Making Democracy: Leadership, Class, Gender, and Political Participation in Thailand. **By James Ockey.** Honolulu, Hawaii, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2004. Hardcover: 233 pp.

It is encouraging to note that scholarly works in English on Thai politics have come out reasonably regularly during the past four to five years. Undoubtedly, these books have been dominated by Anglophone Western academics. The only Thai academic whose works in English on Thai political economy have been well received internationally in the past few years is Professor Pasuk Pongpaichit from Chulalongkorn University. What is also interesting in the case of the new works in English by Western academics is that these are produced by the younger generation of scholars. However, it remains to be seen whether they will be able to create the same kind of impact that the older generation of Western scholars have had on Thai studies — such as David Wyatt, David Wilson, and Craig Reynolds.

The most prolific amongst the new generation in the English-speaking world is an Australian academic, Kevin Hewison (who is now a professor in Asian Studies in the United States, after five years in Hong Kong). But Hewison's Marxist-oriented works have alienated more than attracted people, although his analysis of Thailand's political economy remains one of the most penetrating and valuable. James Ockey — an American who is currently in New Zealand teaching at the University of Canterbury — also belongs to this generation, which includes, among others, Duncan McCargo (University of Leeds), Michael Connors (La Trobe University), and Andrew Brown (University of New England). These are young and energetic minds that are genuinely fascinated by the political, economic and social changes in Thailand in recent years. Every bit of empirical data seems to excite them. They are in turn exciting story-tellers themselves — sometimes to the point of losing the subtle meaning of phenomena. These young guns are very committed to their research on Thailand. They travel to Thailand often to do their field research. They can comment very competently on the current politics of Thailand. They show genuine understanding of Thai politics and society, although their views cannot escape from European ethnocentrism.

As Ockey himself acknowledges — virtually all of the chapters in his *Making Democracy: Leadership, Class, Gender, and Political Participation in Thailand* have been published elsewhere — this is more of an anthology than a new book. Nevertheless, it is still worth reading. Key themes — and scholarly significant ones — do emerge. The specially written concluding chapter, in particular, provides a strong critique of Modernization Theory, which has been dominant in

explaining democratization in the Third World. It posits that authoritarianism enables economic development, which in turn leads to social mobilization and eventually to political liberalization. In Ockey's view, the emergence of democracy in Thailand — and one can surmise in many other developing countries as well — does not conform to Modernization Theory. In fact, he argues that democratically-oriented political participation in Thailand has always been strong at the local level, thus providing a strong basis for democratization.

Ockey supports this assertion with rich empirical evidence — his research of ten years. He spent a lot of time constructing an argument for a kind of "politics from below" and presents very interesting data thus far ignored by English-speaking researchers on Thai politics. In fact, Ockey's approach here is consistent with his other works about political resistance at the local level, that is in his forthcoming work on "Kru Cham Chamrasnet", a well-respected Member of Parliament from Nakhon Si Thammarat in the 1950s. Furthermore, Ockey points to specific characteristics of Thai democracy, which is based on a mixture of Thai traditions (leadership, class and gender) and foreign political institutions and practices. This is the book's important contribution to a better understanding of Thai democracy, which is currently largely based on Modernization Theory. He pieces together convincing evidence, including the role of *nakleng* and *chaopho*. So here, Ockey is laying his hands on something theoretically significant, a kind of democracy shaped by local cultural practices, social institutions, historical development, and imported foreign institutions and ideas.

Ockey devotes a lot of space to a discussion on the political role of women, who have always been silenced in scholarly works. Ockey should be commended for this. He focuses on key female political figures — Chodchoy Sophonpanich, Supatra Masadit, Prateep Ungsongtham, and Arunee Sito, for example. It is important that these key figures are recognized for their role in shaping the future of Thai politics.

Ockey is an example of an inductive researcher who largely uses empirical data to allow key themes to emerge, rather than imposing a pre-selected theoretical framework on data. Ockey in this sense is quite typical of area specialists, who incidentally have contributed in a big way to new theories and insights about politics in Third World countries. His account of the changes in Thai political parties today sheds new light on the current dynamics of party politics in Thailand, including factional loyalty and coalition building.

Ockey's discussion of the middle class is also noteworthy. He is quite successful in demystifying the notion that the Thai middle class is the maker of Thai democracy. Ockey points out that the Thai middle

class is not quite the same as its Western counterpart: the Thai middle class is unique in the sense that it is driven more by consumerism than democratic ideology, at least since the 1990s. Thus, one should view the role of the middle class in Thai democratization with greater scepticism. Are they then simply opportunistic? This issue is worth pondering given the current role of the middle class in the ruling Thai Rak Thai party, which appears to be diverting Thailand toward authoritarianism. Indeed, this writer could not agree more with Ockey on this. In fact, his line of argument is consistent with other cases in the developing world.

James Ockey, in all of his writings on Thai politics, shows a strong commitment to looking at Thai politics in a different way. He has consistently paid attention to what can be called "politics from below" — provincial influential people or *chaopho, nakleng*, or the politically marginalized slum-dwellers and women. These "data" have been neglected by most academics in the West. So, ontologically speaking, Ockey is quite unique — and his work a praiseworthy contribution.

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***West Papua and Indonesia Since Suharto: Independence, Autonomy or Chaos?* By Peter King.** Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 2004. 231 pp.

Following East Timor's secession from Indonesia in 1999, there has been a shift among activists and writers, especially in Australia, to focus on the future of Papua, often referred to as West Papua or the former Irian Jaya. The rallying cry has been to repeat what was achieved in East Timor, namely, to use international pressure and intervention to split the territory of Papua from Indonesian control. Some of the more recent writings on Papua include John Salford, *United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua, 1962–1969: The Anatomy of a Betrayal* (2002); Richard Chauvel, *The Land of Papua and the Indonesian State: Essays on West Papua* (2003), and Elizabeth Brundige, *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses In West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Contro*l (2004). It is in this context that Peter King's book takes on a particular importance as it goes the furthest in proposing international military, diplomatic, economic and political intervention, especially from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United