

# MAJOR PROBLEMS AMONG THAILAND'S POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE UPCOMING ELECTION

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## ABSTRACT

Thailand which claims to have to a democratic government has recently announced that a general election will be held in 2023, therefore, there have been a lot of speculation as to who would win the general election given the growing number of smaller parties. Therefore, this research paper intends to analyze major problems among Thai political parties and the upcoming general election. The study found that due to a shift in power and with the emergence of young voters, more and smaller political parties are emerging in the country as Thai people generally believe that the major political parties only focus on political bargains. In addition, the study found that one of the major challenges that the Thai political parties, regardless of their history and size, encounter is introducing new faces in leadership positions has become a major hurdle. The upcoming election will have a huge impact on the political affairs within the country as the major parties have already begun allying with smaller parties; therefore, it is pertinent that political parties should carefully select their candidates to represent and should have utmost discipline and organizational skills to win the upcoming election. Both a conclusion and suggestions have been suggested by the researcher.

**Keywords:** Political Parties, Upcoming Election, Democratic government

## INTRODUCTION

Thailand, which claims to have a democratic government, has recently announced that a general election will be held in 2023; therefore, there has been a lot of speculation as to who would win the general election given the growing number of smaller parties and a new vote counting system introduced by the government earlier.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to analyze major problems among Thai political parties and the upcoming general election

## METHODOLOGY

Documentary research using secondary data as a source of information from various researches and documents follow the four-step approach to control the quality of the content

The first step is identifying research questions or objectives to guide the selection of relevant documentary materials and data analysis. The researcher then selects documentary materials that are relevant to the research questions. These may include written texts, photographs, films, recordings, or any other relevant sources. Data collection involves examining and scrutinizing the selected materials, taking detailed notes, and recording observations. Data analysis includes examining the content in detail, identifying patterns, themes, and key points, and using techniques such as content analysis, discourse analysis, or grounded theory. Interpretation involves looking for connections between the data and existing theories, concepts, or literature within a broader social, cultural, or historical context. Findings must be validated through comparing results with existing literature, consulting with other researchers, or using other validation techniques.

Finally, findings should be reported in a clear and concise manner, including methodology, data analysis, and interpretation. The report should also discuss limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

## **RESULTS**

The study found that due to a shift in power and the emergence of young voters about ten millions in Thailand, more and smaller of factional political parties are emerging in the country.

Thais generally believe that the major political parties only focus on political bargains and they usually introduce vote-buying system with populist policies.

In addition, the study found that one of the major challenges that the Thai political parties, regardless of their history and size, encounter is introducing new faces in leadership positions, which has become a major hurdle.

As the major or more popular parties have already begun allying with smaller parties, the upcoming election will have a significant impact on the country's political affairs; therefore, it is critical that political parties carefully select their candidates to represent and have the utmost discipline and organizational skills to win the upcoming election. As mentioned above, political parties in Thailand play a vital role in shaping the political arena, therefore, it can be noted that Thailand like other democratic countries have both large and small political parties. The larger political parties are well organized and often dominate the country's political arena. These parties have huge resources, which enable them to marshal a huge following and support across the country. Contrary to their larger counterparts, the small parties in Thailand are newer and thus characterized by fewer resources and very minimal support. The ability to mobilize national policy and legislation is another notable difference between the small and large political parties in Thailand. Larger political parties, with their strong support and wider geographical coverage, are more likely to participate in national political processes, giving them a greater stake in national politics and a better chance of winning elections than smaller parties.

Small parties often struggle to raise their voice due to their small support bases and hence may not have a better chance to participate in national politics and legislation [8]. Larger parties are using their broader support base and presence in national politics to advance their agenda and sell their policies more than the smaller parties can. Henceforth, the smaller parties are suppressed and may not be in a better position to compete with the larger parties to win a key

position in an election. Since these smaller parties only manage to secure a few positions, mostly at the local level, they will not be able to influence key policies and legislation at the national level. Following this, the policies being fought by key parties in Thailand are meant to advance their agenda and sustain them during political instability [10].

However, despite these differences, small and large parties play a fundamental role in shaping Thailand's political system. While large parties provide stability and continuity, smaller parties are known to bring new ideas and often spearhead oversight roles to ensure that the government delivers on its promises. Small parties catalyze the national debate on an important issue. Overall, the success of a political party in Thailand is measured based on the size of its support base and its ability to connect with the electorate while articulating its vision for the country's future [3]. Approaches the general elections, which are scheduled for May 27, 2023. During this historical election, the Pheu Thai Party is seeking to defeat the ruling coalition, which is backed by military rule, though they encounter a number of difficulties in their aspiration. In this election, the electoral system seems to have been designed to favor the parties that are backed by military rule. The Pheu Thai Party, which is currently the most popular party in Thailand and is projected to win the next election, argues that Thailand is set to bounce back after years of military-backed rule. Notably, the current leadership, headed by Prayut, came into being in 2014, and his goal to solidify his support base has borne no fruit. Prayut's popularity in the upcoming general election has been in the doldrums, as indicated by a number of surveys [12].

One popular and recent survey that utilized a sample size of 1,310 indicates that the Pheu Thai Party will win the upcoming election by 70%. The other six well-known political parties, namely, Move Forward, the PPRP, the Ruam Thai Sang Chart Party, Bhumjaithai, and the Democrat Party, came close to the Pheu Thai Party [13]. Following this, the Pheu Thai Party has continually strengthened and expanded its base by conducting rigorous campaigns both at the grassroots and national levels. More so, the ruling party, the PPRP, has shown little intention of cooperating with the Pheu Thai Party in the event that they win the 2023 general election. Furthermore, the rise of the Pheu Thai Party has raised a lot of speculation that the ruling party is currently on the verge of designing and sponsoring circumstances that are meant to derail the 2023 election. This includes state-sponsored protests meant to buy time for them to negotiate on how they hold power back [7].

Just like in other parts of the world, it is common to see the emergence of new leaders in Thailand's political arena. The political landscape in Thailand is continually changing, hence the need to give room for new leaders to steer the party's agenda. The changes in the party's ideology and priorities, the change in public opinion, and the departure of key leaders in the political arena give room for new leadership. There are several examples of new leadership that has recently emerged to steer Thailand's political parties in the last year. For example, the Pheu Thai Party has witnessed a number of fresh, skilled, and gifted leaders over the years, such as Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit and Sudarat Keyuraphan [5]. These leaders have both contributed immensely to shaping the party's political agenda and advancing policies that have made the party stronger and more able to win key political positions.

Also, the Bhumjaithai party has ushered in a number of new leaders, such as Anutin Charnvirakul. Charnvirakul has been a key figure in Thailand's political arena, which has seen him serve as not only a party leader but also Thailand's deputy prime minister. His rise to

leadership has enormously shaped the ideologies and perspective of the Bhumjaithai party, which has helped revitalize and rejuvenate the party's influence and participation in national policies, debates, and legislation. Despite the challenge of implementing key party structures, often due to the inexperience and resistance of some key leaders, Charnvirakul has been successful in steering the party [4].

Overall, Thailand's political parties have continually experienced the emergence of new leaders who have since been successful in marshaling support within the party's internal structure and among the electorate. Learning about and staying informed on these key changes and the emergence of leadership in the political landscape in Thailand is important to understanding how the political parties have grown over time. Concisely, the emergence of new leadership in Thailand's political party has not only shaped the political party's agenda, but also the national political system [9].

There are massive problems which the Thai political parties are tackling on regular basis since the transit from absolute monarch to a constitutional monarchy. While these problems have strengthened some parties, some have been completely banned and cease from existing. The first challenge is the political polarization often since the country's political landscape has been shaped by a high degree of polarization. In most cases, political parties and candidates often takes strong positions on a number of issues when seeking the party ticket which make it difficult to arrive at a common ground for a number of issues. In most cases, this makes it difficult for members of the political party to work together and often contribute to political instability.

Corruption is also a major issue facing Thai political parties. The problem has been persistent both at the national politics and the party level often being perpetrated by the politicians. Corruption is a serious problem in Thailand, and it has been a longstanding issue within the country's political parties. There have been numerous instances of corruption within Thai political parties, ranging from financial mismanagement to illicit financial dealings. This has led to widespread public dissatisfaction and a lack of trust in the political system. One of the most high-profile cases of corruption within a Thai political party occurred in the 1990s, when the former Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, was accused of using his position to benefit his own businesses and of engaging in corrupt practices. Shinawatra was eventually removed from office and fled the country to escape corruption charges. Other instances of corruption within Thai political parties have included the misuse of public funds, embezzlement of party funds, and the use of political connections to secure contracts and other benefits. This type of corruption undermines the integrity of the political system and erodes trust in the government. It is important for Thailand to address this problem and work towards greater transparency and accountability within its political parties [11].

Also, most political parties in Thai Lack of transparency. Some parties in Thailand have been criticized for a lack of transparency in their operations, including in relation to campaign financing and the decision-making processes within the party [10]. This can make it difficult for voters to hold parties accountable and can contribute to a lack of trust in the political system. Limited representation is also another issue since some critics have argued that Thai political parties do not adequately represent the interests of all segments of society, and that certain groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, are underrepresented in the political process. More so, Thai politics has sometimes been influenced by powerful outside interests, such as

business groups or military leaders, which can shape the agendas and priorities of political parties and candidates. This can make it difficult for parties to truly represent the interests of the people they serve. Overall, these are just a few of the major issues and challenges that Thai political parties have faced over the years. It is important for parties to address these issues in order to build trust and credibility with voters and to ensure a healthy and functional political system [14].

Lastly, disagreement among political parties in Thailand is common. In Thailand, political parties have historically had a high level of disagreement, and this has sometimes led to political instability and gridlock within the government. One of the main sources of disagreement among Thai political parties has been the issue of political reform. Different parties have had different ideas about how to address issues such as corruption, transparency, and accountability within the government. In recent years, Thailand has also seen a rise in polarization and extremism within its political parties, with some parties adopting more radical positions and using divisive rhetoric. This has further fueled disagreement and made it more difficult for parties to work together effectively [1].

## **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK**

As Thailand aims to achieve a political stability, the new election will be of great importance for the country as well as for its economy. Due to the Thailand's past political turmoil, Thailand is often seen as a country that has a weak democratic government. The weakness in its democratic system is mainly caused by the involvement of military in the political affairs. The current government has been criticized for its lack policies that would revive the economy; however, the economic slowdown is also a reflection of COVID-19 pandemic and the global economy is currently suffering. Thai government's decisive action may raise eyebrows of many, but the premiere has assured that the country is in a stable state and he has recently announced a general election that would take place sometime in May 2023.

From the 2019 general election, it is evident that one major party may not be able to fill in the required quota therefore forcing it to ally with factional parties. Since 1932, there have been two major parties in Thailand which can be simple identified as one backed by the military and one not supported by the military. Nonetheless, these two major parties cannot simply win the upcoming election on their own because of a new vote counting system introduced by the government in 2019. Therefore major political parties in the country would be more careful in calculating their votes and seats for the candidacy. On the other hand, the new general election would also bring new leadership who would be assigned to propel the party with its transforming ideologies. As the younger generation will have a major voice in the upcoming election, one of the major problems for many political parties would be choosing the right leader that would appease the young voters. However, the new leaders' biggest responsibility would be keeping all the party members united and being transparent in all their electoral activities. In sum, like many other democratic countries, Thai political parties should focus on being more transparent and should work towards a better economy by staying away from populist policies

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