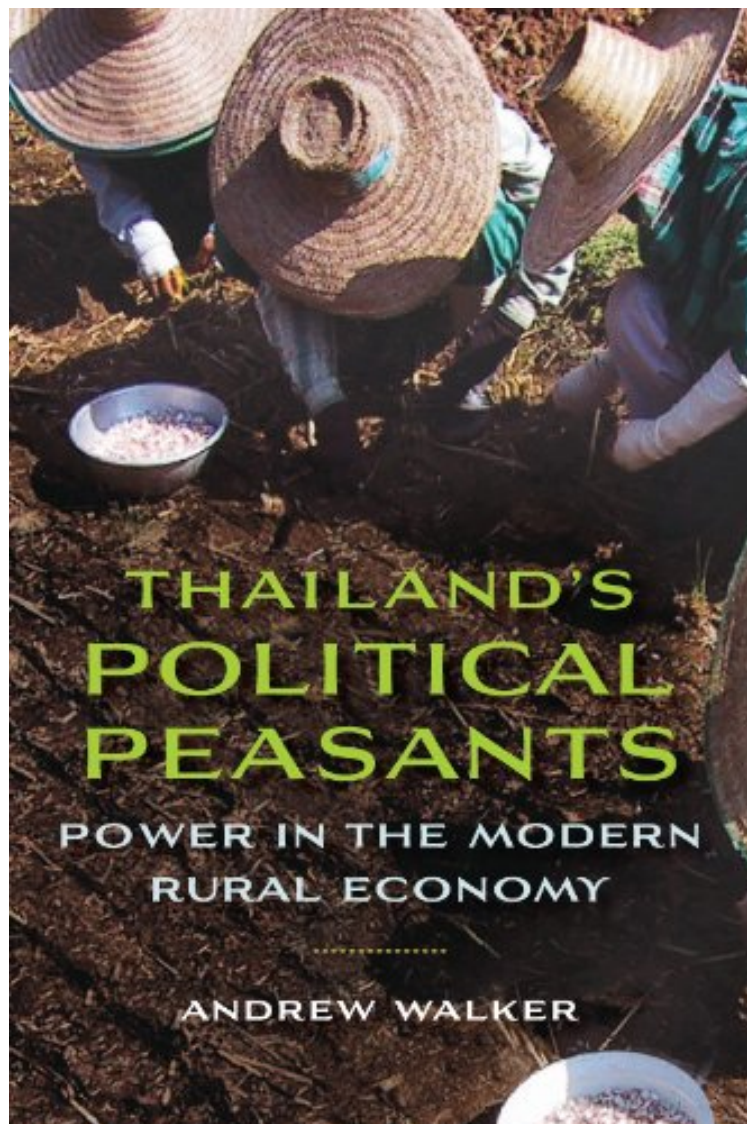


(Free and download) Thailand's Political Peasants: Power in the Modern Rural Economy (New Perspectives in SE Asian Studies)

Thailand's Political Peasants: Power in the Modern Rural Economy (New Perspectives in SE Asian Studies)

Andrew Walker

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Andrew Walker : Thailand's Political Peasants: Power in the Modern Rural Economy (New Perspectives in SE Asian Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thailand's Political Peasants: Power in the Modern Rural Economy (New Perspectives in SE Asian Studies):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. About the farmers daily life, and their newly start in being political active. By Gert Bo Thorgersen First of all I must admit, that to me, in some chapters, the book is too detailed about some

of the rather unimportant things concerning the daily living, that is items without connections to what we normally are calling microeconomics. For example on side 166 the Chapter 6, "Community, Legibility, and Eligibility", begins telling about the plan for the housewives groups, in now starting using uniforms, and then covering the following 4 sides concerning this arranging and the buying of these uniforms. But actually the book starts on the side 3 with the Introduction: "Peasants, Power, and Political Society", by informing us that, historically, the farmers first around the year 2000 started to demand that the politicians in the parliament actually also would do what they had promised before the voting for the parliament. And then in the year 2001 they voted on Thaksin and his party, for maybe this politician would be one, who actual would do what he promised. And when the lowest positioned persons in Thailand again and again were voting on the same person and party, in 2001, 2005, 2006, for the first time in the Thailand history, then the royalist, the richest, got scared of losing power, and had the Yellow members of the Democratic Party to demonstrate against the government. And finally in 2006 they had the army to make a coup, and the constitutional court stating the government party as being illegal, and giving 5 years political quarantine to many of the government members. And on the next side we shortly read about what was going on until Yingluck Shinawatra in 2011 became prime minister. Yingluck who the constitutional court then here the 5th of Mai 2014 deposed, straight against the constitutional law, as many juridical professors have explained. And we read that when the Red shirts, the farmers, in 2010, in Bangkok, made the biggest demonstration in Thailand History, only for having a new selection to the parliament for thereby getting a democratic government, instead of the Yellow one which the army and the constitutional court had put in in December 2008, then the Bangkok Post described it as a "rural horder", Bangkok Post actual has been one of the 70 who were sponsoring the 6 month demonstration in Bangkok, by the Yellows, led by Suthep, and which stopped in the past week. But during this time, the constitutional court did not allow the police to arrest any of those who were paying this demonstrating for the destroying of the government! After the Introduction we on side 34 are starting in the Chapter 1 concerning "Thailand's Persistent Peasantry", and among the graphs, we on the side 37 have a graph showing the GDP per person, were it in 1960 it was \$ 500, and in 2004 around \$ 4,000. And we in the text, compared to the Thailand \$ 3,894, we see China \$ 3,744, Vietnam \$ 1,052, Laos \$ 940, Cambodia \$ 677, and USA \$ 6,975. But actual during the years 1960 to 2004, in Thailand, the difference between the richest and the poorest have increased were much, and to show this we in the book are missing the comparing between the 5 % of the richest and the 5 % of the poorest, as the book instead only talks about using the 20 % by this comparing, but not in amount telling how much it have changed. We on the side 40 have a big Table showing average income, and more, on different places in Thailand, and here we see that the average yearly income in Bangkok is 420,084 Baht (around \$ 12,902), and on another side in the book we read that in the Ban Tiam village it's only 125,000 Baht (around \$ 3,839). And on a Chart, on the side 47, we during the years 1980 to 2007 are comparing the changes in the labor productivity between the agriculture and the industry. For the agriculture it has nearly not increased from 1,000 GDP \$, until after the year 2001 (when Thaksin started), and are still less than 2,000 GDP \$ pr. worker, while it for the industry has gone from around 5,000 \$ to 14,000 \$. And on other sides we read that 42 % of the working persons still are positioned in the farms, but we also read that all of the neighboring countries are better than Thailand concerning the farming productivity. Actual as we read on the side 47, Thai rice yields are among the lowest in the world. And even the poor Laos is 15 % higher than Thailand concerning the rice yields. Strange with this ineffective farming as we have seen that Thailand is richer than the other, but as the book tells us, before Thaksin the politicians in Bangkok were not helping the farmers in the right way. In the Chapter 2 "Ban Tiam's Middle-Income Rural Economy", we have pictures, and a card showing the village containing 130 houses. And are told about the inhabitants, how rich or poor the village is, we learn the number of refrigerators, motorbikes, mobile phones, computers, cars, and so on. And in this chapter, and the next chapters, we follow different persons and learn about with what they are working, if they are farming, and in case so if they then own or rent the hectares, and so on. And many times we read that the agricultural wages in Ban Tiam are around 140 Baht/day. But here we have a problem, which is not mentioned in the book, because in December 2013, finally the daily lowest salary was then also in Northern Thailand stated to be 300 Bath/day (around \$ 9.20). But in the book we also read that the rice cannot be produced in Ban Tiam if the wages exceed 140 Baht. Besides we here, and in the following Chapter, learn that a couple of families lost their houses as the result of studying children being hit by AIDS, and the resulting money it then was costing until they finally died. Actually 12 years ago I was reading that, in Thailand, more the 800,000 then had died as the result of AIDS. The Chapter 3, "Drawing Power into Private Realms", starting on the side 86, covers 25 sides about how Thailand persons are trusting and living with the spirits. To me it's a bit too long writing about this. We learn about the different kind of spirits inside and outside the houses; outside in especially in trees, mountains, and rivers. And we learn how the writer was told that as the result of his taking a picture (we see the picture) of a mother praying to one of the house spirits, caused that the daughter working in Bangkok, 500 miles away, fall and broke her nose. And therefor he has to come and make an offering with a pigs head, to the spirit. While in the Chapter 4, "Contracts, Private Capitals, and the State", we read about how the farmers first now are starting in making contracts, and thereby in many cases don't have the problem by lending money for buying the semen, as the firms to whom they make the contract, deliver what they have to put in the earth. But

especially we read about the garlic and the soybeans, of which the garlic sometimes resulted in earning 100,000 Baht/hectare, but also have resulted in negative years. While the soya only gives 12,000 Baht/hectare, but each year. And we on a graph see how the price on the garlic nearly constantly going upside down between 10 and 55 Baht/kg. But besides we naturally again read about rice and many other crops, as for example the Tobacco. During the Chapter 5, "The Political Economy of Projects", we on some side are watching 4 projects, the first of which are about making a sweet detail out of Bananas, and it turned out to be a success even with selling in South Korea, and without possibility to produce all what there are being asked after. And we read about the State now being connected with the sponsoring of some projects. In the Chapter 6, "Community, Legibility, and Eligibility", we first read about the uniforms which I as the first thing wrote about, and after this we then read about the festivals, especially the one in November where the Banana-leaf trays are send down the rivers in seeking forgiveness from the Goddess of the water. Then follow 10 sides most about community, and we learn that this word is new in Thailand, actual looking like first being constructed in the 1930s. In the Chapter 7, "The Rural Constitution", we start with learning about the rural political culture and that this has taken on a particular salience in the recent years, especial since the overthrow of Thaksin's government in 2006. And that Thaksin's opponents was, and still are, arguing that about the voters irrationality, even though the farmers voted on him, or his party, in 2001, 2005, and 2006, and after this again in 2007, 2011, and 2014. And this among other, probably because for example that Thaksin 3 month after he the first time became prime minister, made what he had promised, which was from the State to each village lending 1 million Baht, of which the farmers then could lend money at a low interest. In the chapter we read many sides about how the local candidates in the Thailand's formal elections are embedded in the informal political culture, and we especially are looking at 2 candidates in the Ban Tiam village. Besides we learn that there were 13 local and national elections from the start of 2004 to the end of 2010, and we many time read about how high he coting turnout percent was. But in the book it's not told that actual, in Thailand, according to the law, al person in the election age have to vote, and if they don't do this then they have to visit the police and explain why! But maybe the law is not totally effective all over Thailand. On the side 206 we learn about Thaksin, and why the farmers like him, and now continue to vote on his party. We read that he is from Chiang Mai, and an industrial man. But by this information we are missing much. Because actually he started as a policeman, and thereby was more out around where he worked, and in contact with the farmers. Opposite to this, for example Abhisit from the Yellow, he who the military put in as prime minister in 2008, and maybe now in 2014 doo it again, he was born in a rich family, in England, and only have been a politician; and he is afraid of getting too long away from Bangkok. Thaksin was the best at the policeman examine, and therefore was send to more school in USA. And later besides, in USA, took a Ph.D. in law, before while still working in the police, went into business and became rich. And in the book we read that when Thaksin in 2001 became the prime minister he in record time got Thailand out of the debt after the economic crises in 1997. On the last 14 written sides in the book, the Conclusion, "Political Society, Civil Society, and Democracy", we mostly learn that there was nothing wrong in Thaksin's politics, as he only just did what the farmers during many years had been asking after. And the politic with which he helped the farmers, in making more productivity, which we earlier rad about, actual only would help the states international competition concerning what the farmers were producing, and thereby increasing the BPD. We read that it's the business men and the military that are behind the coup, and that there in Thailand is powerful elite discourse, drawing on carefully cultivated royal imagery, about the need for "good men" to guide the political process. And the text finish with "Genuine democratic consolidation needs to take this rural political judgment seriously", but we must say that according to have passed by, and still is continuing, here in the year 2014, until now, they have wanted to take it seriously! And as we can read in the book by Harding Leyland: "The Constitutional System of Thailand", which I highly recommend, by the government of Abhisit (and Suthep, the leader of the demonstration in Bangkok during the last 6 month), Thailand no longer is democratic. Abhisit, and thereby the Yellows, got the government, in December 2008, as the result of capturing the airport, and much more, in which the constitutional court did not find anything criminal. And the victims, the Read government, vas deposed, and 111 of the parliament members got 5 years political quarantine. And 3 month earlier, in September 2008 the premier minister was deposed because he in TV had been showing how to make food! And when the Yellow in 2008 demonstrated during 192 days, and took the airport, the army would not help the Read government because, as it said: "There might be wounded persons"! But when the Red in 2010 was demonstrating just for getting an election to a democratic parliament, Abhisit and Suthep then told the King guard: "Kill the protesters", and 92 were killed and more than 2,000 wounded. And then in 2014, again with at Read government, and for the 4th time (2005, 2006, 2008, 2014) again Yellow demonstrators, the army again denied to help the government. Among other Suthep (and the elite in Thailand) in February blocked all of the banks so that the farmers could not get their salary for the rice delivered to the state, and besides so that the government neither could get money from the banks. And again, the constitutional court found nothing wrong in this. But the 26th of Mai 2014 the army opened the banks for the farmers, and in TV told that the army could do what the government could not do, and this proved that the army again had to take the place from the Read government which could not manage to control the country! Besides In the year 2009 Abhisit declared that the Yellow government

then had blocked 14,000 of Internet connections, with writings they didn't like, and now in 2014 we actually are seeing the army repeating this story. Just as we understand by reading the book, the elite don't want to lose power, and we since 2001 have run into more and more political problem, as the farmers still continuing wanting the parliament to listen to them. All together an interesting book with references from extremely many other persons, but again, on some places, to me, it uses too many sides on some unimportant personal details.

When a populist movement elected Thaksin Shinawatra as prime minister of Thailand in 2001, many of the country's urban elite dismissed the outcome as just another symptom of rural corruption, a traditional patronage system dominated by local strongmen pressuring their neighbors through political bullying and vote-buying. In Thailand's Political Peasants, however, Andrew Walker argues that the emergence of an entirely new socioeconomic dynamic has dramatically changed the relations of Thai peasants with the state, making them a political force to be reckoned with. Whereas their ancestors focused on subsistence, this generation of middle-income peasants seeks productive relationships with sources of state power, produces cash crops, and derives additional income through non-agricultural work. In the increasingly decentralized, disaggregated country, rural villagers and farmers have themselves become entrepreneurs and agents of the state at the local level, while the state has changed from an extractor of taxes to a supplier of subsidies and a patron of development projects. Thailand's Political Peasants provides an original, provocative analysis that encourages an ethnographic rethinking of rural politics in rapidly developing countries. Drawing on six years of fieldwork in Ban Tiam, a rural village in northern Thailand, Walker shows how analyses of peasant politics that focus primarily on rebellion, resistance, and evasion are becoming less useful for understanding emergent forms of political society.

"The first book to offer a detailed view of the socioeconomic changes underlying the tumultuous events in Thailand's twenty-first-century politics. Andrew Walker shows why the upsurge of rural politics in Thailand cannot be ignored." —Chris Baker, author of A History of Thailand