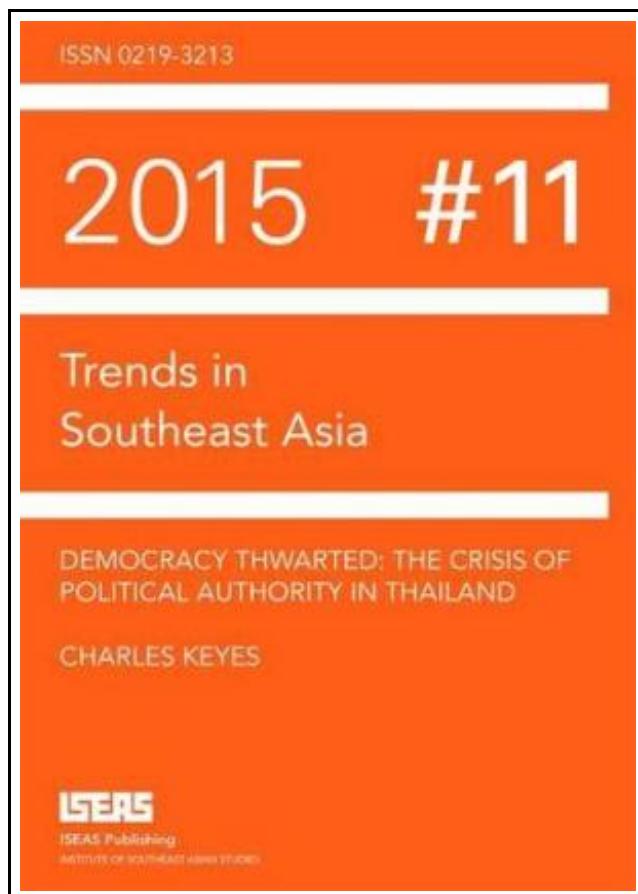


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(Mitchell Kuhn III)

DEMOCRACY THWARTED: THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THAILAND (PAPERBACK)

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ISEAS, Singapore, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: N/A. Brand New Book. The coup in Thailand of 22 May 2014, led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha, ended the country's latest attempt to establish a democratic political order. This coup was but the latest intervention by the Thai military dating at least to the 1950s to prevent any true democratic system developing in Thailand. Instead of a democratic order, the military in alliance with the monarchy, the bureaucracy, and many of the most influential business interests have preferred a system of despotic paternalism first introduced in the late 1950s by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. Thai society is not, however, the same as it was in the 1950s. Democratic movements have emerged among both the urban middle class and the upcountry cosmopolitan villagers and from the mid-1990s to the early 21st century it seemed as though Thailand was developing a strong democratic system. The rise of the populist Thaksin Shinawatra engendered increasing opposition not only from the urban middle class, whose political party was less successful in elections than Thaksin's party, but especially from military, royalist, bureaucratic and many in the business elite. The 2014 coup was intended to ensure, as a previous coup in 2006 had not succeeded in doing, that the populist challenge to despotic paternalism was ended once and for all. The strong criticisms of the proposed new constitution that would ensure the perpetuation of authoritarian rule may make such rule untenable, but perhaps may also lead to more political turmoil in the kingdom of no longer smiling Thai.



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