and East Asia, ed. Anek Laothamatas, pp. 141-166. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books and Singapore: ISEAS. (For the USA and Canada, a hardcover edition is published by St. Martin’s Press, New York.)

Surin gives an account of political history from 1973 to 1992. He distinguishes four periods: 1973-76 (democratic breakthrough), 1977-79 (coping with communists and national reconciliation), 1980-88 (redemocratization), and 1988-1992 (collapse of democracy). Democracy here refers to the extent of access at the central level to political decision-making processes by groups other than the military, especially by the middle class, as well as to the role parliament and political parties are allowed to play. The middle class is seen as the “decisive force” in bringing about democratization. The author sets out to explain democratization and its reversals as the outcome of changing “alliances” between only three “key actors”, i.e. the state (What, or better who, actually is this?), the capitalists, and the middle class. But in the course of describing the political processes, he ad hoc adds a wide range of other supposedly independent “players”: the intellectuals, the intelligentsia, the progressives, the Left, labour, farmers, the military, the bureaucracy, politicians, NGOs, and technocrats. This suggests the need for the construction of a more complete model of social stratification (including relations between the strata). And one would have to consider using socio-occupational categories or concepts such as ‘strategic groups’ or ‘milieus’. A less highly selective use of the pertinent literature could have helped to improve quality and relevance of the article. Also, one would then feel less helpless with the author’s numerous unsubstantiated statements regarding, e.g., the motives for actions or the thinking of various groups (or whatever sociological attribute one may want to attach to whatever it is that acts collectively if it is not the individual).

In the frame of the Solid Waste Management Programme for Phitsanulok, an innovative concept for municipal waste handling has been developed in the last few years. This is based firstly on the involvement of the citizens in the handling of the waste on the level of their households or communities. Secondly, a strong collaboration exists with the private sector especially in the field of recyclable materials; other institutions (e.g. military bases) join in the programme. The administration itself is undergoing a change towards a service provider to the citizens. The project focuses on cooperation issues between the main stakeholders. However, technological aspects of introduction of environmentally sound technologies, viable and affordable in Thailand are also on the agenda. Selected examples of the current achievements are presented in the paper. (provisional abstract by the authors)


This book is the revised version of the dissertation “Thai Political Thinkers from 1932-1998” that was presented to the Nehru Institute of Social Sciences, Pune, India. The Thai political thinkers covered are Pridi Banomyong, Kukrit Pramoj, Chai-Anan Samudavanija, andâ€”perhaps a little surprisingâ€”Chuan Leekpai.


This booklet is divided into three parts, (1) Introduction (Origin and Nature of the Ceremony, Scene of the Ceremony, Paraphernalia of the Ceremony), (2) The Ceremony (Preliminary Rites, The Coronation, Protection of Buddhism, Assumption of the Residence, State Progresses in the City and on the River), and (3) Appendix containing the Brahmanic Mantras.

• “The Local Administration Act of R. S. 116.” Bangkok 1897. (xxxcheck)
This report is a real-life study of policy-making on the occasion of the Bank of Thailand’s fruitless attempt to defend the baht. To quote from the introduction: “The economic crisis which emerged in 1997 was one of the worst in the Thai economic history. But the causes this time were different as they came from withinâ€”in other words, we created the problems onto ourselves from the rapid increases in foreign borrowings in the two to three years prior to the crisis. Even if the authorities were able to foresee the crisisâ€”but they lack decisiveness in implementing preventive measures. Once the problems have arrived, they also lack the courage to use measures which may be politically unpopular to tackle them.”

The book contains chapters by Thanet Apornsuwon on the constitution, government, parliament, the judiciary, and political parties.


The book includes chapter by Suwimol Puengpraseet (Introduction), Dusdi Naiwattakul (The Monarchical Institution and the People), Prinya Chatnukrob (His Majesty the King and the Development of a Productive Environment), Niti Vatiwutipong (His Majesty the King and Thai Politics, His Majesty the King and the Thai Economy), and Chidchanok Soonsinpai (His Majesty the King and Solutions to Problems of the Environment and Urban Society).


Although the book was published in 1975, the author misses the obvious necessity to confront his findings with the student uprising in 1973 that brought down the dictatorial regime of Thanom and Praphat. As he had administered his questionnaire just a short time before that pathbreaking event took place one would also like to know whether, outside his mechanistic observation via employing that instrument, he had detected that something political was happening with the students and other groups of society.

The author gained some special fame in 1991 when he joined his old class mate, Suchinda Kraprayoon, and his friends in the National Peace Keeping Council in their military coup that ousted the ‘democratically elected’ government of Chartchai Choonhavan. He, in 1992, became Minister attached to the Prime Minister’s Office in the ill-fated Suchinda Government. This led some university lecturers and newspaper columnists to ask questions about the role of academics in politics. They also wondered what kind of political education Thinapan may have given his students at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) in all those years.

Manirojana; Thai original: xxxx Thammasat University Journal 5 [2], October 1975-January 1976


• Thongplaew Jolabhoom. 1941. “La Thailande (Siam) Sous le Regime Constitutional.” These Pour le Doctorat, Caen.
• Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology, trans. by Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds. Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1982 (= Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 4)
• Transnationalisation, the State, and the People: The Case of Thailand. 1985. Manila: Southeast Asian Perspectives Project, The United Nations University. 216 pp. (xxxverify)
• Treaty Between the United Kingdom and Siam, signed at Bangkok March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1909. London: Harrison & Sons, 1909.
• Trocki, Carl A. ed. 1977. The Emergence of the Modern State: Thailand and Japan. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University. (xxxcheck)


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- Yoko Ueda (for a book-length treatment see her *Local Economy and Entrepreneurship in Thailand: A Case Study of Nakhon Ratchasima*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1995.) spends 28 pages on the history of Chinese businessmen in Khorat, based on interviews with 46 respondents. This section certainly is of interest for social and economic historians. On the five pages on politics, the author informs us that some businessmen are involved in politics (local and national), that there are “factions” (formalized as “political club(s)" or groups for competing in local elections; Ueda also uses the expression “local machine” while the term phuak is not mentioned), and that these factions are not based on principles but personal relationships. Chart Thai Party, Chart Pattana Party, Arthit Kamlang-ek, Chartchai Choonhavan, and Suwat Liptapallop are duly mentioned.

The article contains short descriptions of the three “actors” mentioned in the title and one more section on the elections of January 2001. I did not see anything about globalization, and Ukrist does not seem to think that it is necessary to consult the relevant literature.


The author’s hero is the Bangkok working class and its struggle for democracy. In his attempt to elevate its place in Thai historical writings, he first reinterprets historical events (1932, 1973, 1992) to show that the working class had, in fact, substantial part in them, unfortunately without providing any systematic review of primary or secondary accounts. For readers who have not been convinced by his preceding presentation, the author proposes to eliminate the problem of social categorization altogether by using the “Marxist” definition of class according to which everyone who does not own the means of production belonged to the working class. Consequently, by definition, almost every urban and many rural Thai citizen belong to this working class, hence its dominating role in promoting democratization in Thailand. This trick also solves the problem of the “new myth of the middle class [that] has been created, [and] which further disguises the central role of the working class.”


As this essentially is a political manifesto, there does not seem to be a need for an academic abstract. Instead, let the author himself describe his perspective: “Socialism is the most complete form of democracy because socialism means the
democratic control of economic production as well as the trappings of political office. Only with socialism can we have production for human need [is this the same as the ‘collective need’ mentioned below; is there any difference to human or collective wants/needs; do humans now produce for non-human or inhuman need and how is this logically and practically possible?]. Yet, socialism has, for decades, been buried under the authoritarian hand of the followers of Stalin or Mao. In Russia, Eastern Europe, China and many third world countries, socialism has come to mean a strong authoritarian and oppressive state. This is the opposite of what Marx or Lenin stood for. [Marx, certainly, but Lenin? Wasn’t it him, together with Trotsky, who set in motion what Stalin later perfected?] The Stalinist view of socialism has been a weakening force in the struggle for freedom, democracy and justice in Thailand. The time has come to reclaim socialism, even in Thailand, for it is clear that Thai capitalist economic development alone is not solving the problems of poverty, oppression and ill health.” (p. 12) The author wants to change Thailand’s political-economic order to a socialist system, i.e., “the common democratic ownership of the means of production by the workers [one wonders exactly what this may mean in practice as the author rules out state-ownership, i.e. the conventional definition of socialism], so that production can be organized for collective need, rather than profit or accumulation” (p. 117). Who is supposed to decide what the collective need is, and what will happen to those who disagree, e.g. because they consider profit and accumulation as their human need as well as the collective need?


Another political pamphlet by Giles who has been successful in establishing himself as what must be the most dogmatic and sectarian Marxist-Leninist author in Thailand. It is theoretically bizarre to say that Rama V has been the “ruler of Thailand’s first capitalist state in the 1870s” (p. 7). In order to argue against the assumption that middle class or civil society were naturally pro-democratic he goes as far as stating, “the German Nazi party was fundamentally a middle class party” (p. 97), with his sole source beingâ€”Trotsky! The concluding three sentences of this publication read, “However, at the end of the day, strengthening trade union struggles alone will not bring about the transformation to socialism. To do that, workers need a Marxist party with political clarity. An important part of that clarity must come from a proper assessment of the failure of the CPT and a clear understanding of the nature of the modern working class under capitalism.” (p. 116)


The three stages mentioned in the title are (1) “The absolute monarchy: formation of the first capitalist state (Rama V-1932)”; (2) “Military domination of the capitalist state (1932-1980s)”; and (3) “Bourgeois domination of the [capitalist] state (1980s-present)”. As the authors sees it, it was the “mainly working class mass movement”, though some other groups are conceded a role, that weakened the power of the
military and increased the scope of democracy. Unfortunately, though, the working class had been poorly organized and lacked political self-confidence which made it possible for the bourgeoisie to reap the benefits of the working class struggle and achieve “its present overwhelming political domination of the Thai capitalist state” (p. 26).

and Cultural Change in Rural Southeast Asia, ed. by Charles F. Keyes (with the assistance of E. Jane Keyes and Nancy Donnelly), pp. 131-152. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.


Van der Mehden, Fred and David A. Wilson, eds. 1970. *Local Authority and Administration in Thailand*. Los Angeles: University of California. xvi+302 pp. (xxxckeck “von” or “van, contributions, bibl TH352.0953.V945L)


• Vichitr Vadakarn, Luang. 1941. Thailand’s Case. Bangkok: Thammasat University.


• Vivat Iampriwan. [1996?]. “Distance Education and Political Development in Thailand: The Case of the School of Political Science, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University.” In 14 ปี รัฐศาสตร์ ยศ. รวมบทความวิชาการรัฐศาสตร์ 5: 208-212.


• Winacker, Martha. 1980. “Two Views of the Thai Guerrilla Movement.” *Southeast Asia Chronicle* xxx?
• Wyatt, David K. 1984. Thailand: A Short History. London: Yale University Press; Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich. (standard work on Thai history; by now in need of an up-date)


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