

Public Opinion Survey on the Government's Economic Policy of the NCPO*

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Abstract

This research gathers the public opinion on the economic policy of the government's past operations (the NCPO) for research analysis, which uses qualitative research, group discussions, and interviews with individuals and business sector entrepreneurs. The research instrument is carefully scrutinized, and the credibility is strengthened by triangulated observations of the environment and the reactions of the people interviewed. The research identifies a significant influence of government policy implementation on the opinions of people and entrepreneurs, which also affect the production potential and economic growth in the future. To effectively use the results of this study for policy recommendation, four Thai-economy supportive factors are to be stressed: (1) government capital factors have a positive effect on long-term economic growth; therefore there is a need to increase investment in large projects; (2) should promote the network of enterprises to be strong in order to create exchange of knowledge within the entrepreneurs group of agriculture and services, and (3) Investment promotion policies that are beneficial to production development attracting foreign investment with high technology to increase production and, (4) have information systems for production and clear indicators to improve the productivity of Thailand effectively.

Keywords: Public opinion; government's economic; policy.

Introduction

Since the coup in Thailand on 22 May 2014, the government under the leadership of General Prayut Chan-ocha, Prime Minister and the leader of the National Peacekeeping Council or the NCPO, took control of the situation. Conflict between political groups is one of the most important problems that affect the lives of people in Thai society and economic activities in the country. Political conflicts that occur, such as the debate within the parliamentary system of democracy or inconsistency between the various political groups, lead ultimately to political gatherings. It may spread as a measure of the suppression of official leading to unrest and political violence. Conflicts are issues that affect the general public and receive attention from public media both inside and outside the country. Seen from various news reports newspapers, radio and television, it reflects the severity of the

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problem in each period, causing changes such as changing the direction of the government's public policy, cabinet adjustments, government changes, dissolution of the coup, etc.

The problem of political instability is an issue that has received academic attention. Study abroad has shown the negative impact of political instability on the country's long-term economic growth, both theoretically (such as Darby et al., 2004; Svensson, 1998) and empirically (Alesina et al., 1996; Barro, 1991; Fosu, 2001), manifested, for instance, in the reduction of the efficiency of policy formulation laws and enforcement, and in reducing the motivation of investment, in particular, the effective long-term projects.

Therefore, political conflicts are one of the institutional factors. To study the political turmoil's long-term economic growth potential, most of these studies were conducted in the manner of analysis by using information of many areas, giving importance to developing countries. Conflict Has reflected through the political crisis, such as government changes and the coup, etc. The research later focuses on measuring uncertainty levels of economic policy, which has a connection dimension with political uncertainty and the divide of political groups by giving more importance to Impacts that occur in developed countries as well.

The analysis focuses on the uncertainty of economic policy, which results in macroeconomic variables such as investment and consumption. The financial markets in this manner must use information showing risk changes and political conflict to explain short-term changes. The study of economic impacts caused by political conflicts can rely on analyzing the data capturing the major causes, such as the political conflicts that affect the uncertainty of the economy as a warning signal for the public to watch, and beware of problems and losses that may arise from future political conflicts as well.

Research Objective

To gather information on public opinion on economic policy and satisfaction with past operations of the NCPO government to be used as a reflection to the government to acknowledge and continue to solve the problems of the country.

Concepts and Theories Used

The definition of the word "comment" has been presented and debated by many scholars, which can be divided into 6 groups, consisting of

The first group considers the opinion caused by learning, not something that has inherited, through both direct and indirect experiences (Arun Ruk Tham, 1997).

The second group views the opinions as evaluations through personal values, which depends on how the person has knowledge or belief in the matter, that will lead to a positive or negative feeling of that person (Gibson, 2000; Prapa Pensuwan, 1994; Sanguan Sutthireerarun, 1979).

The third group sees the opinions having different qualities and concentrations in different forms and levels. That is, comments occur both positively and negatively, and the concentration is both very small and different (Thurston, 1946).

The fourth group considers that comments are permanent things that have happened, and it will be difficult to change (Sak Thai Surakit Bowon, 2002).

The fifth comments are tied to one thing or another. No comments that occurred floating (Sopa Chu Phikun Chai, 1979; Phong Real, 1997; Newstrom and Devis, 2002) and

The last group considers the comments showing the relationship between one person and an object, or one situation (Paphawadee Dulyachinda, 1997).

This research examines the opinions of three elements, namely perception, feeling and behavior tendency, but the elements of the opinions of the researcher were selected under the topic. The public opinion of the NCPO's government's economic policy is limited only to awareness and feelings. Based on the theoretical concept that the researcher has used, as a basis for thinking and explaining the opinions of the public on the economic policies of the NCPO government's past operations, political conflicts and division of divisions have continued academic studies, especially in the study of political economics.

By emphasizing the role of political stability on the country's economic development, the theoretical study of Darby et al. (2004) extends the endogenous growth model concept by adding the role of political divide, which causes political uncertainty and changes in the government affecting the reduction Government investment incentives that promote long-term economic growth.

By making public spending focus on consumption expenditure that results in short-term results, it negatively affects the country's economic growth rate in the long term. These theoretical concepts are supported by the empirical studies, most of which focus on problems that arise in developing countries that are experiencing instability and uncertainty in high level politics, by the first study which gives importance to political stability factors that affect the economic growth of the country, other than factors from other economic theories.

Related Research

The survey of public opinion on the government's policy of the NCPO is mostly in the form of surveys, conducted from time to time. In each issue from the Bangkok Poll, Bangkok University Research Center, together with the Faculty of Economics, conducted a survey of economists from leading organizations on the economic performance evaluation of the Government of Prayut (6 months).

Government overview should be adjusted by the cabinet because it is found that the Minister is lacking of real expertise, coupled with, somewhat restricted framework working as a government official, a lack of new ideas. Professionalism should be promoted. In addition, the delayed operation of the jobs is another concern. There is a small part that should not be adjusted by reasoning that (1) for continuity in implementing policies /

projects, and that (2) the government has less working time on the announced roadmap and therefore should not have to change the cabinet.

Phongsak Leungaram, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, Yuttana Sethapramote University Faculty of Economic Development, The National Institute of Development Administration have, together, studied the economic costs of political uncertainty in Thailand. The study focuses on the economic impact of the political uncertainty in Thailand. The two objectives are, one to create a measure of political uncertainty in Thailand that may help reflect the political conflict and can be used to monitor the political risks in a timely manner and second, in order to evaluate the impact on important macroeconomic variables through the econometric model. Guidelines for measuring political uncertainty by searching for key words from news articles in newspapers, which are classified into 5 areas:

- (1) Conflicts expressed through protest demonstrations
- (2) Disarming measures
- (3) Revolution
- (4) Dissolution of parliament or election
- (5) Constitutional amendment or political reform.

The overall study found that the political uncertainty index in each area can reflect political milestones well and show the trend of rising uncertainty over the period of about 20 years since the year 1997-2016. Moreover, the source of uncertainty in politics has changed significantly, especially in the last 10 years, with the political uncertainty associated with political reform being the main factor of the current Thai political uncertainty.

Considering the impact on the macro economy, the increasing political uncertainty has negatively affected both the short-term economy, especially in private investments, and towards long-term growth potential.

Research Methodology

Data were collected and analyzed based on qualitative research principles, which interviews the stakeholders in the field, performs field-observation, and reviews the relevant documents, academic articles, news, theses, journals, and research information available. Informants are both drawn from the public and entrepreneurs. Discussions have both informal and formal formats. The researchers also make use of field-notes taking of what were observed and reflected upon. Observation, which involves observing the environment and the reactions of the people being interviewed, is non-participatory.

The interview questions were carefully scrutinized by three experts, in checking the tools, the results of the interview, and in ensuring the meaning of media covering research objectives is appropriate.

Data are analyzed qualitatively from the interviewed scripts, and were synthesized also with the observations and the guided theory.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results are summarized as follows:

Thailand's political uncertainty is likely to increase in the horizons, combined with the movement from the assembly calling for the dissolution of the parliament, by the Democratic Alliance Against National Dictatorship or the UDD group until leading to the dissolution of the assembly.

The clash between the authorities and the protesters caused many injuries and deaths, not until the leader of the UDD announced the end of the rally in the reign of Yingluck Shinawatra. It has emerged to put pressure on the Prime Minister to resign and conducted a closing ceremony in the heart of Bangkok in early 2014. The rally was triggered by a general coup through Prayut Chan-ocha, with the news events outside the parliamentary system (Articles with the words related protest Emergency declaration or martial law and the coup d'état) and two aspects related to events in the parliamentary system (Articles that are related to elections and political reform)

The relationship was great during the years 2006-2014, which before 2006, the relationship was not clear. While after the coup of the National Peacekeeping Council (NCPO) in 2014, it was found that the relationship of external uncertainties outside the council and within the council ran in a direction that was opposite, which see that uncertainty in the events related to the protest have decreased the most. Nevertheless, the uncertainty in the election and political reforms remains high in the overall picture.

Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuan Noi Trirat, Director of the Asian Studies Institute and a lecturer at the Faculty of Economics Chulalongkorn University mentioned 4 years of Thai economy in the hands of the NCPO government. The NCPO government's economic development model in the past, the Thai economy is still slow, sluggish, and still has a condition that has no clear guidelines. During the past period, he took up the position. The Thai economy grows only 2-3 percent per year. It is considered a very small number, as the country's potential can actually grow more. Nonetheless, it has changed both from the global economy. The state must accelerate to keep pace with the 4.0 era. There should be infrastructure investment. The rail system reduces congestion and reduces travel costs.

The government has a duty to invested on good infrastructure, to enact laws and regulations such as on rules to drive the business, especially small and medium-sized businesses. Most of the government of the NCPO has not performed well as it should be. Conducive but big capital, and non-competition money will not spread to the people below. There is also lacking of infrastructure in the database system, both public information statistics, in facilitating the creation of social welfare policies. By identifying the profiles of the poor and the needed, it is expected that the government can be more effective in helping the societies. Nevertheless, it is yet to be evidentially seen on the poor really being benefited as of today.

Based on the study of the economic impact of political uncertainty in Thailand, the research of Phongsak Leungaram, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University and Yuttana Sethapramote Faculty of Economic Development of the National Institute of

Development Administration (NIDA) found that consumption of durable goods and consumption of non-durable goods declined as the eruption in political uncertainty.

Besides, the size of the adjustment of consumption of durable goods is more severe than non-durable goods. Durable goods and non-durable goods have decreased -1.3 percent and -0.4 percent respectively. Although the size was not high, it has a clear statistical significance.

When considering the response results based on political uncertainty, the calculated results of various types of consumption responses such as on the separate political uncertainty index, it is found that consumption of durable goods has a high level of response to the increase in uncertainty. In every aspect of politics, the aspect that affects the consumption of durable goods has decreased the most, i.e., political reform decreased by -1.3 percent. The election fell by -1.2 percent and the conflict rally decreased by -1.0 percent. Respectively, while the effect on consumption of durable goods has a lower response size in the case of durable goods, but still has clarity, especially when compared to total private consumption.

By the result of uncertainty in the city in terms of conflict assembly and the declaration of forgiveness for war is the side that has the size of the adjustment of consumption of non-durable goods decreasing the most. From the study of the government's economic policy implementation, the NCPO impacts production and economic growth in the future. To use the study results as an element, suggestions should have a policy of factors that support the Thai economy, namely of the following:

- (1) Government capital factors have a positive effect on the growth of the long-term economy. Therefore, there is a need to increase investment in large projects, as it will cause capital accumulation in the economic system to support future expansion;
- (2) Should promote the network of enterprises to be strong and to create exchange of knowledge within the entrepreneur group by creating an industrial cluster, and to encourage participation in group activities together;
- (3) Improve laws and regulations to facilitate the industrial business, agriculture and services; and
- (4) Investment promotion policies that are beneficial to production development and in attracting foreign investment with high technology
- (5) To increase production and have information systems for production and pointers, with clear measurement to be able to be used to determine the direction of planning in order to develop the productivity of Thailand effectively.

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