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ARTICLE REVIEW

A Tragic Tale of Two Thailands: An Honest Review

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This research report explores the issues of political nature that deepened the divide between the people of two different political ideologies in Thailand. Namely, the nationalists who heavily revered the monarchy, and civic-minded citizens who aspire for democracy. Recounting the historical rivalry between the two, this report reviewed renowned political

events during the first two decades of the 21st Century, as well as exploring the public's points of view between the two different worldviews.

After reexamining the majority of this report, a small, yet critical question can be raised on whether the representation of these supposed events and thoughts in this report can truly be representative of the people's views. This question primarily stemmed from her use of international sources, as well as news articles from different media outlets. With the works of academia in international settings focused on Thailand, the question persists whether one can be sure that their works are not written from their perspectives alone.

The usage of news media as the indicator of the people's thoughts also contributes to the credibility of the report as well. News media, in Thailand, can possess certain political bias, and oftentimes, actively worked to discredit either side of the political spectrum and contributed to the people's thoughts in some cases. For instance, an article from *Dub Kreung Chon* from the infamous royalist-oriented *Dao Siam* demonized one of the pro-democratic events as "crushing the hearts of Thai people everywhere" when they alleged that there were acts of defamation against the then-Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn. (Chatmanee, 1976, p.2)

Examining the report on the causality of political infightings, there is a noticeable absence in economic context which could evince the correlation of economic situations with political conflicts in Thailand. Swanson (2007, p. 208) explains that one could examine the trends of political scientists who have oftentimes correctly assumed the correlation between politics and economics, yet failed to explore the deeper extent of the situation that required close examination of the two. This report falls under the same condition of which explanations on political conditions did not take into account the effects of major economic crises in the 2000 and again in 2008. Should those events have been factored into the report, this report will be in a much better position.

Despite its malpractices, however, this report can be praised for clearly demonstrating the points of view of the monarchical nationalists, and pro-democratic citizens in definitive and equal terms, which in a way, represented the intensity of the entrenchment of these two ideas in present times. Nevertheless, persisting in her report is the previous question of representing these two public views. The lack of interviews from news media, and from the

author's own research, of people who might have associated with said political conflicts, can be construed that this report might not truly represent the people's opinion. In any case, the report, despite the correct representation of political intensity, still has much to improve.

At any rate, to rectify the weakness presented before, the author can, and should, make an effort to use sources which are more local than the present report. Books which were written by figures associated with events, opinions written by those figures, or interviews from those who were present. Their opinions will be able to reinforce the report to which it is credible enough. Furthermore, the ideas, opinions, and thoughts of this nature cannot be truly representative should it do away with qualitative research methods such as direct interviews with associated people. It can be argued that interview with people who might have been involved, directly or indirectly does not only reveal to researchers the experiences they might have to endure, but also opening the researchers with more information that could prove useful to the report.

In the end, one must wonder whether this report will be useful to any future researchers at all. Fortunately, despite its shortcomings, the report did open certain venues for future topics on possible methods which could best fit Thailand's unique political situations. How can the peace process begin, organized, or concluded, as well as the questions on reconciliation and possible political arrangements that are equitable for everyone involved. While this report is not perfect to some extent, it is not exactly a deal-breaker either. One can argue that this report has completed its objective; to grant any interested parties with information needed to explore possible venues to navigate Thailand out of this long and disastrous political conflict. It is best to end this review with a comfortable belief that this report has done its job.

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