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TECHNOCRATS AND MODERNIZATION IN THAILAND

Laurence D. Stifel

A TECHNOCRATIC TRADITION in Thailand can be traced to King Chulalongkorn and his brothers during the Fifth Reign of the present dynasty (1868–1910). The King's objective was to defend national sovereignty against expanding European colonialism and to regain the political and economic rights already forfeited. His reforms consisted of measures to unify the Kingdom and to modernize it—in the sense of catching up with the West—for the purpose of strengthening it and demonstrating that Siam was “civilized.”¹ The King and his brothers were at the same time political leaders and technocrats. They established the broad objectives of modernization and then, drawing upon their own exposure to English education and foreign travel, designed programs to realize them.

Two measures were addressed to the problem of the “poverty of men” qualified to administer new governmental machinery. The King expanded domestic education and institutionalized the practice of sending his sons abroad for foreign study by establishing a system of state scholarships. Second, the technical and managerial ranks were filled with foreign advisers on contract to the government. At the end of the Fifth Reign, there were about 300 foreigners in the government, serving in high positions such as general advisers down to teachers and locomotive engineers.² In many cases, they were individuals of competence and skill who, as technocrats, exerted great influence upon their royal employers. As the pool of Thais with modern education expanded, their numbers and influence waned, not to be revived until after the Second World War.

The major bureaucratic reform was the 1892 transformation of the traditional administration into functionally specialized ministries. The

¹ See David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich, 1969), especially Chapter 2.

² William J. Siffin, *The Thai Bureaucracy: Institutional Change and Development* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), pp. 96–97.

foundation and structure of the present government were established with the King serving as prime minister of the cabinet. While the King and the princes monopolized Western knowledge in the early stages of modernization, conflict with the increasingly sophisticated civil servants became inevitable. The cabinet ministers and the throne itself became vulnerable to criticism of their leadership.

As many have observed, the objective of the 1932 revolution which overthrew the absolute monarch was not primarily to establish a popular constitutional government but rather to place commoner officials in power and to organize a government that would rule on behalf of the bureaucracy; Professor Riggs calls this model of government a "bureaucratic polity."³ Technocratic influences declined for several decades after 1932 while political priorities and the war seized the attention of the new leaders and the bureaucracy.

The Growth of Technocracy in Government

Since modernization, by definition, meant borrowing or adapting from the West, students who received a Western education had legitimate claims to roles in the expanding government service. While some of the King's reforms ebbed and flowed, the rise of Western education has been irreversible. There were about 50 Thais studying abroad at the end of the last century, over 500 in the late 1930s, and almost 6,000 in 1973 in the United States alone.⁴ The Civil Service has finally become so saturated with foreign-degree holders that graduates who return to Thailand are discovering that a foreign degree no longer assures them positions in the government service.

By criteria of formal training, the Thai government is strongly technocratic. At the highest level of government—the cabinet ministers—university degrees have been almost universal and foreign education very common (45% to 67%) since the late 1930s (see Table 1). After World War II, technocratic influence so spread through the lower ranks of the government that a new word had to be coined to refer to the official who was an authority on technical matters—*nach wichakan*.

The bureaucratic elite consists of over 26,000 officials in the top four Civil Service classes (special grade to third grade), entrance to which is normally restricted to university graduates.⁵ One agency, US AID, provided foreign training experience to one of out of every four officials in this entire group; over 1,500 received academic degrees.⁶

³ Fred W. Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 312.

⁴ The first figure refers to Thai students in Great Britain in 1897; Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand*, p. 200. The second figure is from Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), p. 786. The last figure is from Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 1973* (New York, 1973), p. 2.

⁵ Riggs, "Thailand," p. 328. The data are for 1958.

⁶ United States Operations Mission to Thailand, unpublished data. The American agency had trained 8,003 participants by March 1974.

TABLE 1: Selected Data on Thai Ministers, 1892-1969

Date of Ministry	King or Prime Minister	No. of Ministers	Median Age	% With University Education	% With Foreign Education	% From Military
1892	Rama V	12	34	8%	17%	*
1910	Rama V	11	48	27	36	*
1925	Rama VI	12	50	42	58	*
1932	Rama VIII	10	49	70	60	*
1938	Bahol	9	43	100	67	67%
1944	Phibul	9	44	100	67	89
1946	Pridi	11	45	82	45	18
1957	Phibul	14	56	86	50	79
1963	Sarit	13	55	100	54	38
1969	Thanom	12	58	100	67	42

SOURCE: Charnvit Kesetsriri, "The Leaders of Each Cabinet in Thai History," *Thammasat University Journal*, May 1974, III:3, pp. 94-115 (in Thai). The percentage of ministers with university education is estimated from Graph 7.

* The distinction between military and civilian was ambiguous during the period of the absolute monarchy.

A recent study by Dr. Likhit provides the first comprehensive data on the approximately 2,200 special grade officers who hold the most prestigious and powerful positions in Thai society.⁷ Ninety-three percent are college graduates and one-third have graduate degrees, almost entirely from Western universities. Of the younger officers, those under 56, two-thirds had foreign graduate degrees. Dr. Likhit's study concluded that Western educational experience is significantly correlated with rapid advancement in the bureaucracy and a high attitudinal receptivity toward the changes required by modernization.

Economic Growth

Thailand's postwar economic performance, judged by conventional criteria, has been notably successful during the last two decades. Gross national product rose about 7% annually, while the rate of inflation was, until recently, one of the lowest in the world. Visible unemployment was virtually nonexistent. Agricultural exports and American military expenditures caused foreign exchange reserves to triple from the time of the Sarit coup in 1958 to 1972 and double again as the result of the recent boom in commodity prices.

Both the Thai bureaucratic elite and foreign aid donors shared this assessment of the Kingdom's progress and approved the governmental strategy, especially since 1958, which appeared to explain it. The essential core of the national development program has been the

⁷ Likhit Dhiravegin, unpublished tables from current research (Thai language). The final two sentences of this paragraph are based on the published results of Dr. Likhit's earlier study of a sample of officials, *Political Attitudes of the Bureaucratic Elite and Modernization in Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich, 1973), pp. 28 and 41-44.

maintenance of financial stability and the provision of economic and social infrastructure to encourage directly productive activities by the private sector. The losses from an earlier period of state socialism (1951–1958) as a vehicle of economic nationalism reinforced the commitment to a market-oriented strategy of development. There appeared to be evidence that at least some of the benefits were “trickling down” to the poorer classes. To intensify development efforts logically implied qualitative or quantitative changes in existing types of programs—industrial promotion, improvement in the efficiency of the bureaucracy, raising agricultural productivity. Technocrats within the bureaucracy have been encouraged to strengthen the system, while debate concerning more radical measures was until recently an academic exercise of a handful of intellectuals who perceived social injustice emerging from the period of rapid growth.

The uniqueness of Thailand’s postwar economic performance has been a combination of growth and stability which has antecedents deep in the prewar experience and largely outside the scope of technocratic influence.⁸ Thailand bowed to European political pressures during the last century and permitted the prewar economy to expand on a colonial pattern. The rice economy grew as the result of autonomous responses by small peasant producers using traditional methods to world market forces. The economic orthodoxy of the era prescribed classical principles of conservative finance; the government balanced its budget and rejected proposed investments in development projects as financially irresponsible. Postwar growth has been possible because of the capacity of the agricultural sector to accommodate this continuing process. As the rice frontier in the Central Plain was closed, cultivators spilled out onto the upland frontier opened up by new roads and cleared of malaria. Thai agriculture still awaits its Green Revolution, but it has absorbed the burgeoning population and produced new crops to earn foreign exchange.

Another factor contributing to the postwar economic performance has been the increased assimilation of the Chinese minority into the mainstream of Thai society. Both the political upheaval on the Mainland and the Thai government’s coercive policies encouraged Thaiification. The result has been to eliminate the drain of remittances to China and to direct Chinese savings and energies into business or bureaucratic careers. At the present time, 30% of the special grade officers, the bureaucratic elite, come from Chinese trading families and probably at least half have Chinese ancestry.⁹

The openness of Thailand to the international economy has greater significance than the volume of trade would imply. World market

⁸ See Ammar Siamwalla, “Stability, Growth and Distribution in the Thai Economy,” in Puey Ungphakorn, *Finance, Trade and Economic Development in Thailand* (Bangkok: Bank of Thailand, 1975).

⁹ Likhit Dhiravegin, unpublished data.

prices, adjusted for taxes and duties, determine the prices of major commodities produced domestically and of manufactured goods imported into the country. Thai domestic prices have tended to follow the inflationary rates in the world economy which until recently have been modest. Before the war the balance of payments automatically determined the money supply. Economists debate the relative significance of discretionary technocratic decisions versus automatic stabilizers in determining present changes in the money supply. But it is clear that a group of government agencies, led initially by the Ministry of Finance, was involved in collective efforts to prevent inflationary pressures which could jeopardize the openness of the economy. There has been unusual success in curbing government expenditures and restraining imports so that the private initiatives responsible for the growth of the Thai economy could function under stable conditions.

Two Generations of Postwar Technocrats

The thrust of technocracy was evident across the range of government activities in the 1950s, when prominent technocrats with Western educations were working to modernize fields such as education, public administration, and irrigation. A group of technocrats, associated with the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Thailand, and other agencies responsible for financial management and planning, was widely recognized as most influential because of its cohesiveness, its common values, its achievements cutting across the entire economy, and the inspiration of service it provided younger officials.

The Second World War created a gap in the foreign training of young Thais preparing for government service, naturally dividing the postwar technocrats into two generational groups. The five leading technocrats in each group have been selected on the basis of a sample of the opinions of a limited number of experts, and biographical data on the members of the senior and junior groups are presented in Table 2. The selection was based upon the definition of a technocrat as a government official with a modern education in Thailand or abroad which provided skills used to make significant improvements in national policy formulation or administration. Conceptually it is difficult to distinguish the political actors who set goals and the technocrats responsible for executing them. Thais classify ministers and their deputies as political officials and those below as civil servants or administrative officials. Since almost half of the cabinet ministers since 1932 have been civilian officials prior to their appointments, technocratic achievement is often simply a vehicle for advancement to political power. Technocrats also actively enter the political arena in order to secure acceptance of their policies or programs. To confuse the distinction even further, Thai bureaucrats pejoratively label officials as political if they appear to manipulate others too blatantly for their own purposes.

TABLE 2: Leading Thai Technocrats

Median Age	Education	Father's Background	Significant Organizational Involvements
Senior Group 59 years	Undergraduate:	1 — Poor Bangkok Chinese	4 — Ministry of Finance
	2 — Thailand	1 — Wealthy provincial Chinese	4 — Bank of Thailand
	3 — U. K.	1 — Poor provincial Thai	4 — Foreign assignment
	Graduate:	2 — U. K. educated government official	3 — NESDB (formerly NEDB), National Economic and Social Development Board
	1 — U. K.		1 — Bureau of the Budget
	1 — Japan	1 — Industrial Finance Company of Thailand	1 — Thammasat University
Junior Group 45 years	Undergraduate:	1 — Wealthy Bangkok Chinese	4 — Ministry of Finance
	1 — Thailand	2 — Wealthy provincial Chinese	2 — NESDB
	2 — U. S.	2 — Prominent government official	2 — Ministry of National Development
	2 — Australia		1 — Bank of Thailand
	Graduate:		1 — Foreign assignment
	5 — U. S.		1 — Bureau of the Budget
		1 — Board of Investment	1 — Ministry of Agriculture
			1 — Ministry of the Interior

Note: A group of Thai officials and Westerners working closely with them were asked in 1975 to list the five most prominent senior and five most prominent junior technocrats in the government service. There was a high degree of agreement in the responses and the individuals identified most frequently were included in this table. Two of the senior technocrats were dead in 1976 and the median age is based upon their age if still alive. Most of the technocrats have several significant institutional involvements at one time and they have changed at different stages of their careers. Foreign assignments refer to service abroad in a Thai embassy in U. K. or U. S. as economic or financial counselors or with an international organization.

The ambiguity may be illustrated with the example of Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, clearly recognized as the leading postwar technocrat, although he had been actively engaged in bureaucratic politics to win approval of the major changes in financial management discussed next. It is well known that Dr. Puey declined cabinet positions, and the great rewards attached to them, in order to retain his independence and integrity as Governor of the Bank of Thailand and to further broadly defined technocratic goals. Sarit's Minister of Finance, Sunthorn Hongladarom, was originally a technocrat of the senior group but his long service in the cabinet established him as primarily a political figure. Dr. Puey emphasized their relative positions when he said that "a Central Bank Governor should behave toward his Finance Minister as a dutiful wife should towards her husband. She can praise him both in public and in private, but any wifely criticism should be frankly offered in private."¹⁰ Ironically, the Ministers of Finance have appeared to exercise primarily technocratic influences within the cabinet, while Dr. Puey, speaking frankly both in public and in private, has had political power surpassing them all.

Table 2 indicates the clear gap in the ages of the two generational groups of technocrats (14 years difference between the two medians) and the complete shift from England to the United States for training. Their family backgrounds (half are from Chinese families) and organizational affiliations are similar. Nevertheless, there is a psychological and philosophical distance between the two groups which is greater than the gap in their ages would suggest.

The senior group assumed the leadership in upholding a complex code of financial virtue, which Silcock has called a mixture of "personal integrity, Treasury control and Gladstonian orthodoxy."¹¹ King Chulalongkorn and the British advisers introduced the concept of financial conservatism and the Ministry of Finance, joined by the Bank of Thailand after its establishment during World War II, was charged with upholding the code. This legacy was transmitted to the senior group by the elder princes with whom they first worked at the Ministry of Finance. They accepted the responsibility, for they were already committed to it as a value system as a result of their liberal education in Great Britain and their experiences with instability during the depression and war.

Political developments compelled the members of the senior group to devote much of their careers to fulfilling this responsibility. As long as the King held absolute power, he used the throne to uphold financial virtue. A conflict became inevitable when power shifted to the constitutional government, whose ministers required a new patronage system to maintain their power. The ministers sought to use the com-

¹⁰ Puey Ungphakorn, personal statement on various occasions.

¹¹ T. H. Silcock, *Thailand: Social and Economic Studies in Development* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1967), p. 174.

mercial banks, the revenues of state enterprises, and various special funds to strengthen political support in the bureaucracy where salaries had been cut by wartime inflation. The technocrats objected because the incompetence and inefficiency of the state enterprises substantiated the canon of economic orthodoxy and the politically-motivated corruption violated the canon of integrity. While some of the technocrats sympathized with the socialist ideals of the civilian political leader, Pridi Phanomyung, they doubted the capacity of the government to realize his goals by direct intervention; the free market mechanism required neither wisdom nor morality to operate.

The second generation of modern technocrats grew up in the American period without profoundly experiencing either the depression or the war. While the senior group feared the earlier military leadership as a threat to be controlled in serving the Kingdom, the young group came to responsibility when the political leadership under Sarit appeared to be the best instrument for serving the Kingdom.

When Sarit seized power in 1958, he adopted the traditional ruler's paternalistic concern for the happiness of his people and sought legitimacy in the ideology of development. The enterprising Royal Irrigation Department had already demonstrated to Prime Minister Phibul that large dams could be useful symbols of national progress. With foreign assistance, a Master Plan for highway development had just been completed. Sarit grasped the opportunity of using an existing backlog of plans for rapidly expanding the economic infrastructure and establishing his regime with physical monuments of modernity.

Sarit's sheer dominance permitted him to disregard bureaucratic politics and listen to young technocrats who could tell him how to provide roads and water in the rural areas. He encouraged and flattered them with remarks like these: "In former times . . . economics was taken as common sense and those who never studied economics could talk about the subject . . . which led them to believe that they did not have to rely on academic expertise. I have no such belief."¹² Sarit curtailed the number of military men in his cabinet and increased technocratic participation in policy planning.

The younger group of technocrats accepted the legitimacy of Sarit's commitment to development. They welcomed socialization with the military elite in the National Defense College and they accepted the imperatives of national security. The rapid progress of the country strengthened their confidence in their own pragmatic judgments. In sharing Sarit's impatience for results, they recognized the conflict between the conservatism of their seniors and the possibility of faster development. While equally dedicated to serving national interests, the younger technocrats did not have a moral commitment to the value

¹² Thak Chaloemtiarana, *The Sarit Regime, 1957-1963: The Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics* (Cornell University unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1974), p. 355.

system represented by financial virtue. Their education and experiences differed from those of their seniors, and they had learned from modern development economics that there were opportunity costs associated with surplus foreign reserves and cautious fiscal policy. While they began their bureaucratic careers as followers of the senior technocrats, their substitution of pragmatism for principles of financial orthodoxy has tended to distinguish them from the older generation.

The difference between the generations, however, should not be exaggerated, for the members have been viewed as senior and junior members of a single group dedicated to technocratic efficiency. The junior group has not developed a comparable identity, partly because it has no leader with the overwhelming personal characteristics of the senior technocrat, Dr. Puey. Dr. Puey's passion for integrity, his unassailable courage, his compassion, and his humor created a unique charisma within the bureaucracy which more than his technical competence established his leadership of the senior generation of technocrats. When the young technocrats returned from their foreign studies they addressed him with the title of respect, *Acharn* Puey (teacher), and they were recognized as his disciples or *luk sit*. Many of them first worked on his special committee in the Ministry of Finance to strengthen the financial machinery and later on the ad hoc planning committee to cooperate with the 1957–1958 World Bank Economic Survey Mission. The leading technocrats identified in this study all participated in one, and in most cases both of these working parties. For the younger members, these experiences served as their technical apprenticeship and placed them strategically in the center of the expanding development-administration machinery.

Technocrats and the Postwar Financial Reforms

There have been three primary stages in the postwar strengthening of the financial machinery: (1) the 1955 liberalization of the multiple exchange rate system; (2) the 1959 establishment of the Budget Bureau; and (3) the 1959 establishment of a central planning agency.

The senior technocrats skillfully mobilized the support of foreign aid donors as a powerful lever in their internal political effort to make these changes. Foreign aid, totaling about 14% of governmental expenditures in the 1955–1970 period, became an important new variable in the postwar political equation.¹³ Although reserves were growing and Thailand was actually exporting capital to the developed world, they arranged development loans from the World Bank in order to secure the Bank's support both at the micro-level of project implementation and in the macro-formulation of monetary and fiscal policies. The feasibility studies, competitive bidding, and control of ex-

¹³ Sakda Saibua, "Foreign Aid to Thailand" (Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, June 1974), mimeographed, Table I.

penditures required by the World Bank assured the technocrats that waste and corruption were minimized. The World Bank's implicit development ideology coincided with the classical conservatism of the technocrats and the two groups tended to bring to bear similar viewpoints when considering monetary or fiscal policy issues. Thailand joined the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in 1949, and each major loan negotiation or mission from the Bank and the Annual Consultations with the Fund tended to strengthen the technocrats' influence in the government.

The groundwork for economic progress was considered to be a stable, unified exchange rate. Dr. Puey described the first stage as follows:

A system of multiple exchange rates was adopted and in time it became so complicated that exporters and importers found it difficult to make accurate calculations of their costs and proceeds. Violent fluctuations in the free exchange rate, coupled with big budget deficits, added to the uncertainties and risks of traders and investors. In 1955, the authorities took courage and a drastic reform in financial management took place. Exchange rates were unified, an Exchange Equalization Fund was established and operated in a manner to inspire confidence. . . . All this reform is generally considered to be the basis of the progress from 1959 to date [1964]. . . . In short, as long as human actions are motivated . . . by monetary incentives, stable currency is essential for development.¹⁴

The next steps were the establishment in 1959 of the Bureau of the Budget and a planning agency, the National Economic and Social Development Board. The senior technocrats were frustrated by the inefficient and cumbersome system of financial management they inherited. The absence of standard procedures and the lack of timely data permitted wholesale corruption and prevented rational budgeting and planning. Recognizing the need, they turned to American consultants provided by US AID to assist them in modernizing the system and training Thai technicians to operate it. The plans were elaborated during the year-long mission of the World Bank, whose final report recommended the implementation of the completed proposal for the new Budget Department and the creation of a central planning organization.¹⁵

When Sarit became Prime Minister, he agreed to establish both agencies and they became the center for the young technocrats returning from studies in America. At the 10th anniversary of the Budget Bureau, there were 61 foreign-degree holders on the staff, the highest proportion of university degree holders in any agency of the bureauc-

¹⁴ Quoted in Paul B. Trescott, *Thailand's Monetary Experience: The Economics of Stability* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 41.

¹⁵ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *A Public Development Program for Thailand* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959).

racy.¹⁶ The planning agency by then had the largest number of Ph.D.'s in economics on its staff.

The two agencies brought powerful new technocratic forces to bear on the competing bureaucratic claims for government resources. Professor Riggs has argued that, in a "bureaucratic polity," budgetary allocations simply reflect the relative power position of the ministers because they are unchallenged by external interest groups. While this model may accurately depict the 1950s when he did his field work, new variables had entered the equation by the end of the decade. First, the expertise and cooperation of high level technocrats in the four agencies, the Bank of Thailand, the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Bureau and the Planning Agency. Second, their effective mobilization of external organizations to support their programs. Third, the support of the Prime Minister for actions promoting their common objective, national development. Fourth, the emerging threat of communist subversion in the rural areas and the resulting concern over the welfare of the rural population. Fifth, the expanding requirements for government services created by the demographic explosion.

As a result, expenditures have increased markedly and undergone a change in pattern, which reflects plan priorities rather than traditional political power. Actual annual development expenditures rose from 231 million Baht during the First Plan to 664 million during the Second Plan (1967-1971); the target for the Third Plan (1972-1976) was 1,003 million Baht. According to the Riggs hypothesis, the most powerful ministries, such as Interior and Defense, should have had the greatest claims to budgetary resources; however, the growth rate of appropriations has tended to be highest in the areas of development and social overhead.¹⁷ During the 1960s, the appropriation growth rates were highest for the Offices of the Under-Secretary of the Ministries of Communication, Public Health, and Agriculture, and the National Energy Authority. Of 35 departments, the growth rate of the Office of the Under-Secretary of the Interior Ministry ranked twenty-third and that of the Police Department twenty-ninth. The technocrats had major responsibility for causing these major shifts in appropriations.

Conclusions

In conclusion, three observations appear pertinent. Although the philosophy and style of the senior technocrats have profoundly affected the bureaucracy, responsibility is already passing to the younger gen-

¹⁶ Chaianan Samudavanija, *The Politics and Administration of the Thai Budgetary Process* (University of Wisconsin doctoral dissertation, political science, 1971), p. 95.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.

eration. As senior technocrats retire from the scene, the wartime gap in training provides opportunities for the younger technocrats to advance into positions of unusual prominence and responsibility. One junior member is Governor of the Bank of Thailand and two others have cabinet rank positions. This transition is natural, of course, and the effect should be to make technocratic influence within the government more sophisticated concerning postwar scientific advances and possibly more politicized as pragmatic considerations replace the financial conservatism of the senior generation.

The second observation concerns the morality of the military-technocrat alliance, the success of which strengthened and legitimated the military government. In retrospect, the period of rapid development is seen to have produced its own nemesis. Reliance upon market forces created inequalities between the metropolis and the countryside. Criticism and hostility grew among those graduates of the expanding educational machinery who could not be absorbed into the establishment. The generals' myopic concentration on their own internal power struggles led to stupid decisions, including the clumsy management of the 1973 rice crisis which antagonized the population of Bangkok. The pressures increasing within the system made an adjustment inevitable, but few anticipated that the eruption would be as violent or decisive as the student uprising of October 1973.

The technocrats' alliance with the military government has not been primarily self-serving. Although they were not immune to the attractions of prestige and the proximity to power, they were also characterized by a powerful sense of service. As the intellectual elite, they had confidence in the superiority of their own judgments on economic questions, and the military vindicated itself to them by largely accepting this assumption. Some sensed the inevitable contradictions in the development process and hoped that progress eventually would somehow ameliorate the harshness of military rule. However, few had faith in the ability of ordinary politicians to guide the progress of the country, and many of the younger technocrats deprecated the lack of purpose, the corruption, the unsophistication of the elected members of parliament.

This leads to the final observation that the role of technocrats must be redefined if the new parliamentary system is to be viable and independent. Exactly one century elapsed between the time King Chulalongkorn established a Revenue Office, the predecessor of the Ministry of Finance, and the student uprising which upset military rule. During this century Thailand survived and flourished, partly because its technocrats successfully introduced minimum essentials of modernity without sacrificing cherished Thai values. The path appears perilous, but no more now than during the Fifth Reign. The new generation of technocrats and the elected politicians perceive the reality

which surrounds them through different lenses. To avoid the conflict between Westernized civil servants and elected politicians familiar in other emerging nations, the technocrats must draw forth the best of their pragmatism, modern training, and dedication to public service.

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