

Thailand: Sham Elections Unravel in Humiliation

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Less than half the nation bothers to vote at polling stations uninterrupted by protests indicating a vote of no confidence in both the current regime, or the so-called “democratic process” it presides over.



Image: Nepotist-appointed proxy PM Yingluck Shinawatra, sister of deposed dictator Thaksin Shinawatra would complete the humiliation of the regime’s sham elections February 2, 2014, by placing her ballot witlessly into the wrong box. She would then blame election officials for misdirecting her in yet another display of serial deferral of personal responsibility.

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While the New York Times and other Western media sources supporting the regime of billionaire convicted criminal, fugitive Thaksin Shinawatra attempt to claim protesters disrupted elections on Sunday, February 2, 2014, voter turnout at polling stations unaffected

by the protests tell a different story entirely - especially in the north and northeast regions of Thailand where the regime allegedly draws the majority of its support and where polling went uninterrupted.

In Bangkok Post's article, "[Lowest voter turnout in Samut Sakhon](#)," it reports:

The Northeast region recorded the biggest overall turnout with 56.14 per cent, followed by the North with 54.03 per cent, the South with 44.88 per cent and Central region with 42.38 percent.

The Bangkok Post would compare these turnouts with 2011, where a 74% turnout was recorded, and stated [that the overall voter turnout this year was 45%](#). It should be remembered that voting is compulsory in Thailand.

The abysmal voter turnout alone is an indictment of the illegitimacy of the ruling regime, since not voting was considered a sign of support for the ongoing "[Occupy Bangkok](#)" [campaign](#), now entering its fourth week. However, those that did vote, did not necessarily vote for the ruling party - the only major party on the ballot. Many defaced their ballots in protest, while others checked "no vote." While the regime is gloating over their "victory" in its one-party election, the fact that less than half of the population even bothered to vote means the vast majority of Thais have either lost faith in the process or are directly opposed to the regime, or perhaps both.

That has not stopped the regime's Western backers from claiming victory for the embattled dictatorship. The New York Times in its article, "[Protesters Disrupt Thai Voting, Forcing Additional Elections](#)," claimed:

Protesters seeking to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra disrupted Thailand's general election on Sunday in what appeared to be a prelude to more political upheaval.

The opposition forces, who represent a minority of Thais and are seeking to replace the country's elected government with an appointed council of technocrats, said they would challenge the election results in court while continuing to hold street demonstrations in Bangkok, the capital.

Clearly if more people didn't vote than did, the opposition is not a minority, it is now the majority. And while the NYT attempts to portray the protesters as the "Bangkok establishment," it should be noted that many roads in the north and northeast region claimed by NYT to be strongholds of the regime are blocked by rice farmers cheated by the regime's 2011 vote-buying rice scheme that [has since collapsed in scandal, corruption, and bankruptcy](#).

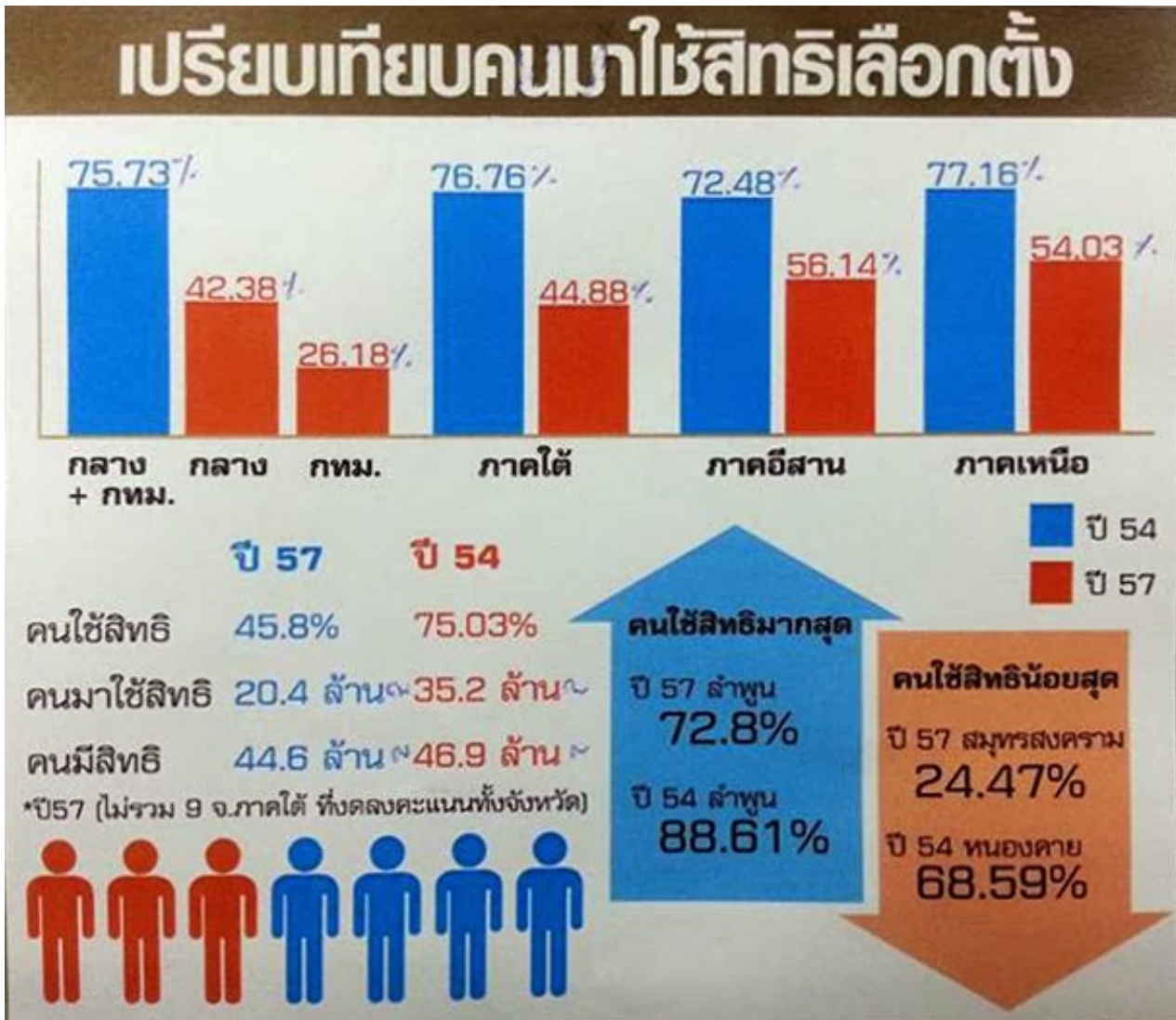


Image: In Thai, the election turnout from 2011 (in blue) versus the election turnout this year (in red). Despite many more eligible voters this year than in 2011, fewer came out to vote. While the turnout at polling stations undisturbed by ongoing protests indicate a drastic vote of no confidence in both the regime and the “democratic process” it presides over, the regime and its Western backers have desperately tried to leverage the charade as a renewed mandate to perpetuate their grip on power.

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The NYT admits that voting went smoothly in the north and northeast but cannot account for the abysmal turnout, there, and elsewhere where voting went on uninterrupted.

Another curiosity was the noticeable lack of violence, indicating that the regime itself has been behind the months of bloodshed overshadowing an otherwise peaceful protest - with the one event they wanted to be a peaceful “success” violence free.

What’s Next

The regime will now be forced to remain in the unfavorable role as “caretaker” for months as it tries to finish an election process that will only yield an underwhelming, questionable mandate, while protesters will continue occupying, marching, and calling for mass mobilizations as they have done so for the past 3 months.

Strategies by the regime and its Western backers revolving around an anticipated military coup have also been utterly confounded.

In the interim, while the regime slowly implodes in on itself, with large sections of its own support base turning on it, protesters who have been focused on street action can now focus on breaking off into groups and focusing on developing their agenda into local organizations and institutions that will displace the corrosive, ineffective, corrupt ministries currently run by the Thaksin Shinawatra regime.

These could focus on [education](#), [agriculture](#), [technology](#), public accountability, [alternative media](#), or a combination of disciplines and solutions that could form the foundation of the necessary reforms and improvements both desired and indeed necessary in Thai society. The protest leadership could also take this time to draft a comprehensive, enumerated Thai and English reform policy for mass distribution to lay to rest the myth that their “reform” is “undefined” and “undemocratic.”

Time is on the side of the protesters, with a regime now reaping the full consequences of its short-sighted unsustainable vote-buying schemes promised in 2011. Thaksin Shinawatra, his proxy regime, and indeed his Western backers will only hemorrhage support, legitimacy, and credibility in the weeks and months to come as their options begin to narrow. Conversely, the protest movement has many options at its disposal – whether it decides to maintain its large scale occupation or consolidate sites – but will stand the biggest chance of success if it takes advantage of its current victory while resisting complacency or overconfidence.

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