The Asia Foundation

THE 2010 NATIONAL SURVEY
OF THE THAI ELECTORATE

Exploring National Consensus
and Color Polarization

About The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports Asian initiatives to improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; sustainable development and the environment; and international relations. Drawing on nearly 60 years of experience in Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research.

With 18 offices throughout Asia, an office in Washington, DC, and its headquarters in San Francisco, the Foundation addresses these issues on both a country and regional level. In 2010, the Foundation provided more than $98 million in program support and distributed nearly one million books and journals valued at over $42 million.

Preface

This report presents the findings of The Asia Foundation (Foundation)'s second national survey of the Thai electorate, which was conducted through face-to-face interviews with a random, representative sample of 1,500 individuals of voting age from across the country between September 17 and October 23, 2010. The 2010 National Survey of the Thai Electorate builds on the original national survey that the Foundation conducted in 2009 to explore citizen views on national reconciliation and political reform and to measure citizen knowledge of and attitudes towards democracy and democratic institutions in Thailand. The 2010 survey revisited the core themes explored in the 2009 survey, to which were added a series of questions relevant to the political events of April-May 2010.

In addition to informing its own country program strategy, the Foundation conducts surveys of this kind with the aim of providing lawmakers, government officials, political leaders, academics, civil society organizations, the media, the international community, and other stakeholders and observers with information about the opinions of ordinary Thais from all backgrounds on the state of governance, the political environment, and national development priorities. This report includes chapters on the national mood; democracy in Thailand; democratic values, tolerance, and freedom of expression; political processes; public confidence in the integrity and political neutrality of democratic institutions; the influence of color politics; political conflict and security; options for political reconciliation; and the polarization of Thai politics.

Since the emergence of the Yellow and Red movements, many observers and commentators have insisted that Thailand is deeply divided into two polarized camps. In simplistic terms, the view holds that one color movement is doing whatever is necessary to keep former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra from returning to power while the other is working equally hard to have him pardoned to return to power again; one is supported by the traditional ruling elite while the other is supported by the under-privileged rural masses; and one is intent on thwarting any democratic growth to ensure the continuation of elite power while the other is fighting for truth, justice, and democracy. The 2010 National Survey offers an opportunity to test the degree to which Thailand has become politically polarized. Does the data support the contention that Thai society is divided along color lines? Among respondents, to what degree were the views of political activists and those professing loyalty to the Yellows or the Reds polarized? If polarized, to what degree were their views a reflection of a polarized Thai society? An analysis of public response to several sets of questions explored through the National Survey may provide insights on the question of color polarization in Thai society.

The 2010 National Survey is the latest in a series of democracy assessments that the Foundation has conducted across Asia. Beginning with a voter education survey in Indonesia in 1999, the Foundation has undertaken numerous public

opinion polls, follow-up surveys in Indonesia, and a succession of surveys in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, and several other countries. These surveys are available on the Foundation website:
www.asiafoundation.org/publications.

This National Survey report is the product of a seamless team effort that involved local partners and Asia Foundation colleagues working under the overall direction of country representative Kim McQuay.

The survey was implemented with the technical support of a professional Thai survey firm, MIAdvisory. Our thanks to Dr. Sunchai Anumanrajadhon and his colleagues Acharanand Lelahuta, Pornchinee Wongthongsook, and Dr. Phillip Hughes for their superb technical support, and to Tim Meisburger for leading the design of the survey questionnaire. Special thanks to Dr. James Klein, who recently completed a distinguished 15-year tenure as country representative for Thailand, for his contribution as lead analyst and principal author of the report, and to Kim McQuay, Tim Meisburger, Yupa Phusahas, Ruengrawee Pichaikul, Sarah Rooney, Eelynn Sim and Pauline Tweedie for serving on the editorial board and fine-tuning the report.

We are grateful to Dr. Jaturong Boonyarattana Soontorn and Dusit Deeprawat for translating the report to Thai, with the support of Jularat Damrongviteetham, Santi Nindang, and Suphannika Thantiviramanon; to Ampika Saibouyai and Pittaya Sasiwatpaisit for their kind permission to reproduce photographs that appear on the cover; to Arpaporn Winijkulchai, Molly Muller and Nancy Kelly for cover design; to Bleho Media for design and production of the report, and to S.Asia Press (1989) for printing it.

We hope that the survey findings will prove useful to those who seek a greater understanding of the current state of democracy and governance in Thailand, and that the report will contribute to a process of political dialogue and reconciliation that is guided by the expectations and aspirations of the Thai people. We welcome reader feedback.

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The National Mood

The survey results suggest that Thais are not as politically divided as the media, politicians, color advocates, and other observers and commentators frequently suggest. Only 12% identified themselves as either Red or Yellow (here and subsequently termed "strongly Yellow" or "strongly Red"), with another 12% indicating that they were "slightly leaning" toward one color or another (here and subsequently termed "slightly Yellow" or "slightly Red). The majority of the population (76%) professed no color attachment.

Overall, the nation was slightly less pessimistic than it was in 2009, when 58% stated the country was going in the wrong direction.[1] In 2010, only 54% believed that to be the case, with a slight majority (51%) confident that the situation would improve over the next year. While 60% had cited the poor economy as the biggest problem facing Thailand in 2009, this perception decreased significantly to only 35% in 2010. This may be a reflection of the fact that, in 2009, only a third (33%) of respondents had thought their personal economic situation had improved or remained unchanged over the past two years, compared to 59% in 2010. Political conflict moved up the list of critical problems, cited by 42% of respondents versus 24% in 2009.

Democracy in Thailand

In both 2009 and 2010, nearly half (48% in 2009 and 49% in 2010) of respondents described democracy in terms of rights and freedoms, with another third (36% in 2009 and 34% in 2010) describing it in terms of elections. However, compared to 2009, in 2010 citizens conveyed a different perspective of their rights and freedoms, with a third (35%) describing these in terms of freedom of speech or opinion compared to only 12% in 2009. In 2009, respondents had stressed equal rights (20%) and freedom of action (16%) compared to only 3% and 11% respectively in 2010.

In 2010, respondents again overwhelmingly (93%) agreed that democracy is the best form of government. However, there was a decline in the number of citizens who strongly believed democracy is the best form of governance, from over two-thirds (69%) in 2009 to less than half (47%) in 2010. Nevertheless, nearly seven in ten respondents remained satisfied with how democracy in Thailand functions and there

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[1]This and other references to 2009 citizen views are based on The Asia Foundation's first national public perception survey: Constitutional Reform and Democracy in Thailand: A National Survey of the Thai People (The Asia Foundation: 2009).

was no change between 2009 and 2010 in how democratic they thought Thailand was, with just under two-thirds (64%) stating Thailand is very or somewhat democratic in 2010.

Similarly, there was no change among those who believed that, in spite of their differences, Thais are united by common values (97%). Among those willing to compromise with minority voices, there was no significant change (54%), but there was a significant rise from 68% to 76% in 2010 among those who would reject a strong, unelected leader when democracy did not seem to be working.

Democratic Values
There was no change between 2009 and 2010 in the high level of political tolerance (79%) exhibited by respondents. Thais do not let party or color affiliation interfere with friendships, with only a small minority of 6% stating that they would stop seeing a friend because of his or her party affiliation. Only 7% would end a friendship over color.

There was a significant increase from 80% in 2009 to 91% in 2010 among respondents who believed that people in their area felt free to express their political opinions. At the same time, citizens were split on the issue of censorship, with 48% stating that it was more important to let everyone have their say than to impose censorship and 46% stating media controls were sometimes necessary to help promote social peace and stability. Citizens were equally split (46%) in stating whether or not they had personally experienced censorship of a newspaper, magazine, radio station, television program, or website that they had used during the past year.

A majority of respondents (59%) in both urban and rural areas believed that the best democratic government will be the most representative of society rather than just the best educated. Nevertheless, a significant majority (75%) believed that the prosperous and well educated have a duty to protect and guide the less fortunate and less educated.

Political Processes
Thai interest in politics declined from 71% in 2009 to 66% in 2010, although this remains significantly higher than among peers in other countries in the region such as Indonesia (28% in 2003), Cambodia (55% in 2003), and Mongolia (46% in 2009). Only 6% of the voting age population attended a political meeting over the past two years. At the same time, there was a slight increase from 55% in 2009 to 58% in 2010 in the number of citizens who strongly or somewhat believed that the national government does not care very much about what people

think. In spite of this increase in the perception of political alienation, a quarter (25%) of respondents believed in 2010 that they had a lot or some influence over national government decisions, up from 18% in 2009.

Democratic Institutions

As in 2009, the only institution that received a combined very high or high integrity rating in excess of 50% was the Courts of Justice; however, it fell 5% from 64% in 2009 to 59% in 2010. Approval ratings for the police were unchanged at 17% between 2009 and 2010. In 2010 the government established the Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ITRC) to investigate the violence of the past two years and make recommendations on how to promote national political reconciliation. Only 28% of respondents gave the ITRC high integrity marks, leaving the majority of the population (58%) concerned about its integrity and 14% unable to make a judgment, although 61% of respondents had a lot or a little trust in the ITRC.

In the case of institutional neutrality, the Courts were again the only institution with a positive rating in excess of 50%, with 63% of respondents perceiving them be generally neutral and unbiased. The military again ranked second after the Courts in terms of neutrality, although the majority (56%) believed it is sometimes or often biased. At the bottom of the politicization rating was the police, with 81% of respondents believing that the police are sometimes or always biased.

Color Politics

As noted previously, less than a quarter of respondents (24%) had any color affiliation: 10% Yellow and 14% Red. There was no consensus in citizen understanding of the primary objectives of the Yellow movement. Twenty-two percent of respondents stated that they did not know what the primary objective of the Yellows is, while others understood the Yellow movement variously as one opposed to former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (21%); motivated by private political gain (14%); or focused on the pursuit of democracy (11%) or the establishment of a new government (8%). Respondents were no clearer about the primary objective of the Reds. They understood the Red movement variously as one attempting to promote the formation of a new government (26%); to protect former Prime Minister Thaksin (19%); or to promote democracy (15%). Fourteen percent did not know what the primary objective of the Reds is.

Only 4% of respondents would be swayed by color when choosing a candidate in the next election. The significant majority (88%) would base their

selection on party affiliation, while 8% had yet to make up their mind.

Only a very small minority of 2% of respondents participated in any type of demonstration during the past two years. In reflecting on a series of demonstrations over the past four years, two-thirds (66%) of respondents believed that large demonstrations should be banned. The only sub-group of which a majority (54%) believed that large demonstrations should be allowed was the Reds. A smaller majority (58%) believed the use of force to end the May 2010 demonstrations was wrong, with a third (33%) approving and 10% stating that they did not know. In assessing blame for the deaths that occurred during the demonstrations, there was no strong consensus. Over a third (37%) faulted the government, while 40% blamed the demonstrators and 4% blamed both sides. A significant number of citizens (19%), however, did not weigh in on this issue. A strong majority (82%) believed that more violence would result from political conflicts in the next year.

Political Conflict and Security
The majority of respondents (52%) perceived the current divisions or polarization in society to be based on opposing ideologies and politics. Only 18% nationwide regarded the divisions as based on economics and even fewer (9%) as an urban-rural clash. Sixty-seven percent of respondents were concerned by different standards of justice (double standards) among different groups.

In 2010, a majority of respondents (63%) continued to see the army as an important institution that helps safeguard and stabilize the country (63%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) continued to think that the Thai army was about the right size, although this was down from 69% in 2009. By a slight majority (52%), most respondents believed that the army should have primary control for security during demonstrations, with just over one-third (38%) believing security should be left to the police. Less than a quarter of respondents indicated that they would fear interacting with either the police (24%) or the army (23%). The majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they would experience a lot of fear (20%) or some fear (39%) in criticizing the Reds, with a similar percentage (58%) indicating that they would experience similar fear in criticizing either the Yellows or the government.

Options for Reconciliation
A significant majority of respondents (79%) believed that a reconciliation process should be initiated to reduce conflict in advance of elections.

When presented with the issue of constitutional and electoral reforms before elections, there was less consensus among respondents. A quarter (26%) wanted elections to be held as soon as possible, while 29% wanted to wait until reforms were passed and 40% were willing to wait until the current administration's constitutional term of office ends.

A slight majority of respondents (52%) thought that elections would be free and fair, while 39% thought otherwise, and 9% did not know. A strong majority (69%) indicated that they would be a lot more (15%) or a little more (54%) confident that elections would be fair if there were international and local non-partisan election observers watching the elections. Just over half the respondents (55%) stated that they would prefer to have Thai national observers for the election, although a third (37%) said either Thai or foreigners would be acceptable.

Half of respondents (51%) did not think amending the 2007 Constitution would resolve the ongoing political conflict, and were clearly divided on how the Constitution might be amended. Just over a quarter (27%) wanted to proceed with no amendments, while 14% preferred to revert to the 1997 Constitution. More significantly, 40% did not know what to do, with 23% stating that they did not know the difference between the two charters and another 17% were not willing to give their opinion or did not know.

Between 2009 and 2010 there was a decline in the percentage of respondents that did not want to pardon politicians who had been convicted by the courts, from 69% to 62%. There also was a decline in the percentage of respondents who were not willing to pardon the instigators of the 2006 coup, from 57% to 52%. The general public was a bit more lenient in their attitude toward prosecuting the military for its crackdown on demonstrators in 2010, with 52% saying that military personnel should not be prosecuted, and a third (37%) stating that they should be, with 11% unsure. Respondents were divided on the issue of prosecuting Reds on terrorism charges, with 48% opposed to and 44% in favor of prosecution. Respondents had a slightly more moderate attitude toward the Yellows, with 50% willing to drop charges. By a slim majority of 50% to 41% most respondents did not want to see previously banned politicians be reinstated, in the interests of political reconciliation.

A solid majority of 61% believed that decentralization would improve governance and reduce tensions, down from 69% in 2009. A strong

majority of respondents (62%) also believed that decentralization might reduce the Red-Yellow conflict. Between 2009 and 2010 there was a significant increase (from 48% to 58%) in the percentage of respondents who thought that decentralization would help resolve the long-term conflict in the three southern border provinces.

A majority (55%) thought that assistance from the international community would likely (19%) or probably (36%) help in resolving Thailand's political impasse. The majority (56%) stated that if the international community offered to help, the government should accept the offer.

Polarization of Thai Politics

While there is ample statistical data from the survey to support the argument that there is a significant political divide between Yellows and Reds, the data also suggests that there was considerable internal diversity of opinion or factionalism within the two political movements.

The data does not support the contention that Thai society is divided along color lines; indeed, analysis of 49 specific survey questions demonstrates that: (i) either both colors supported the convictions of the majority of the population (23 cases); (ii) one color supported the majority, while the other held an extremist minority view at odds with the majority of citizen views (16 cases Yellows with majority, 5 cases Reds with majority); or (iii) there was no national consensus among those with no color affiliation (76% of the voting age population), while the Reds (14%) and Yellows (10%) embraced opposite extremes (5 cases).

Introduction

The 2010 National Survey of the Thai Electorate is The Asia Foundation (Foundation)'s second national public perception survey in Thailand. The first survey, conducted in 2009, focused on constitutional reform and democracy in Thailand. The 2010 survey was designed to gauge changes in the mood of the voting age population between 2009 and the tumultuous political events of the first half of 2010.

The 2010 survey was designed to take account of a variety of democracy and governance issues, including an opportunity to consider the degree of political polarization that exists in contemporary Thailand. Since the emergence of the Yellow and Red movements, politicians, political analysts, the media, and other commentators and observers have routinely claimed that Thailand is divided into two polarized camps. One method of estimating the degree of this polarization is to calculate the number of survey respondents on each side of the Yellow-Red divide as a portion of total respondents. As reported in Chapter 1, those who identified themselves as strong color supporters represent just 12% of all respondents (5.1% Yellow and 6.6% Red). Another 13% of respondents identified themselves as slightly leaning toward a color (5.2% Yellow and 7% Red). Together, these strong and slightly leaning supporters of the color movements represent only a quarter (25%) of the total respondent base. These findings suggest that assertions of deep divisions among the population may have been over-estimated.

The survey questionnaire contained 111 questions, covering topics such as democracy in Thailand, political processes, color politics, conflict and security, and options for reconciliation. Just over half of the 2010 survey questions are the same as those probed in the 2009 survey, which enables a close comparative assessment of how Thais have been affected by the political turmoil that marked 2010. Are Thais now more or less pessimistic about the direction in which the country is going? How important is democracy in Thailand, and what does it mean to people in practical terms? In the wake of the political crisis, are some democratic values now seen as less important than others?

New questions added to the 2010 survey sought to understand how Thais view the conflict and what they think of subsequent efforts to ameliorate the tensions that sparked political events in 2010: What do people see as the root causes of the divisions in Thai society? How has freedom of speech been affected? Do people feel censorship is compromising their access to information and what degree of censorship

are they prepared to accept? On the prospect of reconciliation, the survey further probed what solutions people believe might work in Thailand, by asking whether the 2007 Constitution should be amended, who should be held legally accountable for the May 2010 violence and its aftermath, and when a general election should be held.

To provide a more accurate representation of the voting age population, the survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews. Generally, surveys in Thailand are administered by the telephone, but this has led to unrepresentative data as the sample population has been limited to households with a fixed, landline telephone. According to the 2010 United Nations Information Economy Report, just 10.37% of the Thai population has a fixed line. Consequently, national surveys conducted by telephone are unreliable indicators of the views held by almost 90% of the population. Accordingly, for the purposes of this survey face-to-face interviews were conducted by the Foundation's technical partner MIAdvisory (MIA), a professional marketing and polling firm based in Bangkok, between September 17 and October 23, 2010.

A representative sample of 1,600 people drawn from 30 provinces was interviewed. To compare the results with those of the 2009 survey, however, the analysis which follows in this book uses only 1,500 responses from 27 provinces (excluding the 100 respondents from the three southernmost provinces of Yala, Narathiwas, and Pattani). When the Foundation conducted its 2009 national survey on reconciliation and political reform, the three southernmost provinces were not polled because, at the time, there was a lack of qualified local enumerators with the capacity to conduct the interviews in local dialect. The Foundation has since supported the training of a pool of 25 enumerators living in the Deep South. In 2010 the team conducted a follow-on Foundation survey on Democracy and Conflict in Southern Thailand, which focused exclusively on the three southern border provinces. The same team conducted the interviews from the Deep South for this survey.

While the survey was designed to achieve a 3% margin of error on national estimates, readers should bear in mind that the 3% margin of error applies to results based on the full sample. For results based on a sub-sample of the national respondent base – for example, the Red or Yellow responses – the margin of error will be larger than 3%. This is because those results are based on smaller sample sizes. As footnoted in several places in the text, the margin of error for Red is 7% and Yellow 10%. Further information about the survey methodology can be found in Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 1
THE NATIONAL MOOD

1.1 The Yellow/Red Divide

Politics is complicated in Thailand and it is impossible to represent all opinion in five choices but, if you had to choose one, which of the following would most closely describe your opinion? (Q39)

Yellow: 10%   Red: 14%

⊞ Yellow   ☰ Leaning Yellow   ⊞ Leaning Red   ■ Red
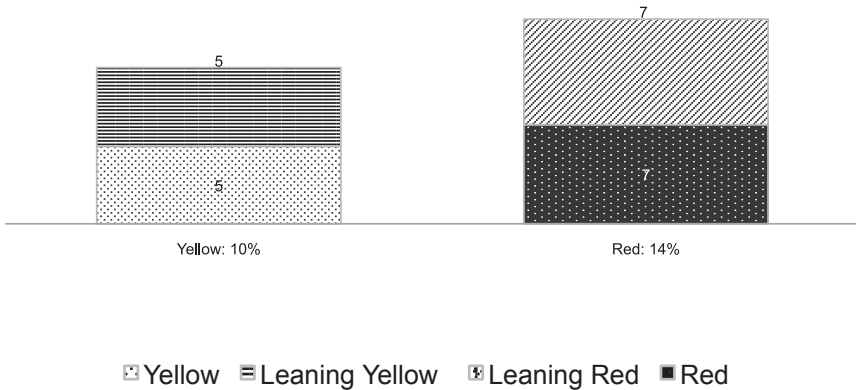
Over the past three years, the national mood of Thailand has often been cast by the domestic and international media, political advocates and pundits, politicians, and color campaigners as reflective of a political power struggle between the Yellows (People's Alliance for Democracy or PAD) and the Reds (United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship or UDD); or, more simplistically, between opponents and supporters of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Responses to a series of questions in the Foundation's 2009 National Survey suggested the nation was not as politically divided as some believed. Rather, the Reds and Yellows appeared to represent vocal minorities of no more than 30% (15% each), with more than 70% of the population professing no color loyalty or association.

In the Foundation's 2010 National Survey, respondents were directly asked their color affiliation. Consistent with the 2009 findings, only 5.1% identified themselves as strongly Yellow and 6.6% as strongly Red. A small minority of the population "very slightly leaned" toward one color or another (5.2% Yellow and 7% Red), leaving a strong majority of 72.6% that professed to have no leanings toward either color,[2] with 3.5% either stating that they did not know or refusing to answer.

Leaning to No Color or Neutral
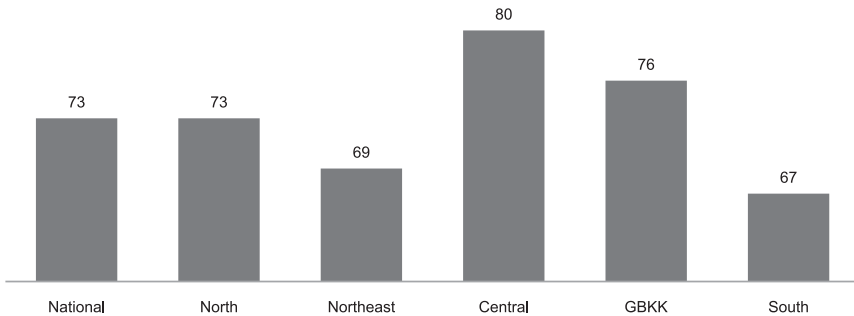
A solid majority (73%) of the national population[3] identified themselves as leaning toward no color or being neutral. As a percent of total geographic population, the Central Region had the highest concentration of no colors (80%), with the lowest concentrations in the South (67%) and Northeast (69%).

No single color represented more than a quarter of the population in any one region, although nearly a quarter of Southerners (24%) were Yellow. In no region did total color representation (both Yellow and Red) approach one-third of the total population. Just over a quarter of the populations in the South (27%), North (27%), and Northeast (26%) claimed a color affiliation. The Central Region had the least affiliation (18%), followed by Greater Bangkok[4] (23%). The North had the highest concentration of Reds (20%) followed by the Northeast (18%), Greater Bangkok (12%), the Central Region (8%), and South (3%). The South had the highest concentration of Yellows (24%), followed by Greater

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[2] Respondents were shown a card with five responses to select from, including: "Very slightly leaning toward": ค่อนข้างเอนเอียงไปทางกลุ่ม
"Lean toward neither or neutral": ไม่อิงกับกลุ่มสีใด/เป็นกลาง

[3] The terms population, voters, and citizens throughout this study refer specifically to respondents of voting age (18 years) and older. Accordingly, while youth under the age of 18 may have supported a color, they are not captured in this survey.

[4] For purposes of this survey, Greater Bangkok includes Bangkok and the adjacent urban provinces of Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, and Samut Prakan.

Bangkok (11%), the Central Region (9%), the Northeast (8%), and the North (7%).

⊡ Yellow ■ Red

| | North: 27% | Northeast: 26% | Central: 17% | GBKK: 23% | South: 27% |
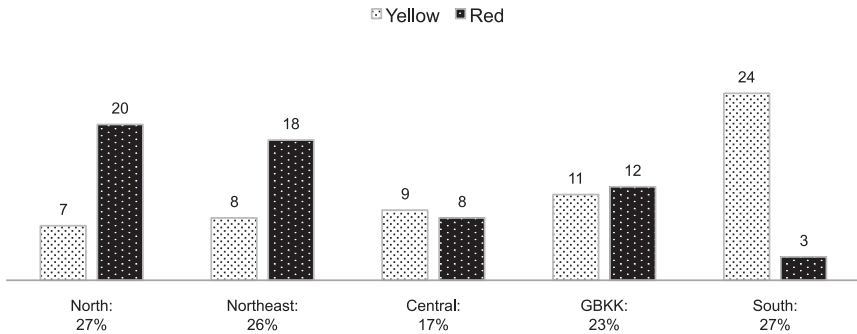
Throughout this analysis, the terms "Yellow" and "Yellows" are inclusive of both those slightly leaning toward Yellow and core or solid Yellows. In a similar manner, the terms "Red" and "Reds" are inclusive of both those slightly leaning toward Red and core or solid Reds. "No Color" includes the 3.5% who stated that they did not know or refused to answer. Where significant differences occur between solid and slightly leaning supporters, colors are clearly differentiated as either *slightly leaning* or *core* or *solid* supporters.

1.2 Direction of the Country

Generally speaking, do you think things in Thailand today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction? (Q1)
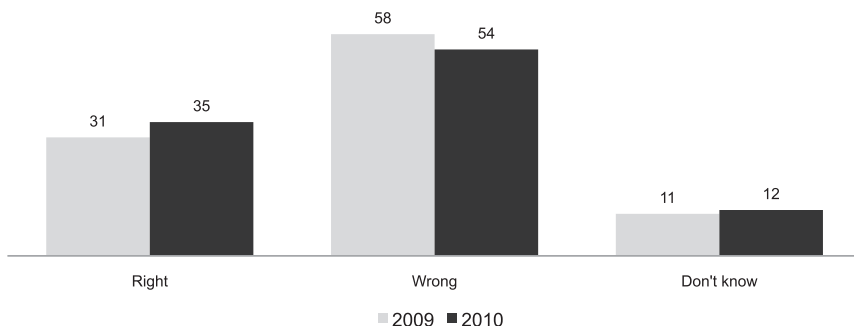
Thai citizens in 2010 were slightly less pessimistic about the direction that the country was taking than they were in 2009. While more than half (54%) continued to believe the country was moving in the wrong direction, this was down 5% from 58% in 2009. Residents of the Northeast and Central Region continued to be the most pessimistic (with 63% and 62%, respectively, expressing the view that things were going in the wrong direction), while those in the South and Bangkok continued to be the most optimistic (with 48% and 41%, respectively, indicating that things were going in the right direction). Rural respondents were slightly more pessimistic (55%) than urban residents (51%). Those with a bachelor's or higher degree were far more inclined to the view that the country was going in the wrong direction (62%) than primary school graduates (50%).

The only group in which the majority were optimistic about the direction of the country were the Yellows (56%), particularly the core Yellows (64%). In sharp contrast, the most pessimistic group was the Reds (86%).[5]

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[5] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10%, core Yellows +-12% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

1.3 Direction of the Country: Reasons for Wrong Direction

Why do you say that? (Wrong direction reasons) (Q2)[6]

	2009	2010
Poor economy	64	63
Political conflict	41	53
Corruption	7	17
Government	15	10
Southern conflict	9	8
Lack of democracy	4	6
Floods/Drought	2	5
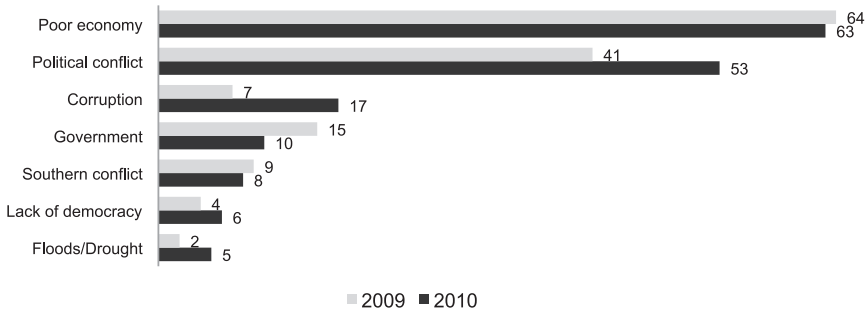
Among those who thought the country was going in the wrong direction, the poor economy (63%) and political conflicts (53%) remained the first and second most cited reasons, although there was a substantial 12% increase in citations of political conflict between 2009 (41%) and 2010 (53%). Corruption as a reason also increased significantly from 7% in 2009 to 17% in 2010, while the government decreased from 15% to 10%.

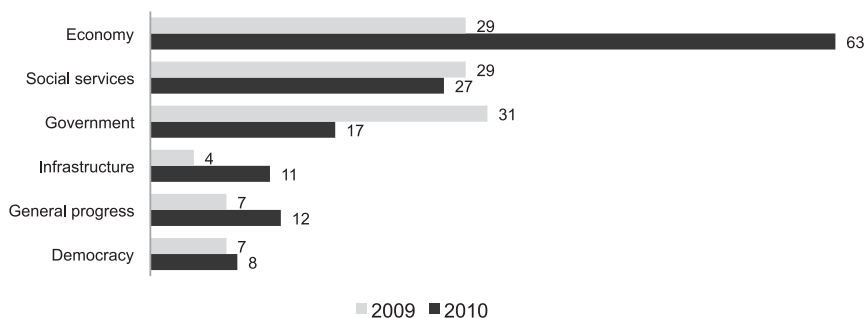Northerners were the most sensitive to economic issues (70%), particularly urban northern residents (76%), while Bangkok residents continued to be the least sensitive (49%).

Northerners were the most concerned about political conflict (64%), while those in areas adjacent to Bangkok were the least concerned (40%), with 55% in Bangkok.

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[6] Respondents were allowed to give two responses so percents add to more than 100%.

1.4 Direction of the Country: Reasons for Right Direction

Why do you say that? (Right direction reasons) (Q2)[7]

	2009	2010
Economy	29	63
Social services	29	27
Government	31	17
Infrastructure	4	11
General progress	7	12
Democracy	7	8

■ 2009 ■ 2010

Among those who thought the county was going in the right direction, the number who cited the economy more than doubled, from less than a third (29%) in 2009 to almost two-thirds (63%) in 2010. Those in the rural Northeast and urban Central Region most often cited the economy (71% and 70%, respectively), while those in the areas adjacent to Bangkok and the rural South were the least persuaded by the economy (39% and 42%, respectively). Yellows were more likely (63%) to mention the economy than Reds (43%) as a positive factor.[8]

The percentage of respondents that pointed to the government as the second most likely reason for optimism fell by almost half from 31% in 2009 to 17% in 2010, with improved social services taking second place (27%), just marginally lower than in 2009 (29%). While there was no significant difference among Yellows and Reds in citing the role of the government as a basis for optimism, Reds were more likely than Yellows to mention democracy and political liberalization, as well as the development of infrastructure such as roads and schools.

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[7] Respondents were allowed to give two responses so percents add to more than 100%.

[8] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

1.5 Biggest Problem Facing Thailand

In your view, what is the biggest problem facing Thailand? (Q3)
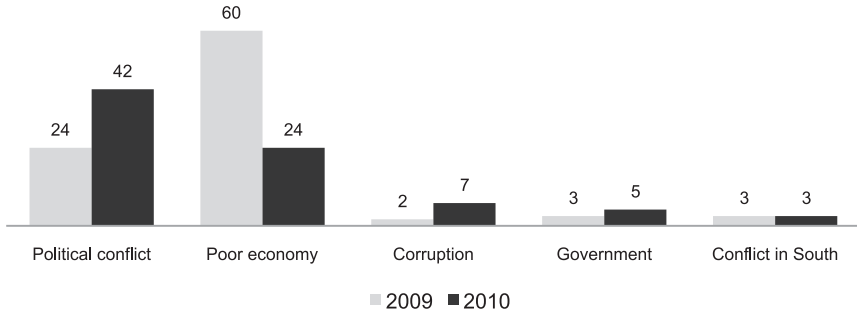
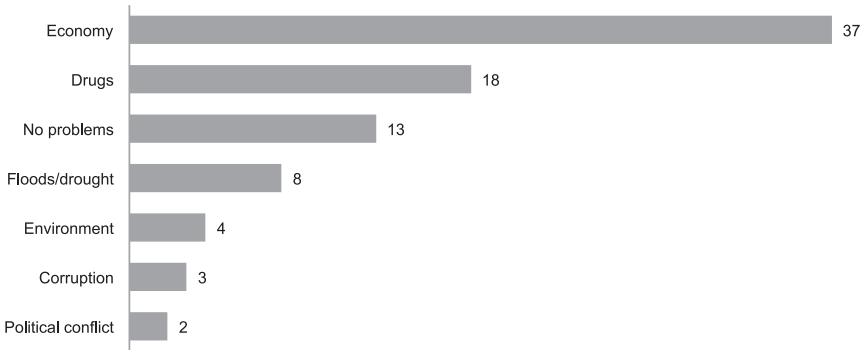The consensus in 2009 was that the biggest problems facing Thailand were the economy (60%) and political conflicts (24%). This was reversed in 2010, with a third (33%) of respondents indicating that the economy was the most important problem and 42% citing political conflict. Residents of the South (44%), urban North (40%), and Bangkok (38%) continued to note the negative consequences of the economy, which received the lowest emphasis in the Central Region (29%). Primary school graduates cited the economy 10% more (39%) than university graduates (29%). Reds were more likely (42%) to mention the economy as a problem than any sub-group, with only 29% of Yellows expressing concern with the economy.[9]

Respondents in the North and Central Region (50%) expressed the greatest concern for political conflicts (45% in the Northeast), while those in the South and Greater Bangkok were the least concerned (26% and 31%, respectively). Reds and Yellows expressed equal concern (39%). Those in Bangkok, where the most serious violence occurred, were the least concerned (24%), expressing almost equal concern about corruption (23%) compared to the national average of only 7%.

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[9] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

1.6 Biggest Problem in Local Area

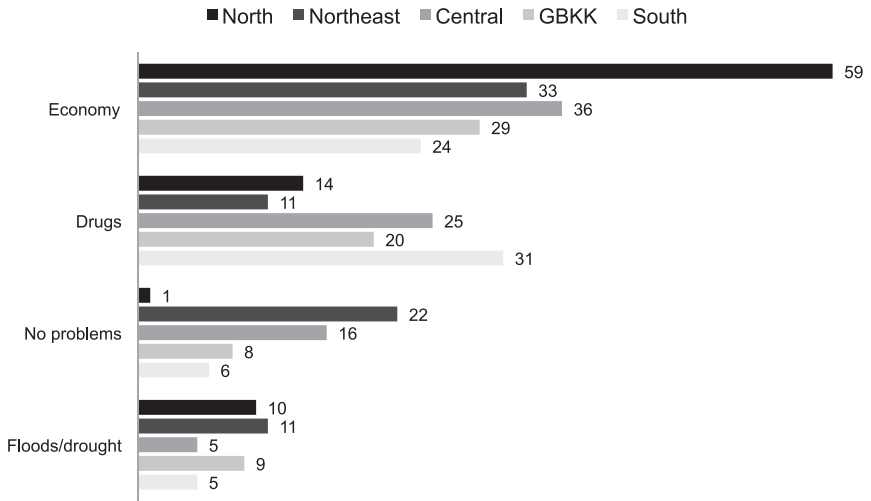*And what about in this area, what is the biggest local problem? (Q4)*

Economy — 37
Drugs — 18
No problems — 13
Floods/drought — 8
Environment — 4
Corruption — 3
Political conflict — 2

When queried about the biggest problem in their own area, 37% of respondents cited the poor economy, followed by drugs (18%), floods[10] or drought (8%), environmental degradation (4%), and corruption (3%). Only 2% mentioned political conflict, while 13% stated that there were no significant problems in their area. This question was not asked in 2009.

There was no significant difference on local concerns between men and women, although women were more worried (20%) about drugs than men (16%). Similarly, although there was no major difference in the problems identified by Reds and Yellows, Reds were slightly more apt to cite the poor economy (44%) than Yellows (32%).[11]

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[10] It should be noted that this survey was implemented just prior to the severe flooding that occurred in 2010.

[11] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

■ North ■ Northeast ■ Central ■ GBKK ■ South

Economy
- 59
- 33
- 36
- 29
- 24

Drugs
- 14
- 11
- 25
- 20
- 31

No problems
- 1
- 22
- 16
- 8
- 6

Floods/drought
- 10
- 11
- 5
- 9
- 5

Citizens in the North registered greatest concern about the local economy (59%), while Southerners were the least concerned (24%). On the other hand, Southerners (31%) and residents of the Central Region (25%) were more troubled (31%) about drugs than those in other parts of country. Northeasterners were equally worried about drugs, flooding, and drought (11%). While the media, color advocates, and politicians often portray the Northeast as a hotbed of discontent, nearly a quarter (22%) of respondents from that region stated that there were no significant problems in their area.

1.7 Future Prospects

Thinking about the future, do you see the situation in Thailand improving or deteriorating over the next year? (Q5)

Legend: ■ North ■ Northeast ■ Central ■ GBKK ■ South

Better
- North: 45
- Northeast: 47
- Central: 54
- GBKK: 52
- South: 64

Worse
- North: 42
- Northeast: 39
- Central: 38
- GBKK: 21
- South: 24

Don't know
- North: 13
- Northeast: 15
- Central: 7
- GBKK: 26
- South: 12

The 2010 survey posed the additional question to respondents of whether they saw the situation in Thailand improving over the next year. A slight majority (51%) thought the situation would improve, while just over a third (35%) thought it would deteriorate. The balance of 14% did not know or care to speculate. Those in the South were the most optimistic (64%) about the future, while a slight majority in the Central Region (54%) and Greater Bangkok (52%) shared a sense of optimism. Those in the North were the most pessimistic (42%).

Men were slightly more optimistic (53%) than women (49%). Education had an impact on optimism, with 57% of diploma and vocational graduates and 56% of university graduates predicting improvements over the next year, as opposed to only 48% of primary school graduates. Similarly, those in the upper income levels were more optimistic (57%) than those with lower incomes (48%).

Reds and Yellows were diametrically opposed in their vision of the future, with 66% of Yellows anticipating improvements compared to only 28% of Reds.[12]

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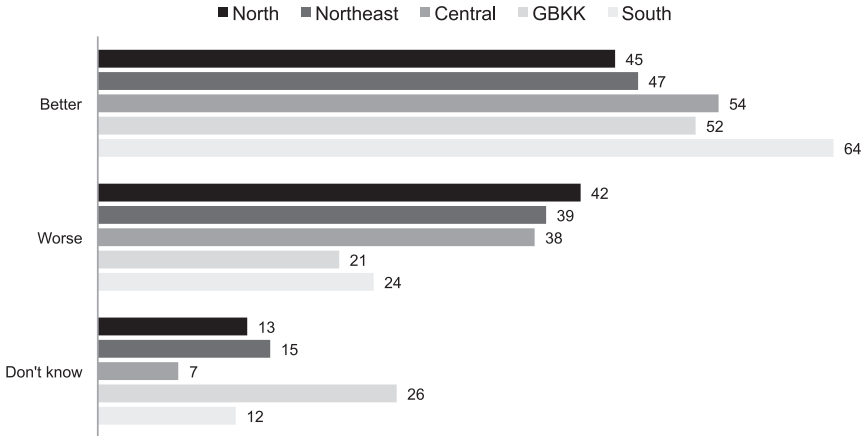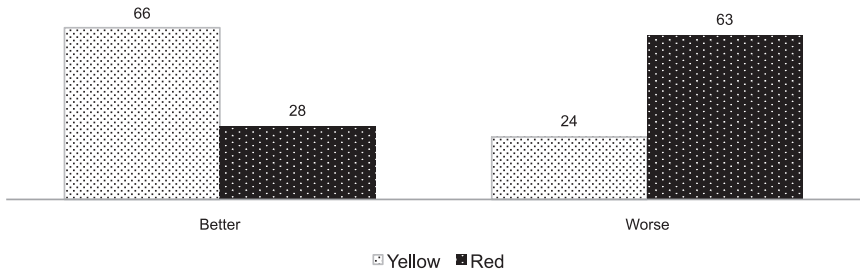[12] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

1.8 Economic Well-Being

Thinking about your own personal economic situation now compared to two years ago, would you say you are much better off, better off, worse off, much worse off, or about the same? (Q6)

	Much better	Better	Worse	Much worse	
2009	1	14	54	13	18
2010	3	32	36	6	24

■ 2009 ■ 2010
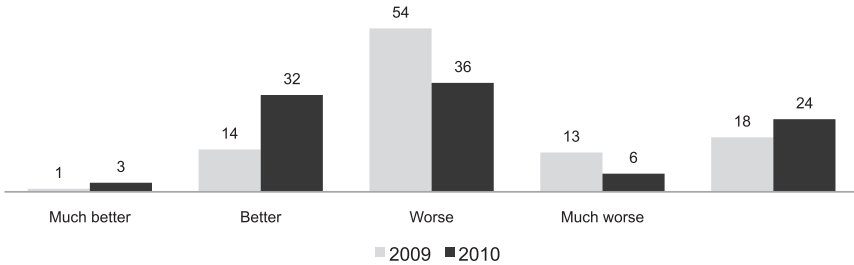
Increased optimism about the direction of the country, as well as optimism with respect to the year ahead, may be a reflection of significant improvements in the economic well-being of respondents. In 2009 only 15% perceived themselves to be much better off or better off than two years before. This increased to 35% in 2010, with another 24% saying they were about the same. Respondents who saw themselves as worse off or much worse off fell from two-thirds (67%) in 2009 to less than half of all respondents (42%) in 2010.

■ 2009 ■ 2010

	North	Northeast	Central	GBKK	South
2009	13	12	17	14	20
2010	32	32	39	24	49
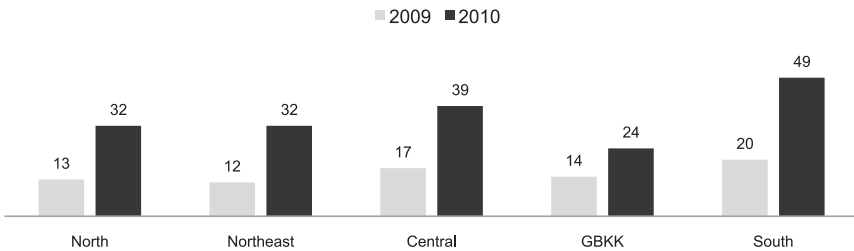
This improvement in economic well-being occurred across both urban and rural communities and all provinces. Twice as many urban respondents stated that they were much better off or better off in 2010 (30%) than in 2009 (14%), and more than twice (38% from 15%) the number of rural residents felt the same. At the provincial level, Southerners reported the highest levels (20%) of economic well-being in 2009, which more than doubled (49%) in 2010. Similar increases occurred

in the Central Region (from 17% to 39%), the Northeast (from 12% to 32%), and the North (13% to 32%). Only in Bangkok did economic well-being fail to double (15% to 24%), although it did so in the adjacent provinces of Greater Bangkok (14% to 32%).

Youth aged 18-19 were the only age group in which more than half (51%) perceived their economic well-being to be much better off or better off, especially in the South (72%) and Greater Bangkok (55%). The exception was 18-19 year olds in the North, 53% of whom said they were worse off or much worse off. Others groups among which more than 50% perceived that they were worse off were Northerners aged 20-29 (60%) and 30-39 (53%), as well as those aged 30-39 in the Northeast (52%).

Two-thirds (66%) of those who described themselves as Red perceived themselves to be worse off or much worse off compared to only 26% of those who described themselves as Yellow, 48% of whom thought they were much better off or better off and a quarter (25%) of whom felt about the same.[13]
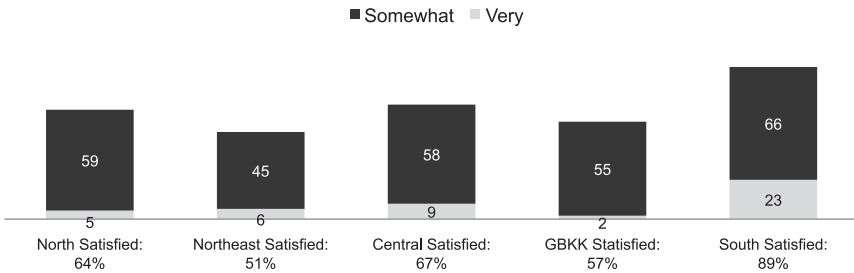
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[13] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

1.9 Satisfaction with Government

Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the job the national government is doing? (Q7)

■ Somewhat Satisfied   ■ Very Satisfied

48	55
5	8
2009: 53%	2010: 63%

Satisfaction with the government's performance increased significantly from 53% in 2009 to 63% in 2010, with rural residents (64%) slightly more satisfied than those living in urban areas (60%).

■ Somewhat   ■ Very

59	45	58	55	66
5	6	9	2	23
North Satisfied: 64%	Northeast Satisfied: 51%	Central Satisfied: 67%	GBKK Statisfied: 57%	South Satisfied: 89%

Satisfaction levels were significantly higher (89%) in the South than other regions, especially the Northeast (51%). Yellows and Reds were once again diametrically opposed, with 85% of Yellows satisfied with the government (of whom a quarter, 25%, was very satisfied); and 76% of Reds dissatisfied (of whom nearly a quarter, 24%, were very dissatisfied).[14]
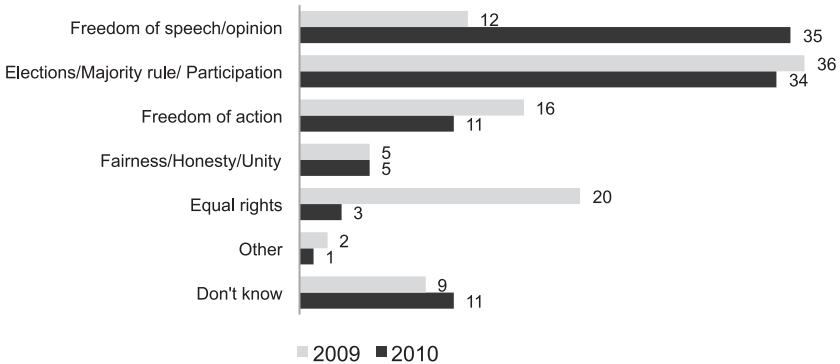
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[14] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 2
DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND
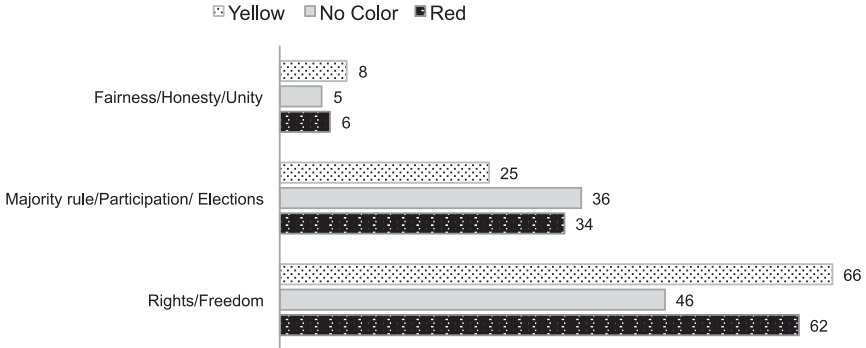
2.1 Understanding of Democracy

A lot of people in Thailand today are talking about democracy. If a country is called a democracy, what does that mean to you? (Q8)

In both 2009 and 2010, almost half (48% in 2009 and 49% in 2010) of the respondents described democracy in terms of rights and freedoms, while another third (36% in 2009 and 34% in 2010) described it in terms of elections. Urban residents were far more likely (53%) to cite rights and freedoms than rural residents (47%). Greater Bangkok residents were significantly less likely (26%) to stress elections compared to citizens in the North and Central Regions (37%). There also was a slight increase in the number of 2010 respondents (11%) who could not provide a characteristic of democracy, compared to 9% in 2009.

Citizens had a different perspective of their rights and freedoms in 2010 compared to 2009. In 2010, a third (35%) described these in terms of freedom of speech or opinion compared to only 12% in 2009. In 2009, respondents had stressed equal rights (20%) and freedom of action (16%) compared to only 3% and 11%, respectively, in 2010.

More than half of respondents in the South (57%) and in Greater Bangkok (55%) described democracy in terms of rights and freedoms, while those in the Northeast were the least likely (42%) to describe democracy in those terms. Respondents in Greater Bangkok were the most likely to cite speech and opinion as a characteristic of democracy (45%), while those in the Northeast were the least likely (30%) to do so. Northeasterners headed the list of respondents who were unable to provide a characteristic of democracy (17%).

⊡ Yellow   ☐ No Color   ▣ Red

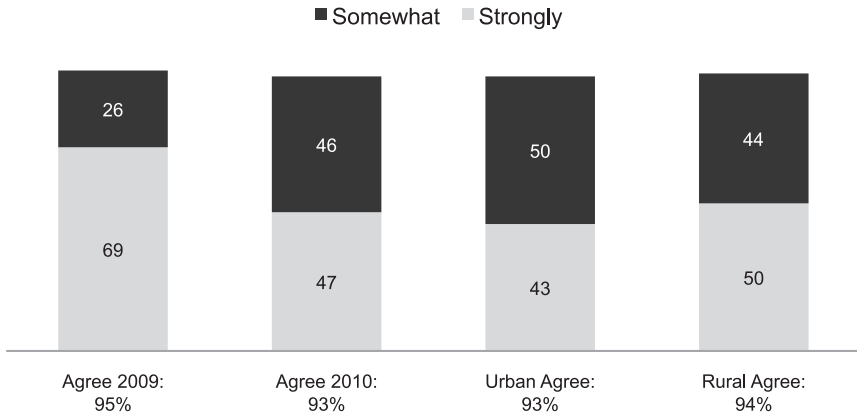| Category	Yellow	No Color	Red
Fairness/Honesty/Unity	8	5	6
Majority rule/Participation/ Elections	25	36	34
Rights/Freedom	66	46	62

There were significant differences between respondents who professed color affiliation and the majority of the population. While 46% of the population with no color affiliation described democracy in terms of rights and freedoms, nearly two-thirds of color affiliated respondents cited rights and freedoms.[15]

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[15] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

2.2 Support for Democracy

Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree? (Q10)

■ Somewhat ■ Strongly

|	Agree 2009:95%	Agree 2010:93%	Urban Agree:93%	Rural Agree:94%
Somewhat	26	46	50	44
Strongly	69	47	43	50

Between 2009 and 2010 there was a slight decline in support for democracy as the best form of government from 95% to 93%. This was seen most significantly in the drop in the number of citizens who strongly believed democracy is the best form of governance, from over two-thirds (69%) in 2009 to less than half (47%) in 2010. There was a 6% drop in overall support for democracy among rural Northerners from 98% in 2009 to 92% in 2010, and a 27% drop in strong support from 80% to only 53%.

The city of Bangkok was the only area that saw no drop in overall support for democracy (91% in both 2009 and 2010), although there was a 30 point drop in strong support from 57% to 27%. The area with the least change was the South, where overall support dropped only half a percentage from 93.3% to 92.8% and strong support dropped seven points from 54% to 47%.

Although these changes were relatively similar across gender and age groups, those aged 50-59 reported the greatest drop, of 28%, in strong support from 74% in 2009 to 46% in 2010.

2.3 Compromise with Minorities

Some people say: "Decisions should be made based on what the majority wants, even if the minority disagrees." Others say: "It is more important to get as much agreement as possible between the minority and majority, even if the majority must compromise." Which is closer to your view? (Q9)
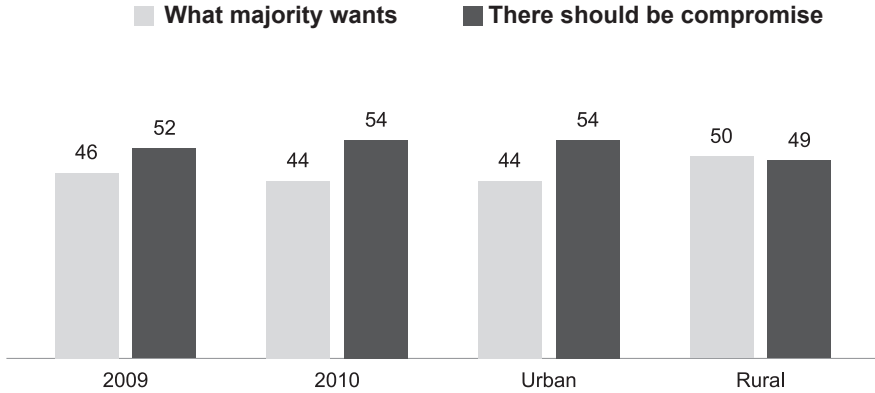

After a year of political confrontation, there was a significant rise in the number of respondents who are willing to compromise on issues with minorities. In 2009, respondents were split, with 46% insisting on majority rule and 52% prepared to compromise. In 2010, 54% of citizens nationwide and in urban areas preferred compromise. Rural citizens remained split, with 50% for majority rule and 49% for compromise. The most willing to compromise (64%) were citizens in the three provinces adjacent to Bangkok (versus Bangkok at 49%), the rural North (57%), and the urban Central Region (56%). Rural Southern residents were the least willing to compromise (63% for majority rule), followed by rural residents of the Central Region (57%).

Women were much more open to negotiation (54%) than men (47%). Youth aged 18-19 were more open to compromise (55%) than their elders aged 40-49, who preferred majority rule over compromise by 51% to 47%.

2.4 National Identification

Despite our differences, as Thais we have many values that unite us. To what extent do you agree or disagree? (Q11)
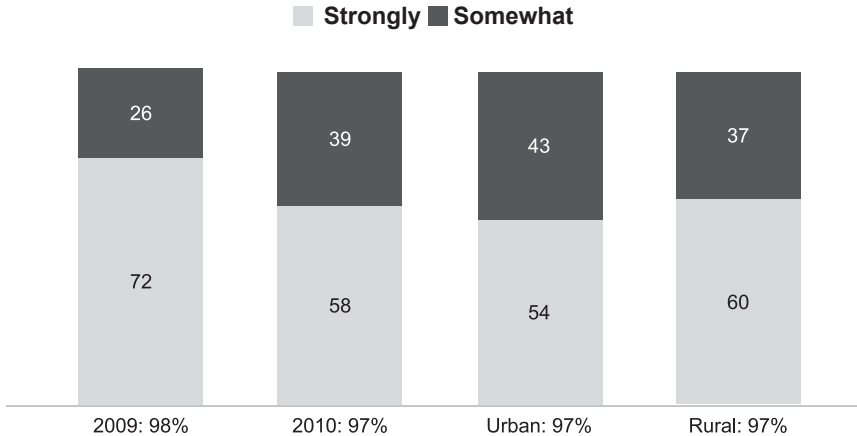

Although respondents nearly unanimously (97%) continued to believe that there is more that unites them than divides them, the intensity of this conviction lowered significantly between 2009 and 2010, with those expressing a strong conviction falling from 72% to 58%. This decline in strong conviction was especially pronounced among urban residents, falling from 72% in 2009 to 54% in 2010. The largest overall decline (both strong and somewhat) was seen in the rural Central Region, from 100% in 2009 to 94% in 2010, and a drop of 17 points in strong agreement from 77% to 60%. The most significant decline, a 42 point drop, in strong support was in the provinces adjacent to Bangkok, from 81% in 2009 to only 39% in 2010, followed by a 19 point drop in the Northeast from 79% to 60%.

There was no significant variation by gender, age, education, income, or color, but for the exception of those who identified themselves as slightly Red having the lowest level of agreement on this point.

2.5 Support for Authoritarianism

On some occasions, democracy doesn't work. When that happens there are people that say we need a strong leader who doesn't have to be elected through voting. Others say that even if things don't function, democracy is always the best. What do you think? (Q12)

Legend: ■ 2009   ■ 2010

Strong Leader: 30 (2009), 22 (2010)
Democracy Best: 68 (2009), 76 (2010)
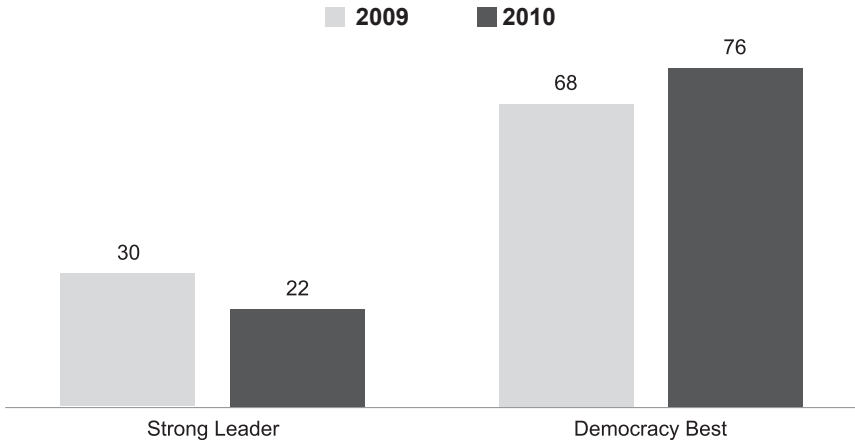
Support for democracy increased from 68% in 2009 to 76% in 2010. Bangkok showed the most significant change, with a 17-point increase from 67% in 2009 to 84% in 2010. Bangkok and the North (also 84%) were the areas most supportive of elected leadership. The most dramatic change was in the rural Northeast, which in 2009 was the most supportive of an authoritarian leader and where support for an unelected leader plunged from 36% to 20% in 2010. The rural South also saw a decline in support for authoritarianism, from 35% in 2009 to 31% in 2010. The urban South stands as the most supportive (33%) of an unelected leader in 2010.

As in 2009, the results for this question remained fairly constant across gender, age groups, education, and income, although 32% of those in the 18-19 year old group nation-wide would support an unelected leader (44% in the South). While 39% of Yellows were more likely to accept an authoritarian leader, only 15% of Reds would do so.[16]

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[16] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.
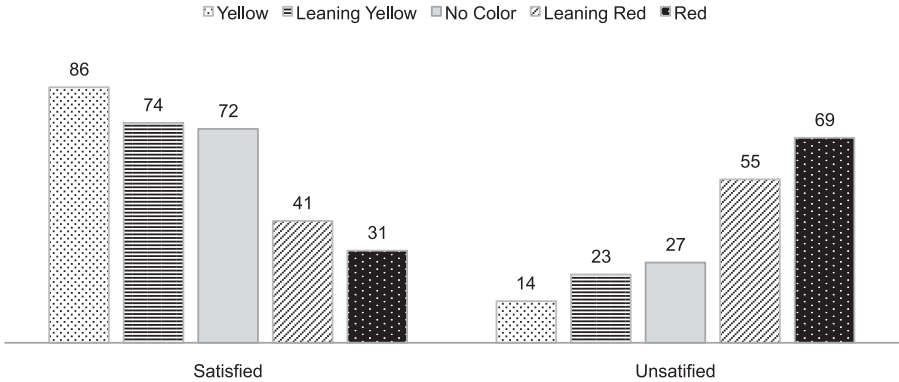
2.6 Satisfaction with Democracy in Thailand

In general, would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the way democracy works in Thailand? (Q13)
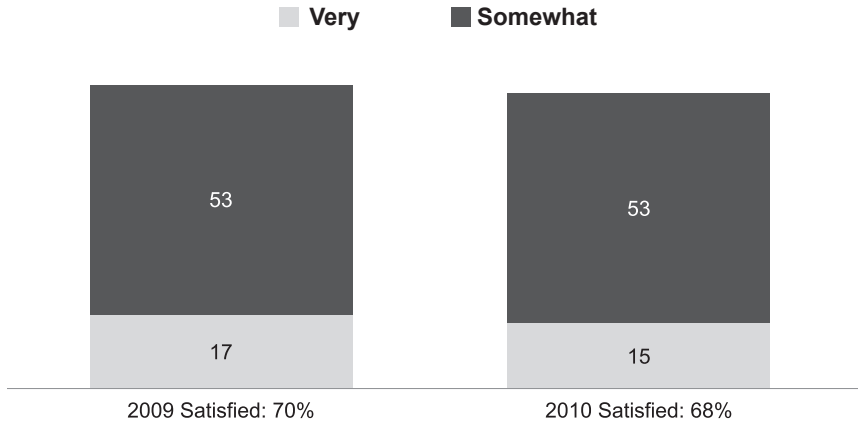
Very   Somewhat

53	53
17	15
2009 Satisfied: 70%	2010 Satisfied: 68%

Nearly seven in ten respondents remained satisfied with how democracy in Thailand functions, although there was a marginal decline from 70% to 68% between 2009 and 2010. Regionally, the South remains the most satisfied (89%) and the Northeast (37%) and the North (36%) the least satisfied. Dissatisfaction in Bangkok, which had been the most dissatisfied in 2009, declined from 37% to 29% in 2010.

There was only marginal variations by gender, age, education, and income, although those aged 18-19 were 86% satisfied (100% among this age gro up in the South). Those aged 30-39 were the least satisfied (38%), together with those in the upper income strata (37%).

⊡ Yellow ≡ Leaning Yellow ☐ No Color ⊠ Leaning Red ■ Red

Yellows expressed higher than average satisfaction (80%) with the way democracy works in Thailand while Reds expressed higher than average dissatisfaction (62%). At the same time, there was significant variation within both the Yellow and Red ranks between solid colors and those only slightly leaning. Those slightly leaning Yellow, while still above the national average of 70%, were less enthusiastic (74%) than the core Yellows (86%). Similarly, only 55% of those slightly leaning Red were unsatisfied compared to 69% of core Reds.[17]
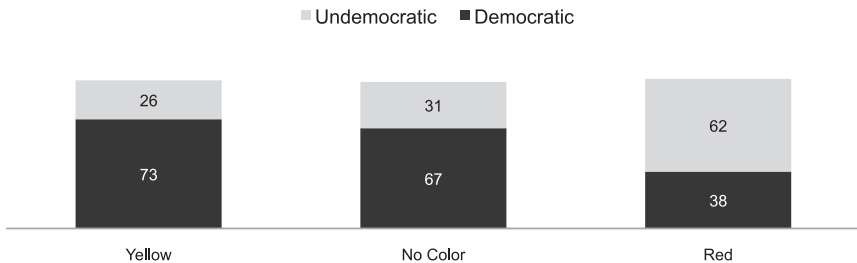
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[17] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

2.7 How Democratic Is Thailand

In your opinion, is Thailand very democratic, somewhat democratic, a little democratic or undemocratic? (Q14)

■ Somewhat ■ Very

|	
48	51
15	13
2009: 63%	2010: 64%
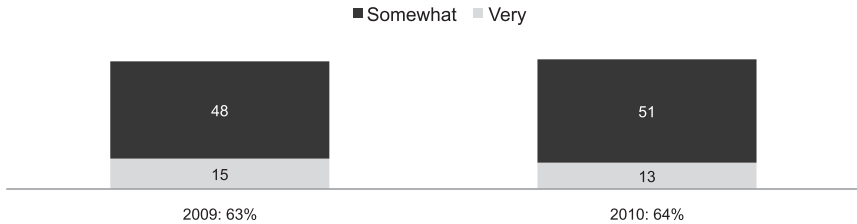
There was only marginal change between 2009 and 2010, with just under two-thirds stating that Thailand is very or somewhat democratic (63% in 2009 and 64% in 2010). Although there was some differentiation in answers by age, education, and region, it is possible that these correlate to the wide variation in responses by Yellows and Reds and their age, education, and regional distribution.

■ Undemocratic ■ Democratic

Yellow	No Color	Red
26	31	62
73	67	38

Yellows and Reds were diametrically opposed on the issue of Thai democracy, with 73% of Yellows stating that Thailand is very or somewhat democratic and 62% of Reds stating that it is very or somewhat undemocratic.[18] Viewed from the perspective of the total

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[18] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

voting age population, 63% perceived Thailand to be democratic, which includes 8% who identified with the Yellows and 5% who identified with the Reds.
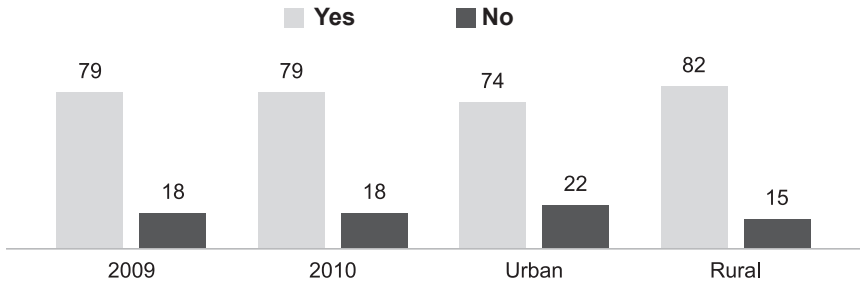
⊡ Yellow   ▢ No Color   ■ Red

Democratic: 64%   Undemocratic: 35%
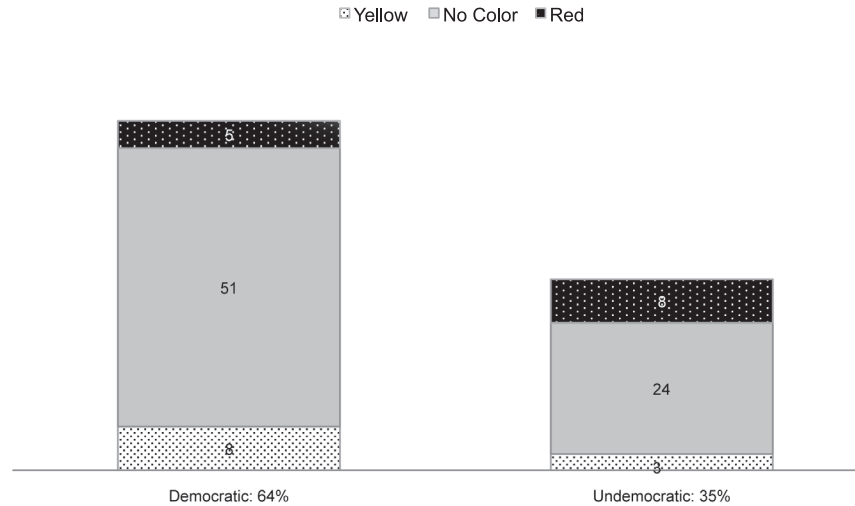
CHAPTER 3
DEMOCRATIC VALUES

3. 1 Political Tolerance

Do you think that all political parties, even the ones most people do not like, should be allowed to hold meetings in your area? (Q18)

Yes   **No**

	2009	2010	Urban	Rural
Yes	79	79	74	82
No	18	18	22	15

There was no change between 2009 and 2010 in the high level of political tolerance (79%) exhibited by respondents. Men became slightly more intolerant of political meetings (up to 16% in 2010 from 14% in 2009), while women became slightly more tolerant (down to 19% in 2010 compared to 22% in 2009).

The North remained the most tolerant (89% compared to 87% in 2009), while Bangkok slipped significantly from 87% in 2009 to only 69% in 2010, perhaps due to the violent political demonstrations. Citizens with only a primary school education were far more tolerant (72%) than the 36% of those with a post-secondary education who opposed such meetings, together with 37% of upper income households.

There was no significant difference among the color groups regarding political tolerance.

Suppose a friend of yours supported a party that most people did not like. Would you accept that, or would it end your friendship? (Q19)
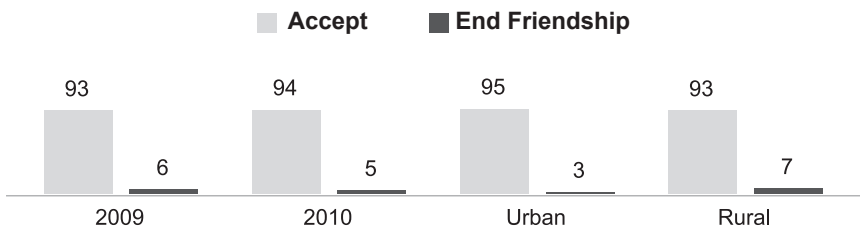
Accept   **End Friendship**

|	2009	2010	Urban	Rural
Accept	93	94	95	93
End Friendship	6	5	3	7

Suppose a friend of yours supported a color movement (Red or Yellow) that most people did not like. Would you accept that, or would it end your friendship? (Q20)

Total **Urban** **Rural**

	Accept	Stop Seeing
Total	92	7
Urban	94	4
Rural	90	8
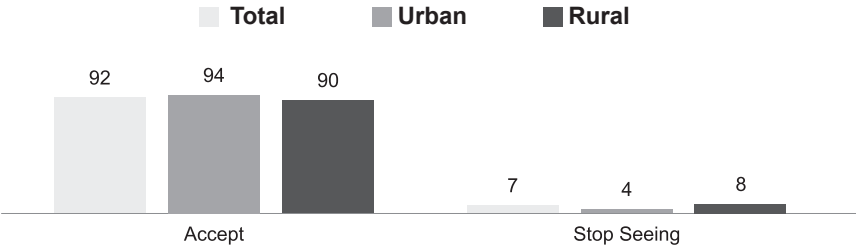
Thais do not let party or color affiliation interfere with their friendships; only a small minority (6%) of respondents would stop seeing a friend because of their party affiliation, while only 7% would end the friendship over support for a color movement. Those most likely to end a friendship over differences in political party affiliation are those aged 60 and over (14%), particularly in the North (26%) and Northeast (20%). This same age group also was most likely (15%) to reject a friend because of color affiliation; again, particularly in the North (23%) and Northeast (16%).
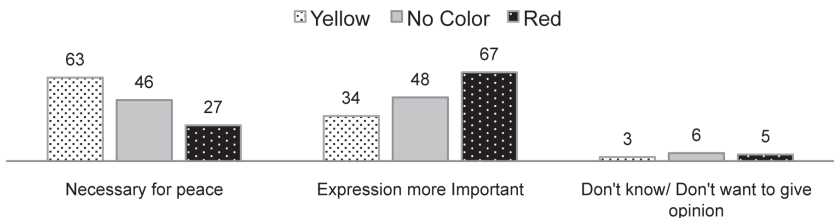
3.2 Freedom of Speech

Do people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live? (Q21)

Yes No

80 91 16 8

2009 2010
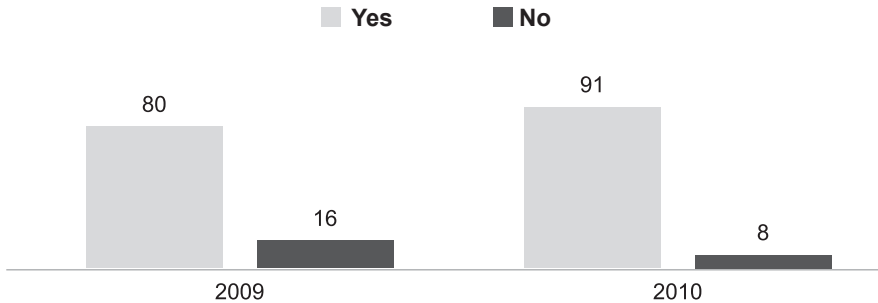
On the question of whether or not people in their area felt free to express their political opinions, there was a significant increase to 91% affirmative in 2010 compared to only 80% in 2009. There were no significant differences between Reds or and Yellows. Regionally, however, 11% of Northeasterners and residents of provinces adjacent to Bangkok stated that people did not feel free to express their opinions.

These high expressions of personal freedom of speech are particularly interesting given the fact that the government imposed the Internal Security Act and the Emergency Degree to restrict or shut down certain media. Respondents were queried on the issue of media censorship in 2010 but not in 2009.

The government has used the Internal Security Act and Emergency Decree to restrict or shut down some media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and websites). Some people think this was necessary to help promote social peace and stability; while others think it's more important to let everyone have their say. Which is closer to your opinion? (Q22)

Yellow No Color Red

	Necessary for peace	Expression more Important	Don't know/ Don't want to give opinion
Yellow	63	34	3
No Color	46	48	6
Red	27	67	5

Citizens were split on the issue of censorship, with 48% stating it was more important to let everyone have their say than to impose censorship and 46% stating that media controls were necessary to help promote social peace and stability. Yellows and Reds were diametrically opposed on this issue, with 67% of Reds stressing freedom of expression and 63% of Yellows preferring peace and stability.[19]

To determine if respondents had been personally affected by media restrictions, they were asked:

Has any newspaper, magazine, radio station or TV station or website you regularly use been censored or stopped during the last year? (Q23)

|		
8	6	
33	36	7
5	4	1
Yes: 46%	No: 46%	Don't know: 8%

▣ Yellow ▢ No Color ■ Red
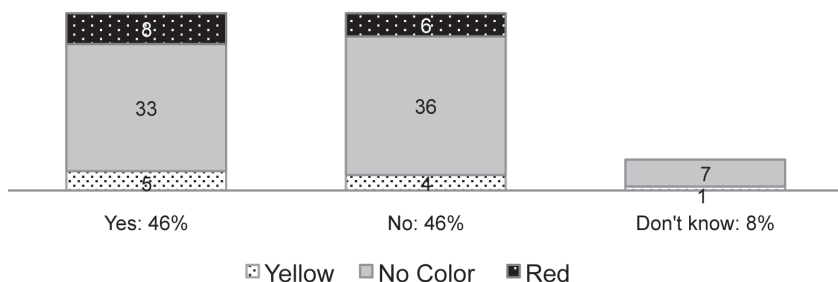
Almost half the population, including both Reds and Yellows, said that they had been personally affected by censorship. Citizens were equally split (46%) in stating whether they had or had not personally experienced censorship, with the balance (8%) stating that they did not know.

Respondents in the Central Region reported the highest instances (63%) of personal experience with censorship, while Greater Bangkok reported the lowest (30%).

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[19] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

# 3.3 Persistence of Traditional Social Structures

Here are two ways of thinking about democratic government: the best government will include representatives from all areas of the country and levels of society; the best government will be provided by the most intelligent and best educated. Which is closer to your view? (Q24)

Most representative	Most educated	Don't know/ Don't want to give opinion
59	35	6
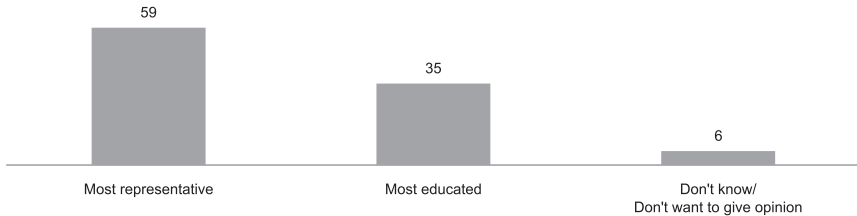
A majority of respondents (59%) in both urban and rural areas believed that the best democratic government is the one that is most representative of society rather than just the best educated. Those in the North and South were particularly strong in this view (69% and 65%, respectively). While a slight majority (51%) of those with a primary education favored social representation over education; with each step up in education levels among respondents this conviction rose progressively to 67% among university graduates.

The only area where less than half of the residents did not voice support for representative government was Bangkok (43%), but there was 62% support in the three adjacent provinces. This may be due to the fact that a significantly higher than average number of respondents stated that they did not know or did not want to give their opinion (17% in Bangkok compared to the national average of 6%).

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: the prosperous and well-educated have a duty to protect and guide the less fortunate and less educated? (Q25)
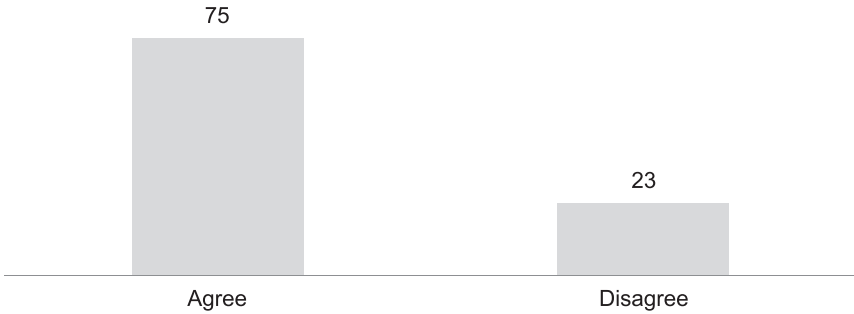

Although 59% of respondents believed that the best government is the one that is most representative rather than the best and brightest, a significant majority (75%) of respondents believed that the prosperous and well-educated have a duty to protect and guide the less fortunate and less educated. This perspective was most strongly held in Bangkok (81%) and the South (80%) and least strongly held in the three provinces adjacent to Bangkok (65%). Disagreement rose with the level of education attained by respondents, from 19% among those with a primary education to 25% among university graduates.

3.4 Trust in Society

Generally speaking, do you think that most people can be trusted? (Q26)
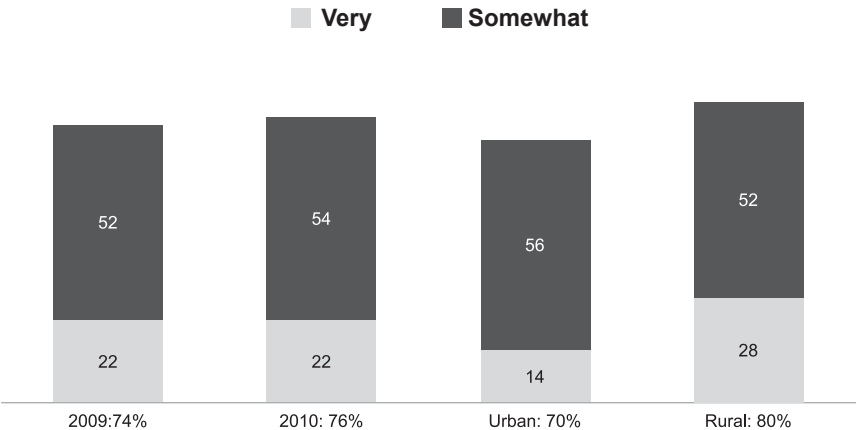
2009 **2010**
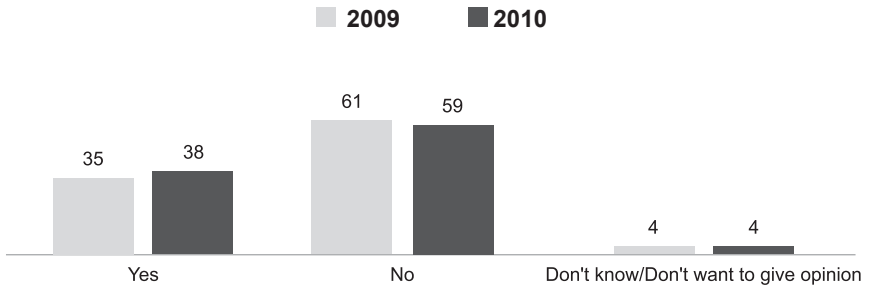
There was a slight decrease in the majority of respondents who stated that most people cannot be trusted, from 61% in 2009 to 59% in 2010. The significant difference in views between men and women observed in 2009 was still present in 2010. Women continued to say that most people cannot be trusted (68%), while fewer men were skeptical of others in 2010, declining to 50% from 55% in 2009.

2009 **2010**
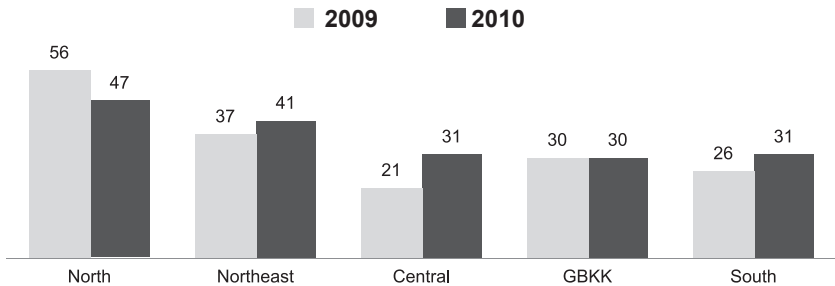
Differences in trust also remained between provinces, with a low of 30% in Bangkok to a high of 47% in the North (down nine points from 56% in 2009).

3.5 Trust in Neighbors

Now, speaking in general terms of the people from here, would you say that people in this neighborhood are generally very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy, or untrustworthy? (Q27)


Very   Somewhat

| 2009:74% | 2010: 76% | Urban: 70% | Rural: 80% |

(Bar values) 2009: Somewhat 52, Very 22; 2010: Somewhat 54, Very 22; Urban: Somewhat 56, Very 14; Rural: Somewhat 52, Very 28.

Similar to the slight increase in levels of trust of people in general between 2009 and 2010, trust in neighbors increased from 74% in 2009 to 76% in 2010. Rural respondents continued to hold greater trust in neighbors (80%) than those living in urban areas (70%). Both Yellows and Reds were slightly less trusting of their neighbors than society in general.

CHAPTER 4
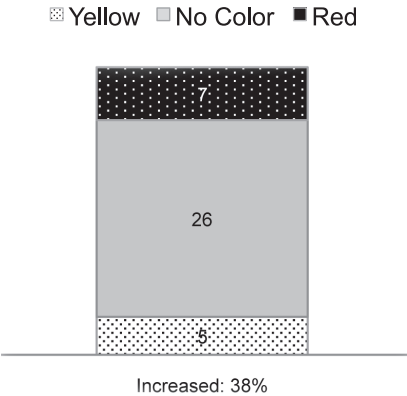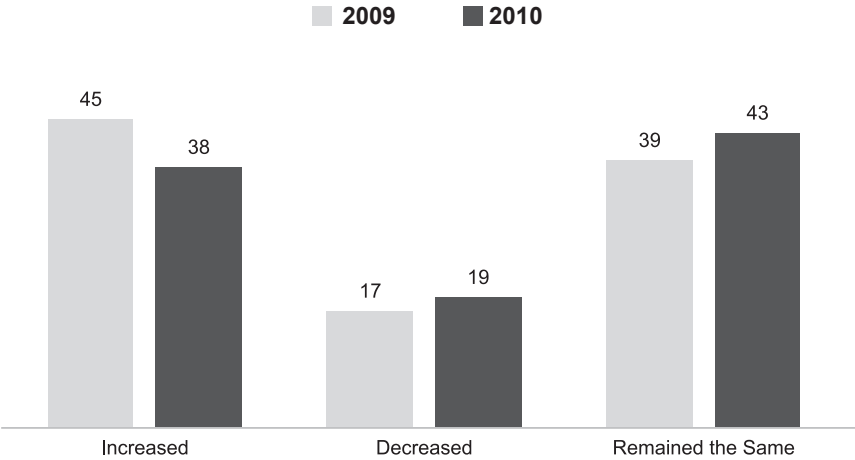# POLITICAL PROCESSES

4.1 Interest in Politics

How interested are you in politics? Very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not interested at all? (Q28)

⬜ Very   ⬛ Somewhat

53	56
18	10
2009: 71%	2010: 66%
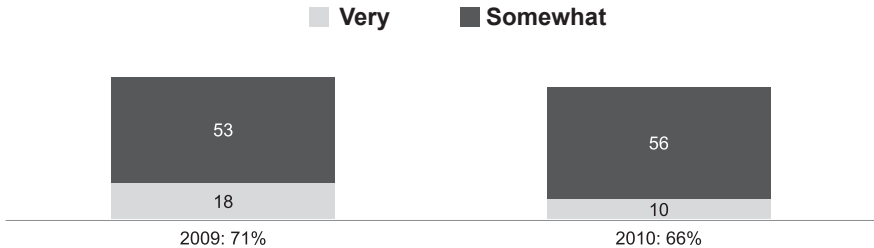
Thai interest in politics declined from 71% in 2009 to 66% in 2010, although political interest remains significantly higher in Thailand than in other countries in the region in which the Foundation has conducted similar survey research, including Indonesia (28% in 2003), Cambodia (55% in 2003), and Mongolia (46% in 2009). As in 2009, political interest continued to escalate by age from less than half of the 18-19 year old voting age population (48%) to a high of 74% among those aged 50-59, before dropping to 65% among those 60 years of age and older. Men are in general more interested (70%) in politics than women (63%).

Over the past three years, would you say that your interest in politics has increased, decreased, or remained the same? (Q30)

The percentage of respondents who indicated that their interest in politics has increased in the past three years decreased from 45% in 2009 to 38% in 2010. Only in the urban North (50%), the South (42%), and the urban Northeast (40%) were increases in interest in 2010 higher than the norm of 38%. Citizens in the urban South (29%), and in the provinces adjacent to Bangkok, the rural Central Region, and the rural Northeast (all 21%), reported much higher rates of decreased interest. In general, a higher percentage of women reported greater interest (21%) than men (17%).

2009   **2010**

	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same

(2009: 45, 2010: 38; 2009: 17, 2010: 19; 2009: 39, 2010: 43)

⊠ Yellow ☐ No Color ■ Red

7

26

5

Increased: 38%

Only among those in the color movements did more than half of respondents report an increased interest in politics. It might seem logical to attribute the significantly higher rates of increased interest among colors to the overall rate of interest during 2010; however, as a percentage of the total population, colors constituted only a third of the 38% who claimed increased interest. The other two-thirds was comprised of citizens who did not identify themselves with any color movement.
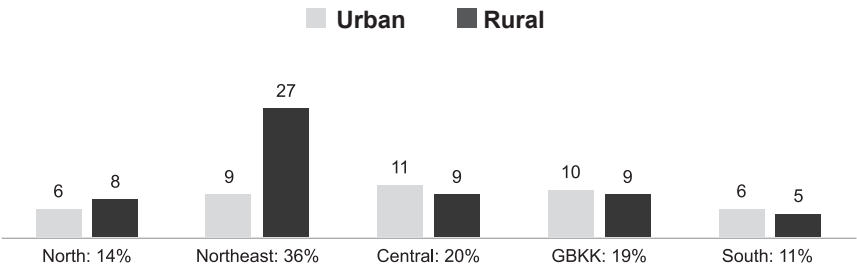
4.2 Political Discussions

How often do you discuss politics with friends? Almost all the time, often, not very often, or almost never? (Q29)
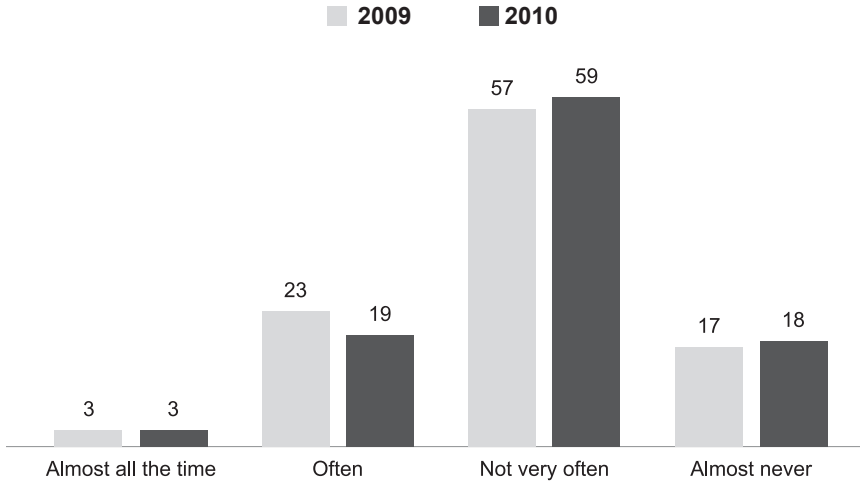
Along with the decline in political interest, there was a drop in the percentage of citizens who had political discussions with their friends almost all the time or often, from 26% in 2009 to 22% in 2010. Men were much more likely (28%) to have such discussions than women (17%). Urban respondents in the North had the most political discussions (33%), while those in the Central Region had the fewest (14%).
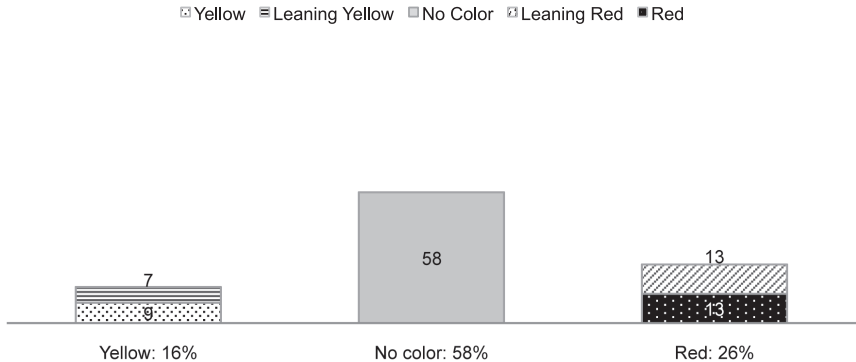
4.3 Political Meetings

In the past two years have you attended any political meeting? (Q31)

6	94
Yes	No

Urban   **Rural**

| North: 14%	Northeast: 36%	Central: 20%	GBKK: 19%	South: 11%
6 8	9 27	11 9	10 9	6 5

As a percent of total voting age population, a third (36%) of all those who attended a meeting came from the Northeast, with the strongest representation from the rural Northeast (27%).[20]

---

[20] The margin of error for meeting attendees is +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

☒ Yellow ☰ Leaning Yellow ☐ No Color ☒ Leaning Red ■ Red

| Yellow: 16% | No color: 58% | Red: 26% |

The majority of voting age population that attended a political meeting in the past two years had no color affiliation (58%), while just over a quarter (26%) affiliated themselves with the Reds.
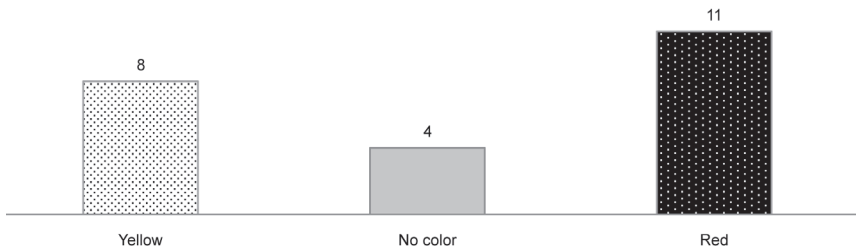

Nevertheless, only 4% of those with no color affiliation attended a political meeting, while 8% of those who identified themselves as Yellow or slightly leaning Yellow attended a meeting, and 11% of those with a Red affiliation participated in a meeting in the past two years.[21]

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[21] The margin of error for meeting attendees is +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

4.4 Political Alienation

Some people say, "I don't think that the national government cares very much about what people like me think." Do you agree or disagree? Strongly, or somewhat? (Q34)

Strongly ▢ Somewhat ■

| 2009 Agree: 55% | 2010 Agree: 58% | 2009 Disagree: 43% | 2010 Disagree: 38% |
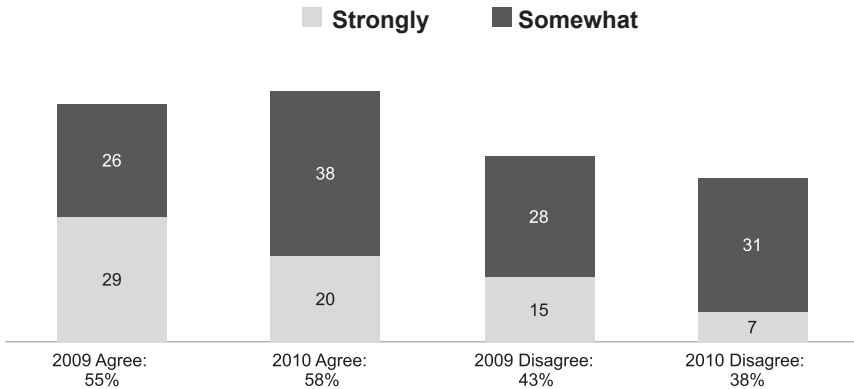
There was no significant increase from 2009 to 2010 in the number of respondents who strongly or somewhat believed that the national government does not care very much about what people think. This perception was the strongest among 68% of those in the three provinces adjacent to Bangkok and weakest among 54% of Southern residents. Only 42% of Bangkok residents agreed and 38% disagreed, but a significant number did not know or did not want to give their opinion in Bangkok (18% compared to the national average of 4%).

This sentiment was slightly stronger among those aged 50-59 (64%). Females were more likely to sense this alienation (60%) than men (56%), as were those in the lower income strata (60%) compared to those in the upper strata (54%).

Among population sub-groups, the greatest alienation was perceived by the Reds (81%) and the least by the Yellows (41%).[22]

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[22] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

4.5 Political Efficacy

How much influence do you think someone like you can have over national government decisions? A lot, some, very little or none at all? (Q35)

2009   **2010**
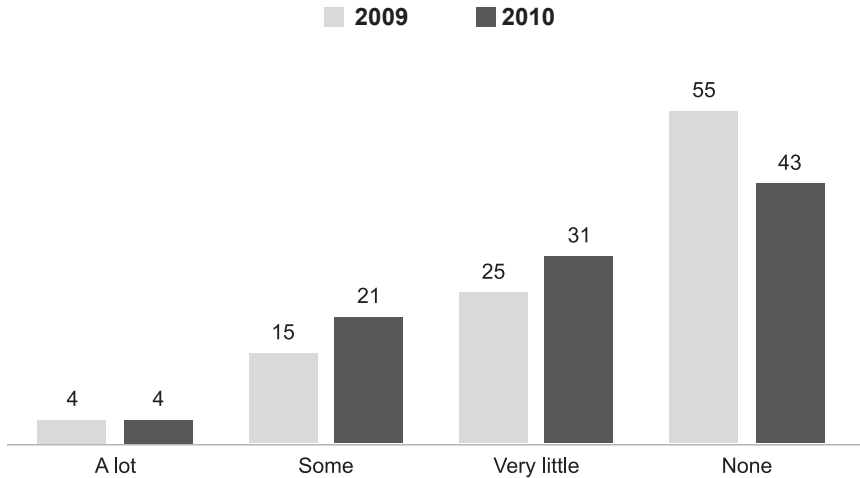
In 2010, a quarter (25%) of respondents believed that they had a lot or some influence over national government decisions, up from 19% in 2009. This sentiment was particularly strong among a third (35%) of Central Region residents and weakest among those in Bangkok (15%). While there was no difference between males and females, younger respondents aged 18-19 were more likely (32%) to be optimistic on this issue with all other age groups around 25%.

In terms of the color divide, 58% of Reds believed that they had no influence and whereas Yellows were consistent with the national sample.

CHAPTER 5
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

5.1 Integrity of Institutions

For each institution please rate its integrity according to this scale: Very High Integrity, High Integrity, Neither High nor Low Integrity, Low Integrity, Very Low Integrity. (Q40-47)

High/Very High **Neither High nor Low** **Low/Very Low**

Courts
59
31
9

Military
34
47
17

Election Commission
29
51
18

ITRC
28
47
11

NGOs
26
22
9

Police
17
46
36

Media
14
53
32

Parliament/MPs
11
51
37
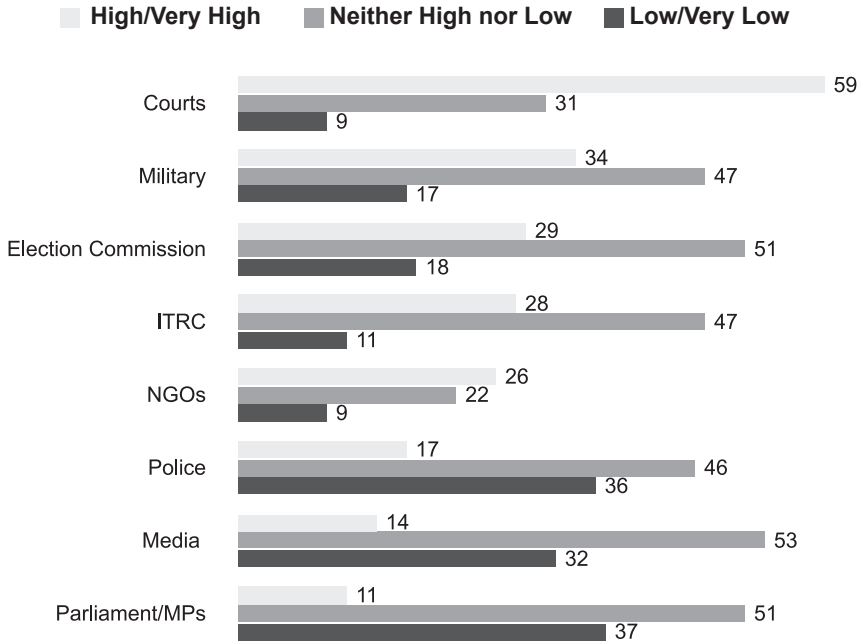
Courts of Justice: As in 2009, the only institution that received a combined very high and high integrity rating in excess of 50% was the Courts of Justice; however, the courts fell 5% from 64% in 2009 to 59% in 2010. Its combined low and very low rating remained unchanged at 9%, leaving a total of 40% with a less than positive impression. Although approval was the lowest in Bangkok in 2009 (56%), this decreased dramatically in 2010 to less than a third (32%). Disapproval of the Courts decreased marginally in the Central Region from 55% in 2009 to 51% in 2010. The Courts' approval rating had peaked at 78% in the South in 2009, but in 2010 it fell 9% to 69%. An even more dramatic drop in approval of 19% was seen in the North, from 68% in 2009 to just under half (49%) in 2010. The Courts' approval ratings remain unchanged in the Northeast at 63%.

Women were more impressed with the integrity of the Courts (63%) than men (54%), as were university graduates (65%) compared to those who had only completed primary education (54%).
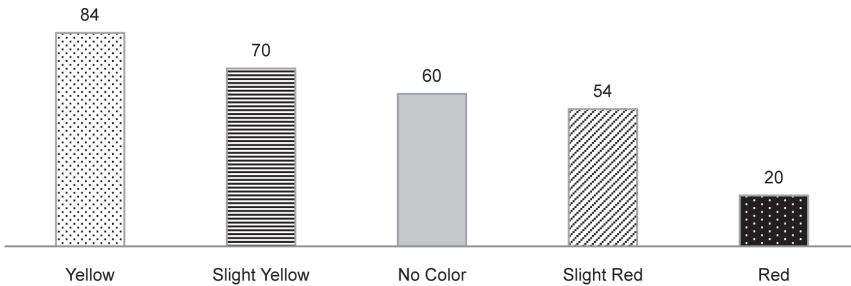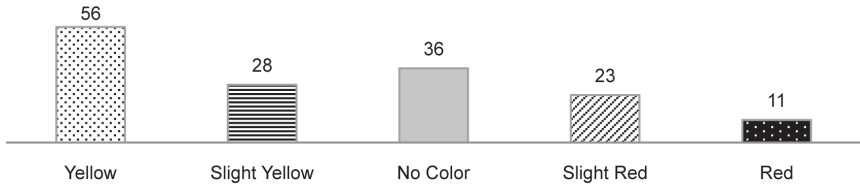

The greatest disparity in the Courts' approval ratings occurred between Yellows and Reds. Solid Yellows gave the Courts the highest approval rating of any sub-group (84%), while Solid Reds gave it the lowest rating (20%).[23]

Police: Integrity ratings of the police were 17% in 2009, which remained unchanged in 2010, although the combined very low and low approval ratings decreased marginally from 39% to 36%. Police approval ratings were highest in the rural Northeast (22%) and rural Central Region (22%) and the lowest in Bangkok (4%). Police integrity declined progressively as levels of education increased among respondents, from a high of 20% among primary school graduates to a low of only 9% among university graduates. There was no difference of view between the colors on the integrity of the police.

Military: In 2010, the military received the second highest integrity rating among public institutions, although its rating dropped from 44% in 2009 to just a third (34%) in 2010. In 2010, there was a narrowing and reversal of the 2009 urban-rural split (37% to 47%) in perceptions of the integrity of the military, with a slight decline in urban areas to 36% and a more pronounced 14% decline in rural areas, resulting in an urban-rural split of 36% to 33%.

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[23] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Regionally, perceptions of military integrity increased in 2010 in the South to 52% (up from 48% in 2009) and in Greater Bangkok from 33% to 41%. The greatest decline in perception of military integrity occurred in the North, dropping 17% from 44% in 2009 to 27% in 2010. A less dramatic drop of 9% occurred in the Northeast from 41% to 32% and in the Central Region from 38% to 29%.

The greatest disparity in perceptions of military integrity among sub-groups was again observed between Yellows and Reds. More than half (56%) of solid Yellows approved of the military versus just 11% of solid Reds.[24]

Election Commission of Thailand (ECT): Similar to the Courts and military, the ECT also lost ground in its integrity rating in 2010, dropping to 29% from 36% in 2009. Although the ECT's integrity rating increased significantly in the South from 26% in 2009 to 42% in 2010, it plummeted from 43% to 25% in the North. The ECT also lost ground in the Northeast (falling from 40% to 32%), in the Central Region (from 29% to 21%), and in Greater Bangkok (from 33% to 27%). Younger respondents aged 18-19 were far more optimistic about the ECT (47%) than their elders aged 60 years and older (27%). The Yellow's rating of the ECT was consistent with the national norm while Reds rated it below the norm at 22%.

Media: Perceptions of the media also declined in 2010. Its integrity rating lost 7%, falling from 36% in 2009 to 29%, while its combined very low and low rating increased from 25% to 32%. The media's low rating was fairly constant across all sub-groups by region, gender, age, education, income, and color.

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[24] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Members of Parliament (MPs): Public perceptions of the integrity of MPs increased slightly from 10% in 2009 to 11% in 2010, but Parliament remained the institution with the lowest integrity ratings among citizens. Its rating was the lowest in Bangkok (2%) and peaked at 19% in the rural Central Region.

Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ITRC): In 2010, the government established the ITRC to investigate the violence of the past two years and make recommendations on how to promote national political reconciliation. Only 28% of respondents gave the ITRC high integrity marks, leaving the majority of the population (58%) concerned about its integrity, and the remaining 14% unable to make a judgment.
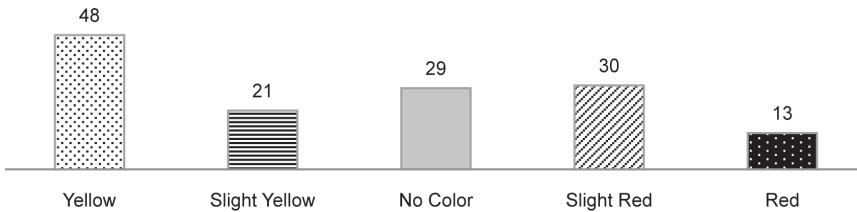
While perceptions of the ITRC's integrity remained fairly constant across all subgroups, there were glaring distinctions among those most involved in the political conflicts of the previous two years – those affiliated with the color movements. Almost half of solid Yellows (48%) thought that the ITRC had very high or high integrity but only 13% of solid Reds agreed.[25]

Respondents were requested to further clarify their perceptions of the ITRC with the following question.

A new commission called the Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been established to investigate the deaths that occurred during the April/May 2010 demonstrations. Can you tell me, how much you trust the commission: a lot, a little, not much, not at all? (Q48)

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[25] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

A lot/ A little   Not much/ Not at all   Don't know

National	61 / 30 / 10
North	61 / 26 / 12
Northeast	53 / 37 / 11
Central	38 / 27 / 5
GBKK	60 / 27 / 13
South	72 / 23 / 5
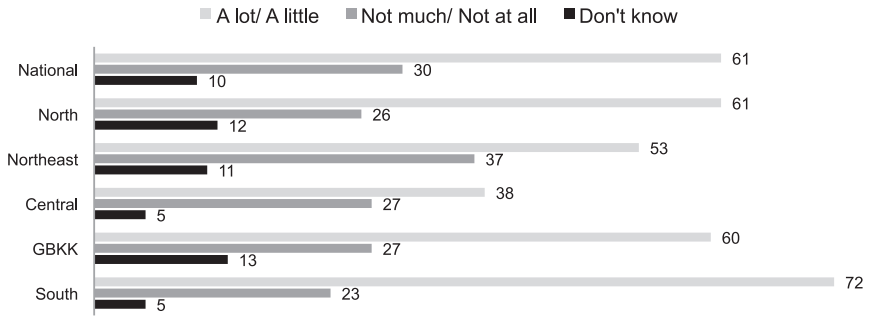
Sixty-one percent of respondents had a lot or a little trust in the ITRC, with a high of 72% in the South and a low of 53% in the Northeast. Primary school graduates were less trusting (57%) of the ITRC than those with a post-secondary education (67%), while those in the upper income strata were more trusting (67%) than those in the lower income strata (56%).

Yellow	Slight Yellow	No Color	Slight Red	Red
70	66	64	38	39
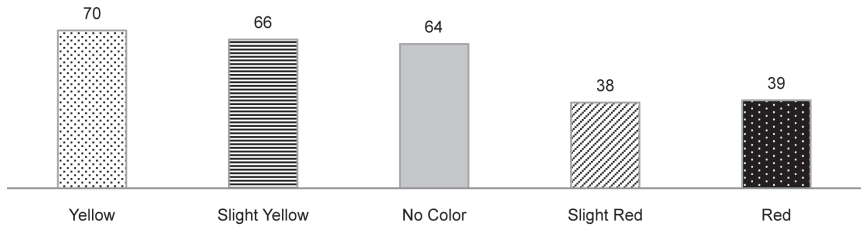
Among colors, 70% of solid Yellows had some trust in the ITRC, while only 39% of solid Reds extended it any trust.[26]

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[26] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

5.2 Politicization of Institutions

Some people say the democratic institutions in Thailand have become politicized, and are no longer neutral. I will read you a list of institutions and for each one please tell me if you think it is generally neutral and unbiased; sometimes biased; or often biased. (Q49-54)

Courts
- 63
- 35
- 3

Military
- 38
- 58
- 3

Election Commission
- 27
- 70
- 3

NGO
- 26
- 43
- 31

Media
- 17
- 81
- 2

Police
- 15
- 83
- 2

■ Generally neutral and unbiased　■ Often/ Sometime biased　■ Don't know
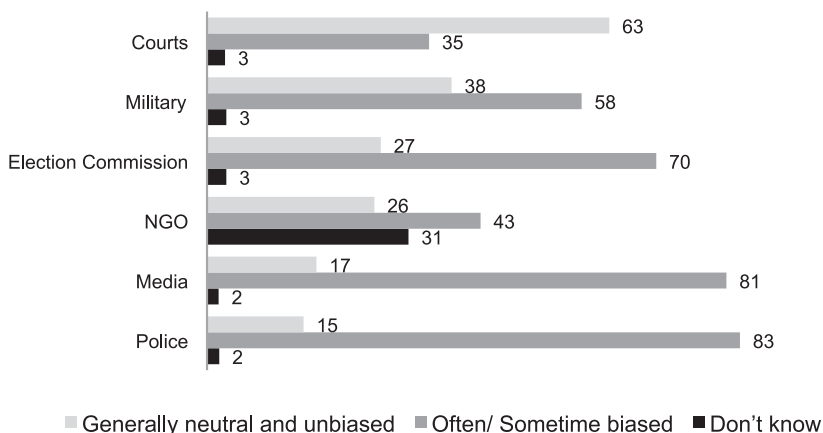
Courts of Justice: The Courts were again the only institution with a positive neutrality rating in excess of 50%, with 63% of the population perceiving them to be generally neutral and unbiased; a marginal increase over 2009 when 62% rated the Courts as unbiased. This perception ranged from a high of 70% in Greater Bangkok, through 67% in the Northeast and 65% in the South, to lows of 52% in the North and 58% in the Central Region.

Confidence in the neutrality of the Courts declined as the age of respondents increased, from a high of 78% among those aged 18-19 to 57% among those aged 40 and older. While confidence increased with higher education levels from 60% among those with only a primary school education to 67% among university graduates, it declined with higher income levels from 63% among the lower household income strata to 56% among upper income households. Sixty-six percent of solid Yellows had confidence in the neutrality of the Courts, while only 34% of solid Reds viewed the Courts as unbiased.[27]

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[27] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

**Police:** At the bottom of the politicization rating was the police, with 81% of citizens expressing the view that the police are sometimes or always biased. This reflected a slight improvement over the 84% who held this view in 2009. Distrust of police neutrality increased with higher education levels from a low of 72% among those who only completed primary school to 86% among university graduates. No other sub-groups demonstrated any significant inconsistency from the national norm of 81%.

Media: The media also received a high bias rating, with 80% of respondents perceiving a lack of media neutrality – a marginal improvement over 81% in 2009.

Military: The military again ranked second to the Courts in terms of neutrality, although the majority of respondents (58%) believed that the military is sometimes biased or often biased. Core Reds (87%) were twice as likely as core Yellows (40%) to question the neutrality of the military.[28]

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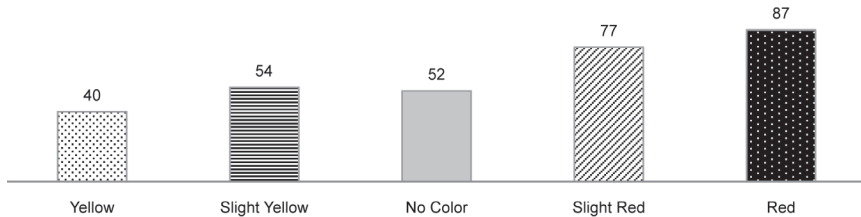
[28] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 6
COLOR POLITICS

6.1 Color Affiliation

Politics is complicated in Thailand and it's impossible to represent all opinion in four choices, but if you had to choose one, which of the following would most closely describe your opinion? Yellow, very slightly leaning Yellow, very slightly leaning Red, Red, No color/neutral, Refused to answer. (Q39)

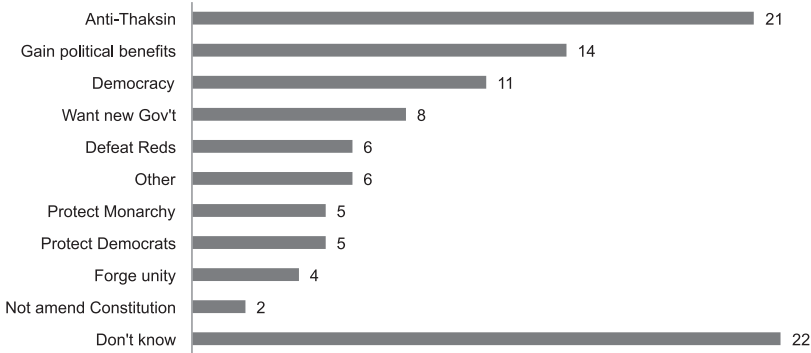## Percent of Total Population with Color Affiliation

▨ Yellow   ▤ Leaning Yellow   ▩ Leaning Red   ▪ Red

Yellow: 10.3%   Red: 13.6%
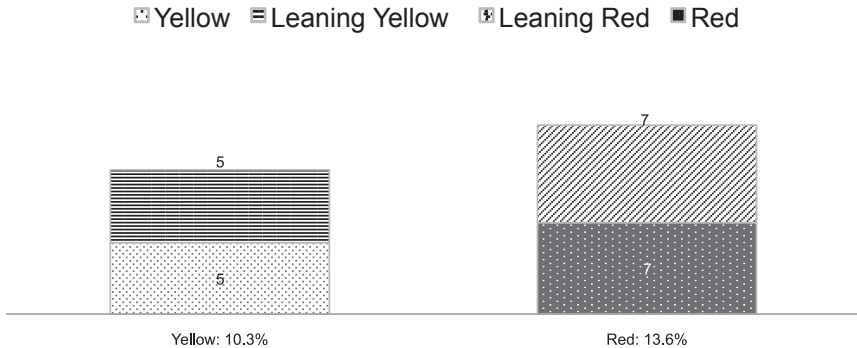
As noted in Section 1.1, less than a quarter of respondents (24%) declared any color affiliation: 10% Yellow and 14% Red. Even fewer (12%) perceived themselves as solid color supporters: 5% Yellow and 7% Red. The other half identified themselves as only slightly leaning in favor of a color (5% Yellow and 7% Red).[29]

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[29] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

6.2 Objective of the Yellow Movement

What would you say is the primary objective of the Yellow movement? (Q37)

Category	Value
Anti-Thaksin	21
Gain political benefits	14
Democracy	11
Want new Gov't	8
Defeat Reds	6
Other	6
Protect Monarchy	5
Protect Democrats	5
Forge unity	4
Not amend Constitution	2
Don't know	22

There was no consensus among respondents about the primary objective of the Yellows. Twenty-two percent stated that they did not know (22%), while others characterized the movement variously as one opposed to former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (21%) or concerned with private political gain (14%), the pursuit of democracy (11%), or the creation of a new government (8%).

There was not much additional clarity about the primary objectives of the Yellows when the question was put to those best placed to know – the Yellows themselves – with responses largely consistent with the national responses. Likewise, a similar mix of views and absence of consensus on the purpose of the Yellow movement was observed among Red supporters.

6.3 Objective of the Red Movement

What would you say is the primary objective of the Red movement? (Q36)

Want new Gov't	26
Pro-Thaksin	19
Democracy	15
Political benefits	13
Other	6
Double standards	5
Create unrest	3
Amend Constitution	1
Defeat Yellows	1
Don't know	14
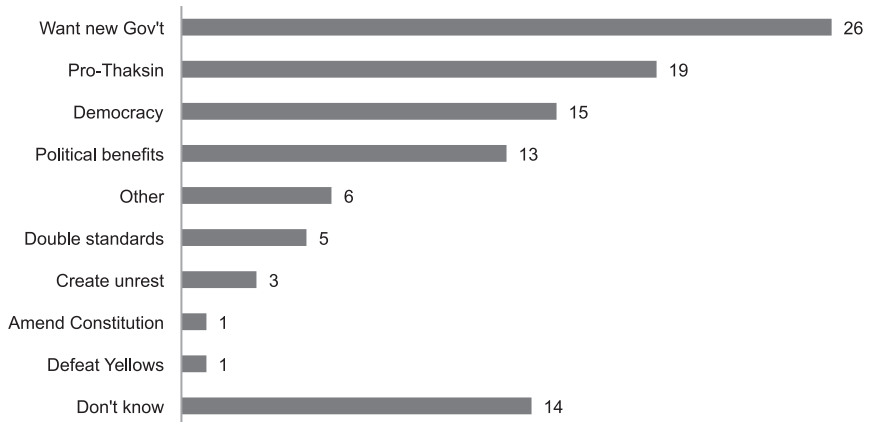
Respondents had no more clarity on the primary objective of the Reds than they did the Yellows. Twenty-six percent believed that the Reds were attempting to promote the formation of a new government, while 19% believed they were protecting former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and another 15% believed they were promoting democracy. Fourteen percent did not know.

Similarly Red supporters were divided on the primary objective of the Red movement and largely echoed the national findings, with one exception; Reds were twice (30%) as likely to believe that they were promoting democracy.

6.4 Color Affiliation Impact on Candidate Selection

What will be more important in helping you choose a candidate in the next election; their color affiliation or their party affiliation? (Q38)
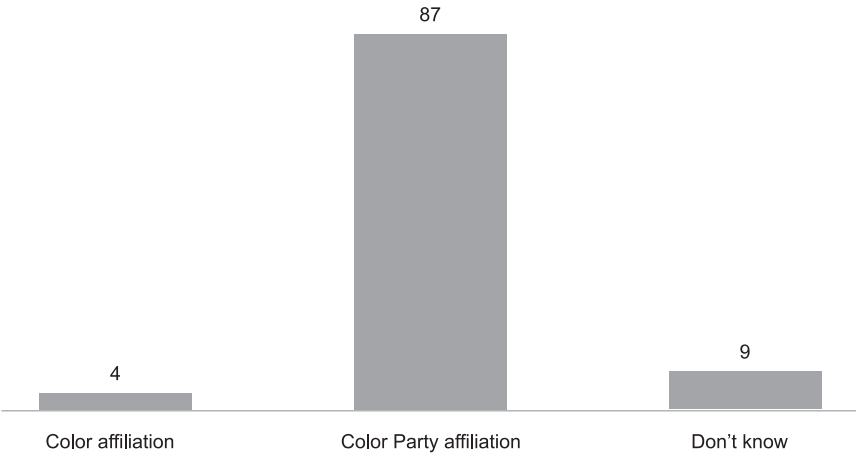
Only 4% of respondents would be swayed by color when choosing a candidate in the next election. A significant majority (87%) would base their selection on party affiliation, while 9% had yet to make up their minds. Color affiliated supporters were consistent with the national norm.
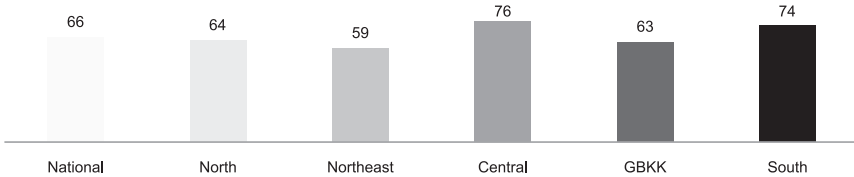
6.5 Demonstrations

How about a demonstration; over the past two years have you participated in any demonstration? (Q32)

2	98
Yes	No
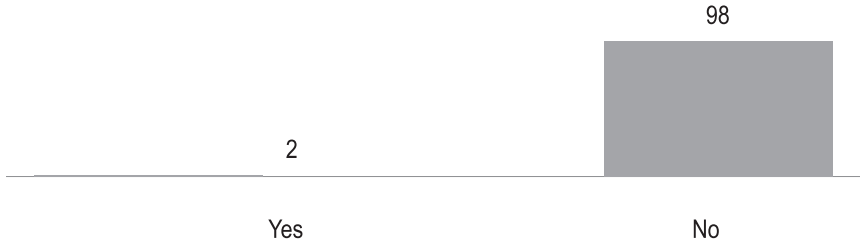
Despite the media coverage of political demonstrations in Thailand over the past two years, only a very small minority of respondents (2%) participated in any type of demonstration.

6.6 Banning of Political Demonstrations

Political demonstrations are allowed in most democracies, but in Thailand they seem to have caused a lot of conflict in recent years. Should large demonstrations be allowed, or should they be banned? (Q60)

After the series of demonstrations over the past four years, two-thirds (66%) of respondents believed that large demonstrations should be banned. This sentiment rose to a high of 76% in the Central Region and 74% in the South, with citizens of the Northeast only 59% behind such a ban. Women were more in favor of a ban (70%) than men (61%), with the opinion declining with increased age from a high of 77% among those under 20 years of age to only 63% among those 50-59 years old before moving back up to 68% among those 60 years and older. Support for a ban also declined among those with higher incomes, with a high of 68% among those in the lower income strata to a low of 59% among upper income households.
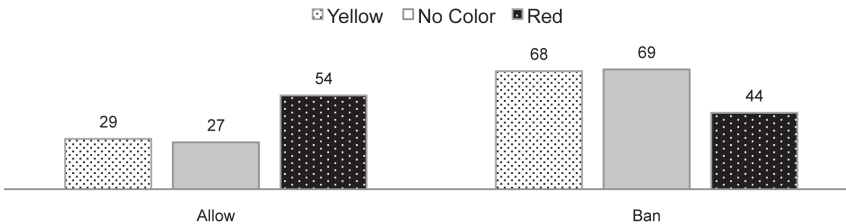
The only sub-group in which a majority (54%) believed that large demonstrations should be allowed was the Reds, with 57% of core Reds

opposed to a ban on large demonstrations and 52% among those slightly leaning Red. While 69% of those with no color affiliation would support a ban, 68% of Yellows would likewise be willing to have large demonstrations banned.[30]

Yellow ☐ No Color ■ Red

6
7	53
21	
3	7
Allow: 31%	Ban: 66%
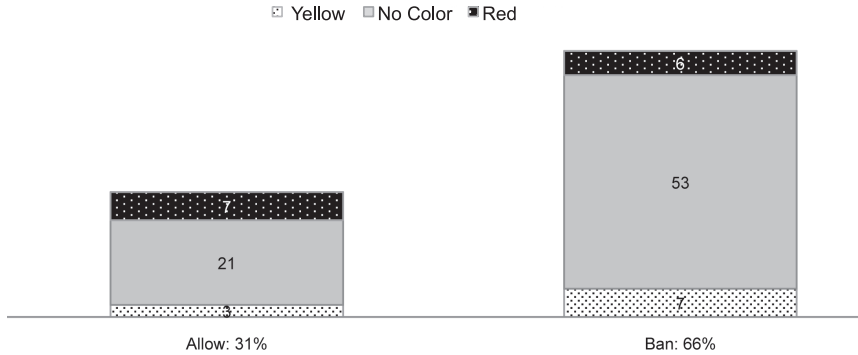
As a percentage of the total respondents, both the Reds and Yellows were split on this issue, with 7% of the Reds opposing any ban and 6% supporting it. Yellows constituted 7% of those supporting a ban but only 3% of those opposed.

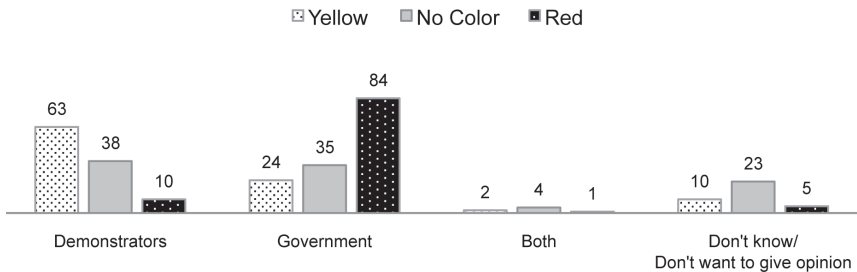[30] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

6.7 Use of Force in Demonstrations

The government has been criticized by some for using force to end the demonstrations in May 2010; while others say force was necessary to limit damage and restore order. Which is closer to your view? (Q61)
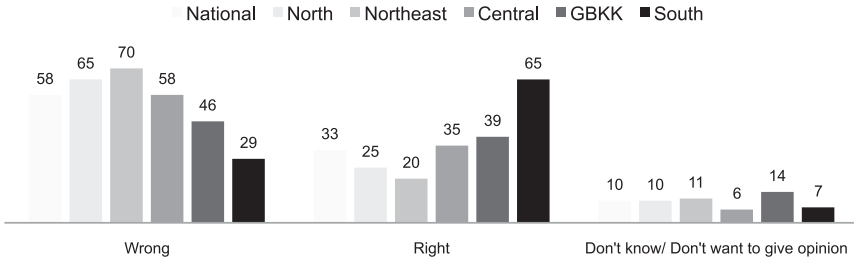
A solid majority (58%) believed that the use of force to end the May demonstrations was wrong, with a third (33%) approving it and 10% stating they did not know. This sentiment was the strongest in the Northeast (70%) and North (60%). Greater Bangkok had the highest non-response rate (14%) while a plurality of the remainder (46%) thought the use of force was wrong. Only in the South did a majority (65%) believe the use of force was the right thing to do to limit damage and restore order.
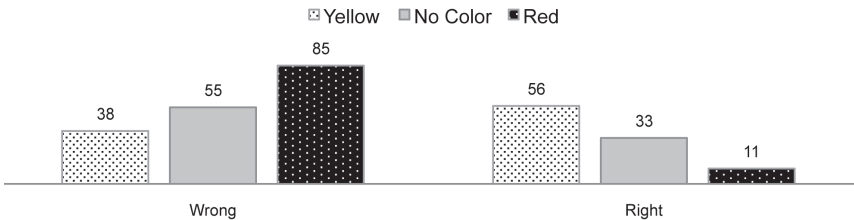
The only other sub-group that thought the use of force was the correct action to take was the Yellows (56%). In sharp contrast, 85% of Reds deemed the use of force to be wrong.[31]

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[31] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

6.8 Responsibility for Deaths in Demonstrations

And who do you think was primarily responsible for the deaths in May? Do you think it was mostly the demonstrators' fault for holding an illegal demonstration, or mostly the government's fault for using excessive force to end the demonstration? (Q62)
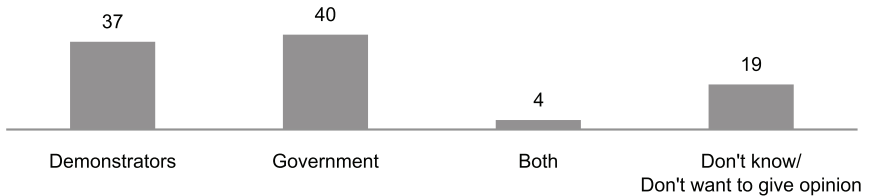
In assessing blame for the deaths that occurred during the May demonstrations, no strong consensus emerged among respondents. Over a third (37%) held the demonstrators responsible, while nearly as many (40%) blamed the government and 4% blamed both sides. A significant number of citizens (19%), however, did not weigh in on this issue. A significant majority (73%) in the South blamed the demonstrators, while a smaller majority (53%) in the rural Northeast believed the government was responsible.

Respondents with no color affiliation were significantly split in apportioning responsibility for the deaths: 38% blamed the demonstrators; 35% held the government accountable; 4% held both equally responsible; and nearly a quarter (23%) did not know. The Reds and Yellows were much clearer in who they thought was to blame. Most Reds (84%) held the government accountable and nearly two-thirds (63%) of the Yellows blamed the demonstrators for the deaths that occurred during the demonstrations.[32]

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[32] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.
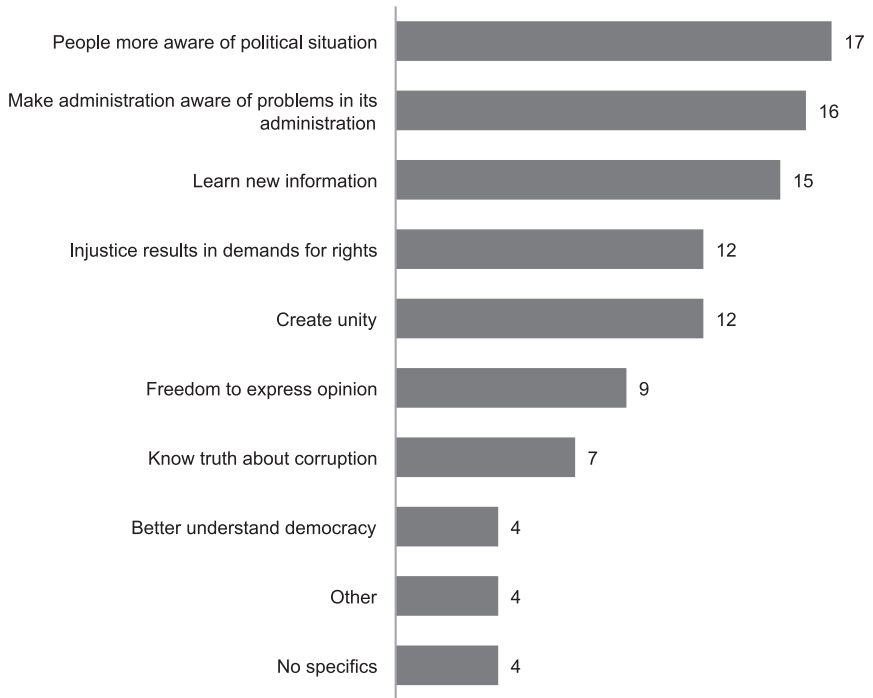
6.9 Positive Results of the Demonstrations

Everyone knows about the negative aspects of the demonstrations over the past few years and of the ongoing political conflict, but can you think of anything positive that may have come out of these events? (Q97)
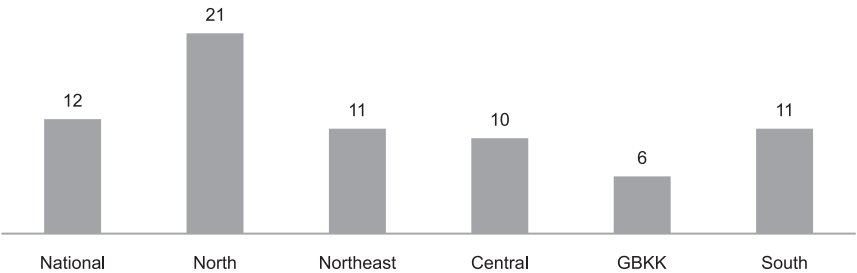
Few respondents (12%) saw any positive outcome of the demonstrations, although 21% in the North felt that some benefits had resulted.
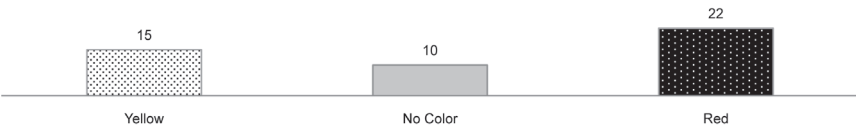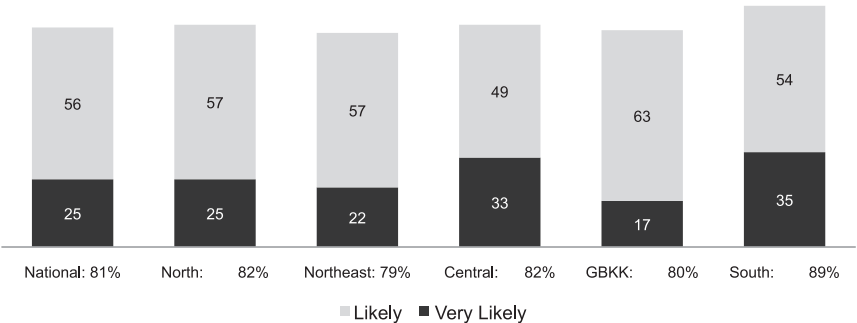

Both Yellows (15%) and Reds (22%) were more likely to see positive benefits, although there was little consensus on what positive things may actually have resulted from the demonstrations. Nearly half of respondents (48%) felt that the demonstrations had improved people's awareness of the political situation (17%), made the government more aware of problems in its administration (16%) or more broadly contributed to improved knowledge (15%).

What is that? (Q98); Anything else? (Q99)

Category	Value
People more aware of political situation	17
Make administration aware of problems in its administration	16
Learn new information	15
Injustice results in demands for rights	12
Create unity	12
Freedom to express opinion	9
Know truth about corruption	7
Better understand democracy	4
Other	4
No specifics	4

6.10 Possibility of Renewed Violence

How likely do you think it is that there will be more violence related to political conflicts in the next year: very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all? (Q63)

56	57	57	49	63	54
25	25	22	33	17	35
National: 81%	North: 82%	Northeast: 79%	Central: 82%	GBKK: 80%	South: 89%

  Likely   ■ Very Likely

A strong majority (81%) of respondents believed that there would be more violence related to political conflicts within the next year. There was a slight correlation between increased levels of education (primary to university), and increased concern for violence. Conversely, there was generally a decline in concern from young (94%) to old (75%). There were no discernable color variations from the national norm.

CHAPTER 7
POLITICAL CONFLICT AND SECURITY

7.1 Perspectives on Thai Political Polarization

Which of these phrases best describes the current division or polarization in society? (Q56)
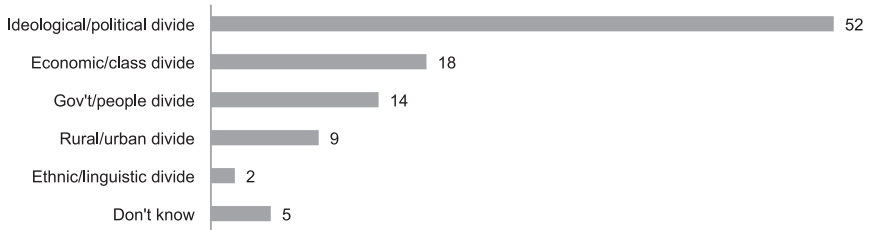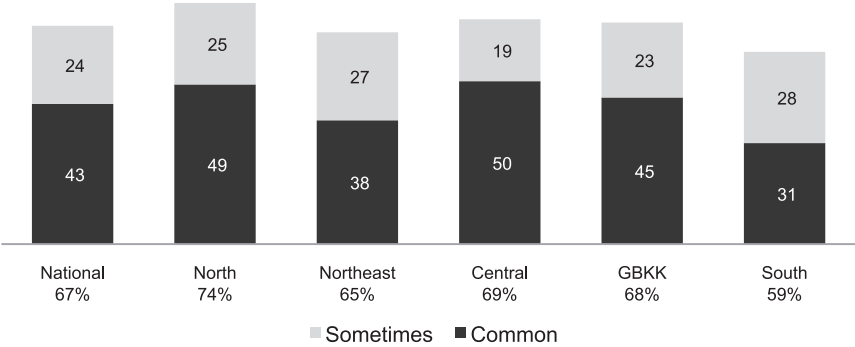
Ideological/political divide	52
Economic/class divide	18
Gov't/people divide	14
Rural/urban divide	9
Ethnic/linguistic divide	2
Don't know	5

The majority of respondents (52%) perceived the current division or polarization in society to be based on opposing ideologies and politics. This perspective was held to varying degrees of intensity across age, gender, education, and income, but was strongest in the North (68%) and Central Region (65%) and weakest in Greater Bangkok (35%), where an equal number (35%) believed the polarization was an economic or class issue. Nevertheless, only 18% nationwide saw the divisions as based on economics and even fewer (9%) as an urban-rural clash.

Others saw the conflict as one between the government and people (14%).

7.2 Double Standards

Do you think there are different standards of justice (double standards) for different groups in Thailand? (Q57)

Sometimes: 24	25	27	19	23	28
Common: 43	49	38	50	45	31
National 67%	North 74%	Northeast 65%	Central 69%	GBKK 68%	South 59%

■ Sometimes ■ Common

The majority of respondents (67%) felt that double standards often (43%) or sometimes (24%) exist in the judicial system (inclusive of police, prosecutors, lawyers, and judges). Urban residents in the North (81%) and in the provinces adjacent to Bangkok (77%) were strongest in their view of double standards, versus 58% in Bangkok and 59% in the South.

This perception increased with the level of household income from 64% among the lowest strata to 74% among upper income households. It also increased with education from a low of 60% among primary school graduates to 81% among university graduates.

Seventy-eight percent of core Reds and 83% of those slightly Red believed this to be a significant issue, while the majority of Yellows (69%) and those with no color affiliation (65%) also were concerned by double standards.[33]

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[33] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Which group benefits most from double standards? (Q58)

National   Urban   Rural

Group	National	Urban	Rural
Government	33	34	33
Politicians	30	37	27
Rich	16	17	16
Influential persons	8	6	6
Yellows	6	5	7
Others	5	4	5
Security officials	2	1	2
Reds	2	2	3
Don't know	6	4	8
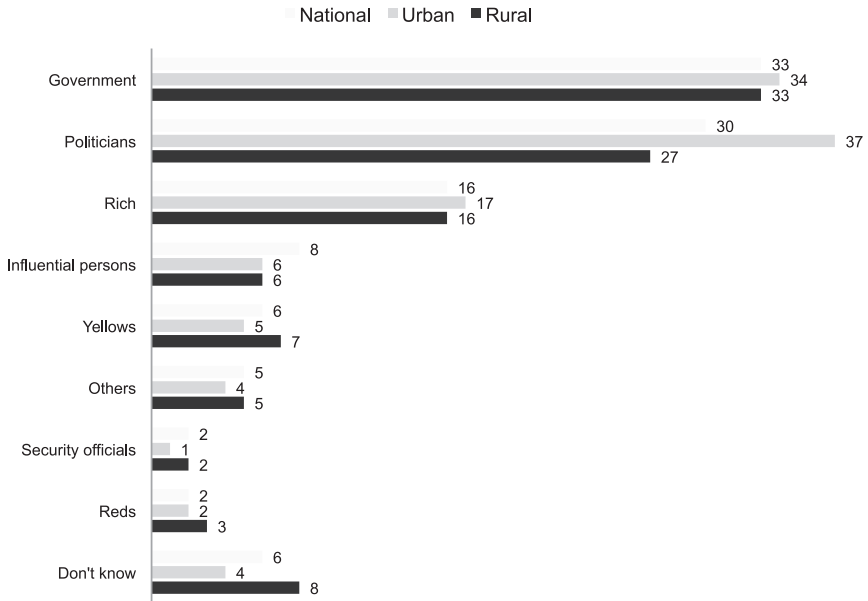
When those who responded that double standards did exist were asked who benefited, a majority (63%) mentioned government (33%) or politicians (30%). Urban residents thought that politicians in particular (37%) benefited from double standards, especially in greater Bangkok (55%). Yellows and Reds expressed divergent views on the beneficiaries of double standards. While 46% of Yellows thought politicians benefited, only a quarter (25%) of Reds agreed, with more than half (54%) expressing the view that the government benefited most (compared to only 23% of Yellows), with another quarter (25%) believing that the Yellows benefited most.[34]

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[34] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Which group is hurt most by double standards? (Q59)
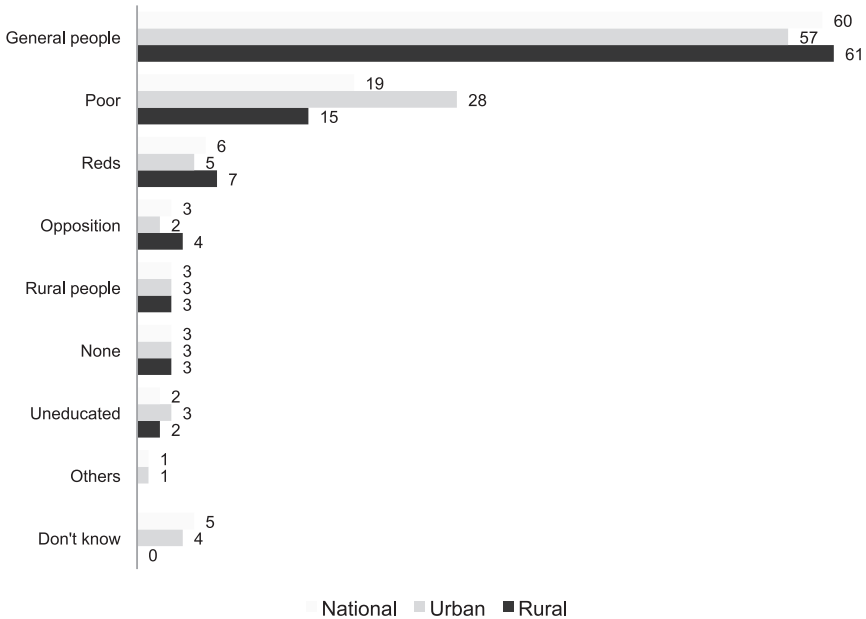
There was consensus (60%) that double standards hurt the general population the most, with three-quarters (75%) of Southerners holding this view, but only half (50%) of Northerners. Among core Reds, however, 30% stated that they as a group were hurt the most by double standards.[35]

7.3 Role of the Army

Many people think the army plays too big a role in politics in Thailand, while others see the army as an important independent institution that has helped safeguard and stabilize the country. Which is closer to your view? (Q65)
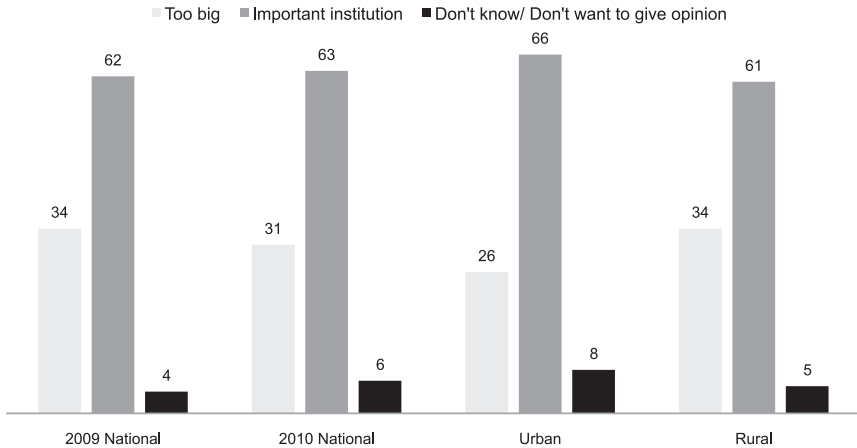
In 2010, the army continued to be seen as an important institution that helps safeguard and stabilize the country (63%). This perspective gained the most ground in Greater Bangkok, increasing from just over half (53%) in 2009 to two-thirds (69%) in 2010, and in the South increasing from 65% to 80%. Thai citizens lost respect for the army in the urban North, dropping from 60% in 2009 to 52% in 2010, and in the Northeast from 61% to 54%.

Yellows and Reds disagreed on their view of the army, with a large majority of Yellows (82%) seeing the military as an important independent institution, while more than two-thirds (69%) of Reds thought the army plays too big a role in politics.[36]

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[36] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

7.4 Size of the Army

How about the size of the army? Do you think the army is too small, the right size, or too big? (Q66)
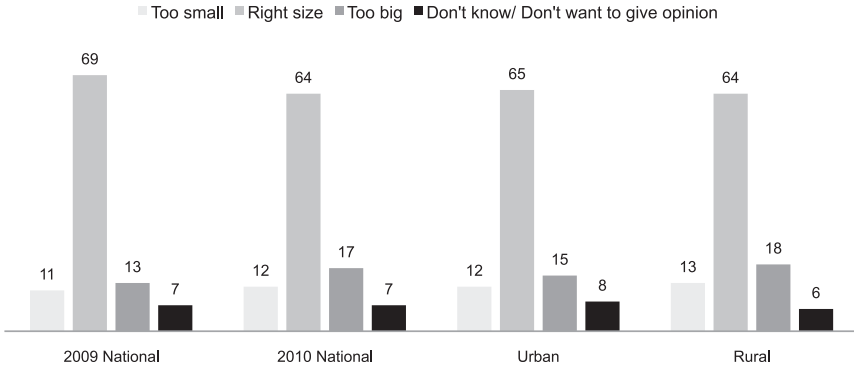
Nearly two-thirds of the population (64%) continued to think that the Thai army was about the right size. However, with the exception of Greater Bangkok, where there was a slight increase from 59% in 2009 to 60% in 2010, there was a decline in all regions from 74% to 66% in the South, 68% to 60% in the Northeast, 71% to 65% in the Central Region, and 75% to 74% in the North.

Although nearly one-third (35%) of Reds thought the army was too big, the majority of both Reds (55%) and Yellows (62%) thought the army was the right size.[37]

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[37] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

7.5 Role of the Army in Ensuring Security During Demonstrations

Recently the Army has taken a lead role in ensuring security during demonstrations, but in most other countries this role is performed by the police. Who do you think should have the primary responsibility for security during demonstrations, the army or the police? (Q64)
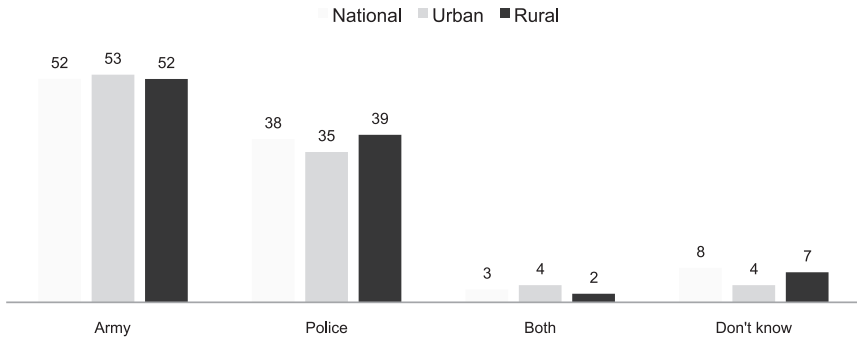
By a slight majority of 52%, most respondents believed that the army should have the primary responsibility for security during demonstrations, with over one-third (38%) believing security should be left to the police. Support for the military in this role was strongest in the South (73%) and Central Region (63%) and weakest in the Northeast (42%). Support declined with increased age, from a high of 61% among those aged 18-19 down to 45% among those aged over 60.

Yellows and Reds were once again at odds over this issue, with 66% of Yellows supporting the army and 63% of the Reds taking the minority view that the police should have primary responsibility for security during demonstrations.[38]

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[38] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.
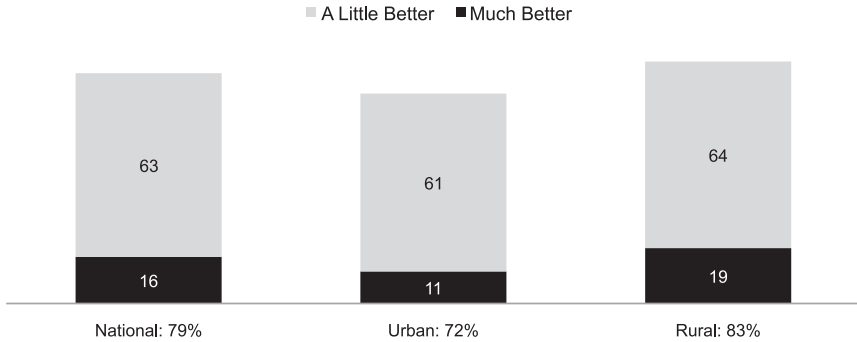
7.6 General Security Situation

How would you rate the security situation in your area: excellent, good, fair, or poor? (Q67)
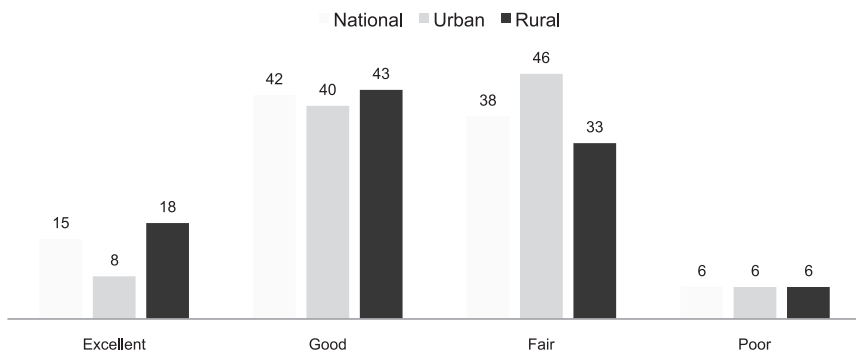
The majority of respondents (57%) found the security situation in their area to be excellent (15%) or good (42%), while only 6% found it to be poor. There was considerable variation, however, between regions and urban and rural areas with a high of 61% in rural areas to a low of 48% in urban areas expressing excellent or good. The urban North reported the highest level of area security (75%), while 68% of Bangkok residents reported only fair (60%) to poor (8%) security.

In general, males felt more secure (59%) than women (54%). Perceptions of area security decreased progressively with higher education levels from 62% among primary school graduates to just over half (51%) of those with university degrees. It also decreased among respondents with a higher household income, from a high of 58% among lower income families to only 52% in the upper income strata.

Over the last two years, would you say the crime and security situation in your area has gotten much better, a little better, a little worse, or much worse? (Q68)


A significant majority (79%) in both urban (72%) and rural (83%) areas believed the security situation had improved in their area in the past two years, with a high of 88% in the rural South and a low of 59% in Bangkok. However, 47% of core Reds thought the situation had become a little worse (44%) or much worse (3%).[39]

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[39] The margin of error for slight/solid Yellows is +-12% and slight/solid Reds +-10%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

7.7 Personal Security Situation

How often do you fear for your own personal safety or security or for that of your family these days? Often, sometimes, rarely, or never? (Q69)

National Urban Rural
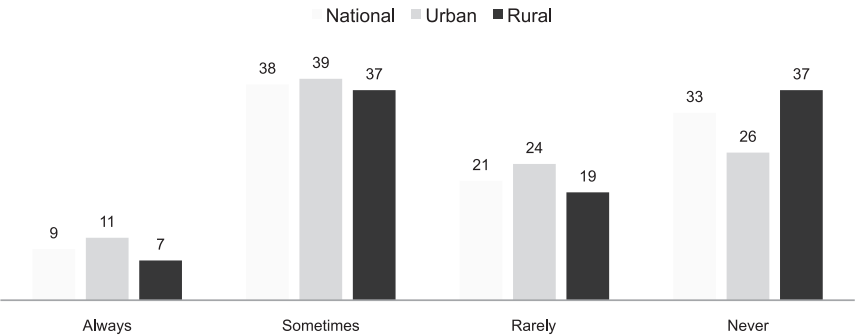
The majority of respondents (54%) never (33%) or only rarely (21%) felt concerned about their own personal security, although 50% of urban dwellers were sometimes (39%) or always (11%) anxious compared to only 44% of rural residents.

While 61% of men rarely or never felt concerned about their personal safety a majority of women (53%) were sometimes (43%) or always (10%) concerned.

7.8 Causes of Anxiety

If you decided to participate in one of the activities I'm going to mention, would you do it with no fear, some fear or a lot of fear? (Q70-77)
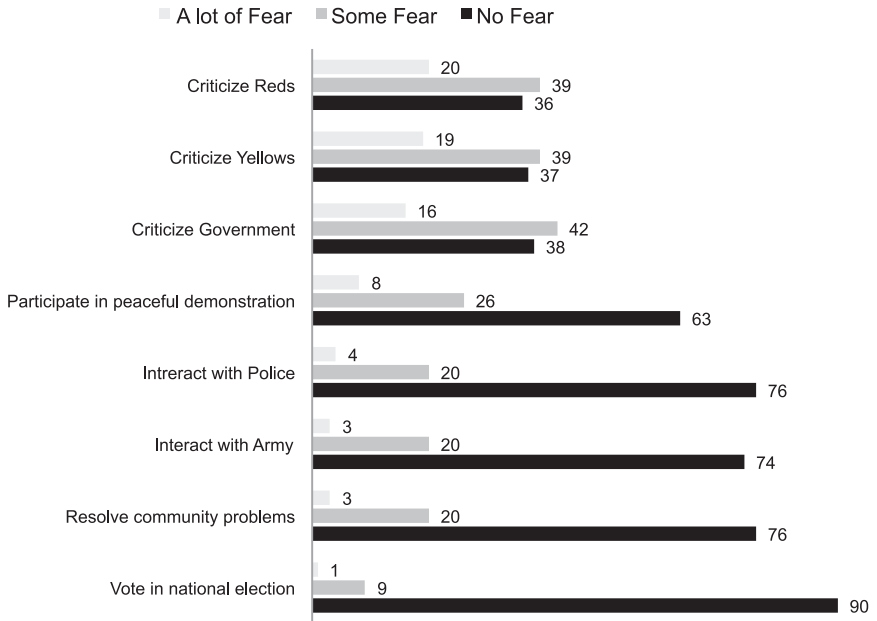
A significant majority of respondents are afraid to criticize Reds (59%), Yellow (58%), or the government (58%). Almost a quarter of respondents indicated that they feared interacting with either the police (24%) or the army (23%).

The younger generations tended to be more fearful of criticizing the Reds (68% among 18-19 year olds and 67% among 20-29 year olds), and the government and the Yellows (63% for 18-19 year olds and 64% for 20-29 year olds). There were no other significant fear levels among any other sub-group, although university graduates exhibited the least amount of fear of any group.

While the majority (61%) of those with no color affiliation was concerned about criticizing the government, only 53% of Reds and 42% of Yellows were worried. The majority (62%) of those who had no color affiliation was equally concerned about criticizing either the Reds or Yellows, but the majority (51%) of both Reds and Yellows were not apprehensive about criticizing either color group.[40]

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[40] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 8
OPTIONS FOR RECONCILIATION

8.1 Elections to Resolve Conflict

Some people have suggested that there must be a reconciliation process to reduce conflict in society before elections can be held; while others think reconciliation is not possible until elections have been held. (Q79)
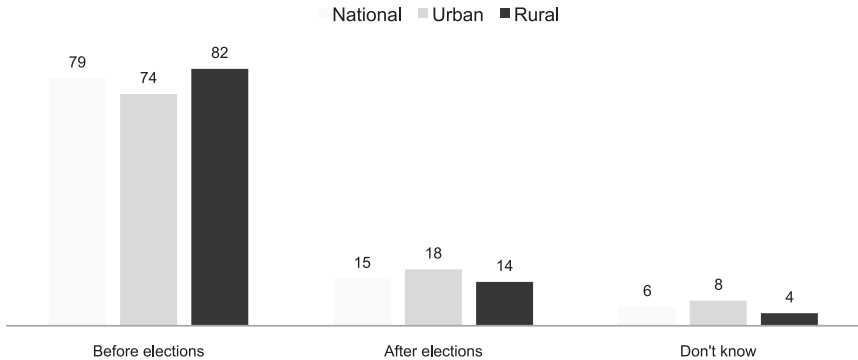
A significant majority of respondents (79%) believed that a reconciliation process should be initiated to reduce conflict before elections are held. Support for this view was lower in urban areas (74%) and stronger in rural areas (82%). Residents of Bangkok were lower in their support for reconciliation before elections (62%) than any other region, with the Central Region (90%) highest. There was a similar degree of consensus among Yellows and Reds that elections should be delayed until reconciliation was attempted.

8.2 Postponing Elections to Reduce Conflict

Will postponing elections help reduce conflict in society, or make it worse? (Q81)

National ▫ Urban ■ Rural
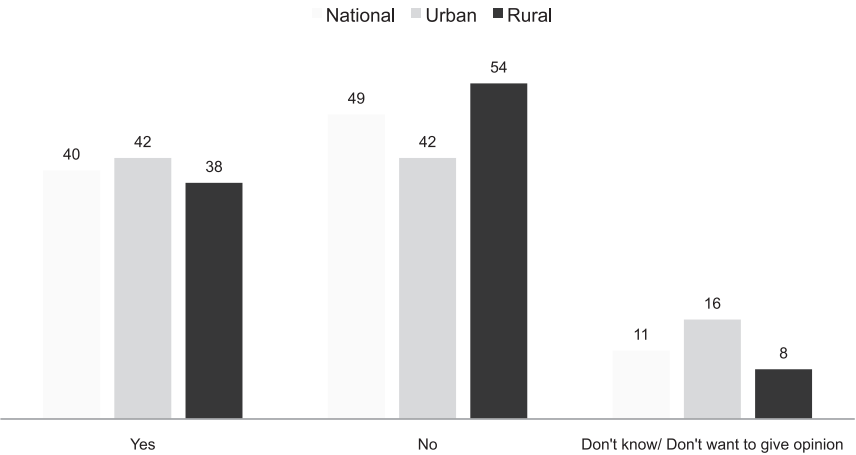
No clear majority view emerged as to whether or not postponing elections would help reduce conflict in society. Most of those who answered this question (49%), especially in rural areas (54%), thought it would not help, while 40% believed that postponing elections would help. In 2009, respondents were evenly divided (45% yes and no respectively) on this issue, with 10% expressing no opinion. Reds and Yellows were diametrically opposed, with 79% of Reds of the view that postponing elections would worsen the situation and 53% of Yellows holding that it would reduce conflict.[41]

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[41] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.3 Timing of Elections

The current government assumed office through normal parliamentary procedures rather than elections, so some people say elections should be held as soon as possible, while others think it will be important to enact necessary reforms before elections are held, or to wait until the current government's term expires. Which is closer to your view? (Q80)
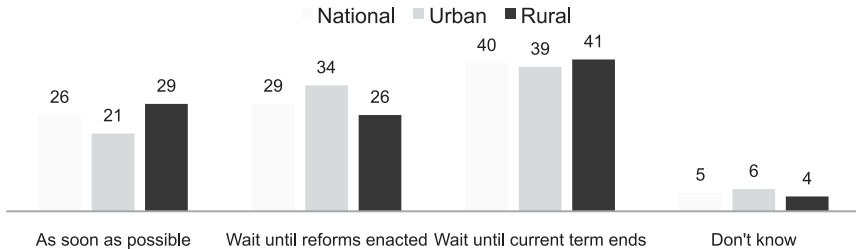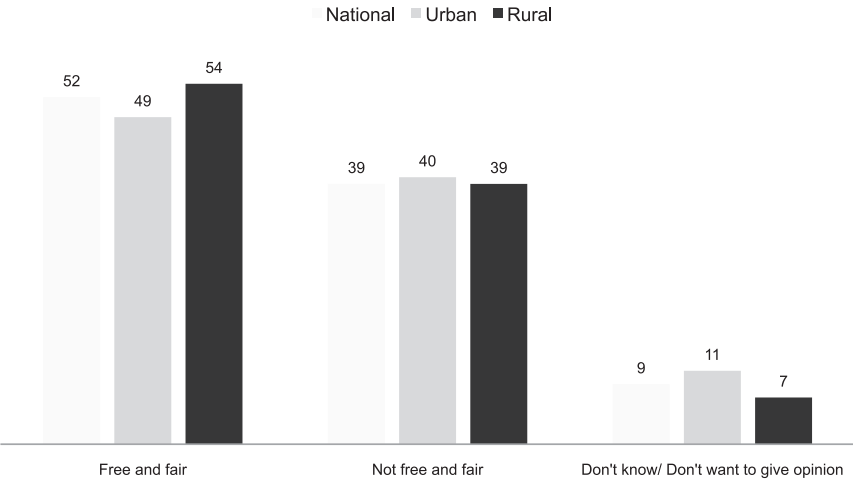

There was less consensus among respondents on the issue of constitutional and electoral reforms before elections. A quarter (26%) wanted elections to be held as soon as possible (up from 23% in 2009), while 29% wanted to wait until reforms were passed (down from 30% in 2009) and 40% were willing to wait until the current administration's constitutional term of office ends (down from 43% in 2009). Women were more willing (44%) to wait until the end of the term than men (37%). While there was no significant difference among those who preferred to wait until the government's term ended based on levels of education (about 40% overall), those who wanted elections as soon as possible declined with increased levels of education among respondents, from a high of 28% among primary school graduates to 16% among those with a university degree. Similarly, those willing to wait for reforms increased with higher education levels, from a low of 26% among those with only a primary school education to 37% among university graduates.

Colors were more clear-cut and contrary in their positions: core Reds wanted elections as soon as possible (62%) while core Yellows insisted on waiting until the government's term expired constitutionally (63%).[42]

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[42] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.4 Free and Fair Elections

Some people have called for elections to resolve the current political conflict. If elections were held today, do you think they would be free and fair? (Q55)

National ▢ Urban ■ Rural

	Free and fair	Not free and fair	Don't know/ Don't want to give opinion
National	52	39	9
Urban	49	40	11
Rural	54	39	7

Just over half (52%) of all respondents thought that elections would be free and fair. These 2010 results are slightly higher than responses in 2009, when 48% feared elections would not be free and fair and only 47% believed that they would be. Those with a primary education were more confident (55%) of free and fair elections than were university graduates (50%). Respondents of first-time voting age were the most confident (59%) compared to 47% in the 40-49 year old age group.

8.5 Non-Partisan Election Observers to Promote Free and Fair Elections

In many countries international and local non-partisan election observers watch the election process. Would the presence of election observers make you a lot more confident that elections would be fair, a little more confident, no more confident, or less confident? (Q95)
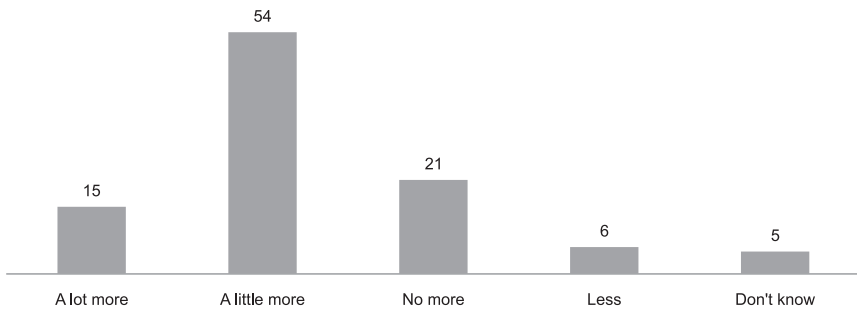
A strong majority (69%) of respondents would be a lot more (15%) or a little more (54%) confident that elections would be fair if there were international and local non-partisan election observers watching the elections, a significant if slight increase over 2009 when 62% responded in favor of observers. There was little variation among sub-groups on the issue of election observers, with strong majorities among all sub-groups wanting non-partisan election observation.

8.6 Nationality of Election Observers

Some people would prefer Thai election observers, while others prefer international observers. How about you? Would you prefer Thai observers, international observers, or are both equally acceptable? (Q96)
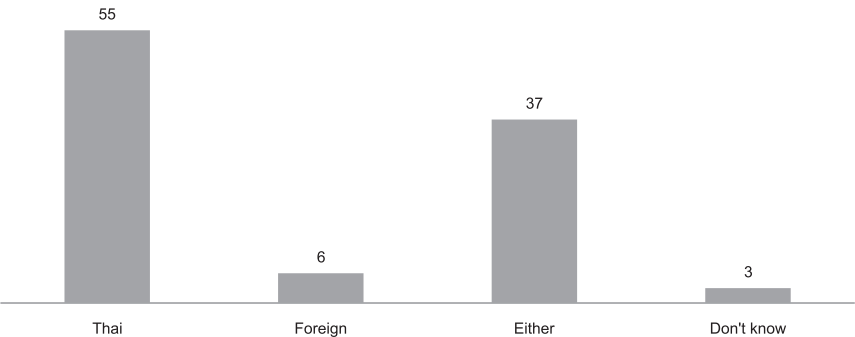

More than half the respondents (55%) stated that they would prefer to have Thai-national observers for the election (up from 42% in 2009), while 43% would accept foreign observers. Yellows were significantly more in favor (71%) of Thai observers than either those with no color affiliation (54%) or Reds (44%).[43]

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[43] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.7 Amending the Constitution to Resolve Conflict

Some people think the current Constitution should be amended to resolve the political conflict, while others think that amending the constitution at this time will cause more conflict than it will resolve. Which is closer to your view? (Q82)
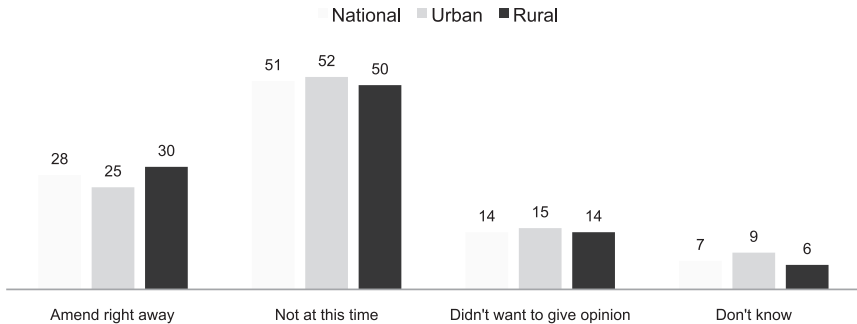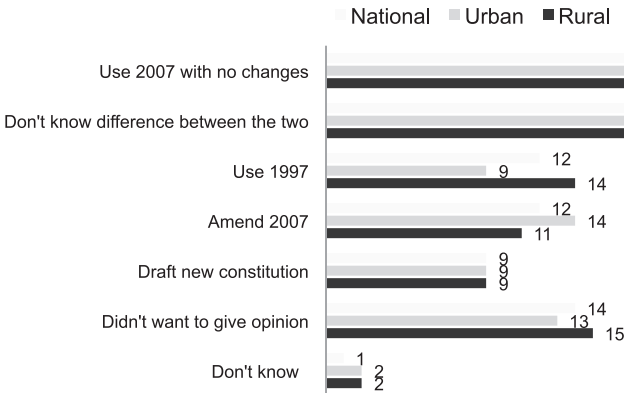

The majority of respondents (51%) did not think amending the 2007 Constitution would resolve the ongoing political conflict. The majority of men (54%) wanted to wait on constitutional reforms, while only 45% of women supported this position, although 25% of women did not know or did not want to give their opinion compared to 16% of men. The desire to hold off on amendments increased with education from 45% among primary school graduates to 62% of those with vocational degrees and diplomas and 59% of university graduates. Household income was also a factor, with only 47% in the lower income strata supporting delay, increasing to 57% among the upper income strata.

By a slight majority (51%), those with no color affiliation wanted to wait on reforms, as did 65% of Yellows. Reds were split, with 48% in favor of amending the Constitution now and 41% preferring to wait.[44]

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[44] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.8 How to Amend the Constitution

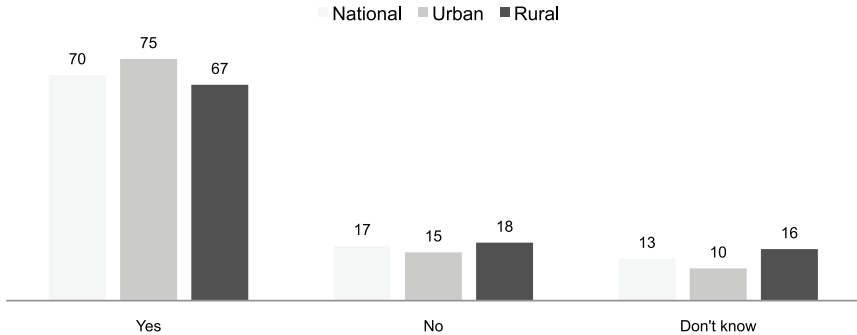*When thinking about possible changes to the constitution, which of these options would you prefer? (Q83)*

National   Urban   Rural

Use 2007 with no changes	27 / 27 / 27
Don't know difference between the two	24 / 27 / 23
Use 1997	12 / 9 / 14
Amend 2007	12 / 14 / 11
Draft new constitution	9 / 8 / 9
Didn't want to give opinion	14 / 13 / 15
Don't know	1 / 2 / 2

Citizens were clearly divided on how the Constitution might be amended. Just over a quarter (27%, versus 28% in 2009) wanted to proceed with no amendments, while 12% wanted to revert to the 1997 Constitution (down from 27% in 2009). Over a third (39%) did not know what to do. Among these, 24% stated that they did not know the difference between the two charters and 15% did not want to give their opinion or did not know. Females were less likely (47%) to have an answer to this question than men (33%), as were those with less education, from 48% of primary school graduates to 30% of university graduates.

While 45% of those with no color affiliation were unable to respond, only a quarter of colors had this problem (Yellows 26%, Reds 23%). The majority of Yellows (65%) wanted to either use the 2007 Constitution (54%) or amend it (11%), compared to only 34% of Reds, who also favored returning to the 1997 Constitution (33%).[45]

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[45] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.9 Poor Voter Knowledge of the Differences between the 2007 and 1997 Charters

On the issue of education and elections, do you know if a bachelor's degree is a minimum requirement for a candidate for Parliament? (Q15)

Legend: ☐ National ☐ Urban ■ Rural

Yes: National 70, Urban 75, Rural 67
No: National 17, Urban 15, Rural 18
Don't know: National 13, Urban 10, Rural 16

Even though the 2007 Constitutional Drafting Committee sent draft copies of the Constitution to every household prior to the 2007 referendum that approved the Constitution, some analysts believe that few people actually read the complex document, and that even fewer understand it or how it differs from the 1997 Constitution. To test this assumption, respondents were asked whether or not candidates running for Parliament required a minimum of a bachelor's degree. This was one of the controversial reforms of the 1997 Constitution that was removed from the 2007 Charter (although the requirement was retained for cabinet ministers). Only 17% of respondents were aware of the change, with a significant majority (83%) stating that it was still a requirement or that they did not know. The majority of color affiliated respondents were likewise unaware of this change.

To improve governance, should a certain level of education be required for members of Parliament; or should everyone be able to be a candidate regardless of education level? (Q16)
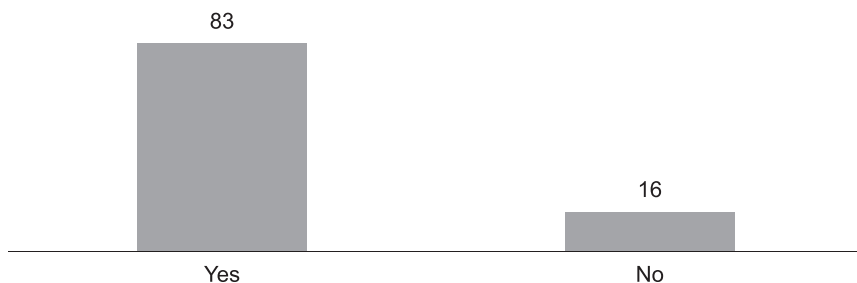
Although a minimum education requirement is no longer necessary under the 2007 Constitution, a significant majority of respondents (83%) thought that such a requirement should apply to MPs.

How about voters? To improve governance, should a certain level of education (perhaps a number of years or a high school diploma) be required for voters; or should everyone be able to vote regardless of education level? (Q17)
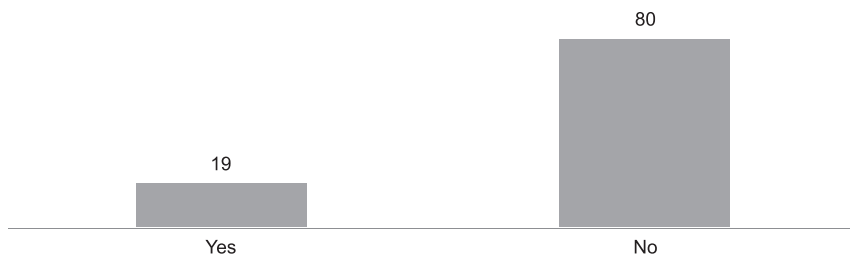
Only 19% of respondents would be willing to see educational requirements applied to voters. There were no significant variations among color or no color respondents.

8.10 Pardoning Convicted Politicians

Some politicians have been convicted of crimes, but say that they are innocent and that the convictions were politically motivated. To reduce political conflict, should these politicians be pardoned, or should their convictions stand? (Q84)
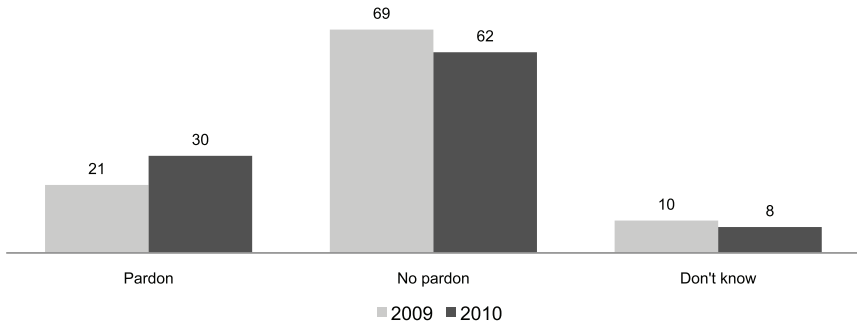

There was a decline of 7% (from 69% to 62%) between 2009 and 2010 in the percentage of respondents that did not want to pardon politicians who had been convicted by the courts. Support for retaining the convictions of politicians increased with the education level of respondents, from a low of 54% among those who graduated from primary school to a high of 76% among university graduates. Household income also was a factor, with support for convictions rising from 61% in lower income households to 67% in upper income households.

While a two-thirds (66%) majority of those with no color affiliation were against a pardon and 69% of Yellows were likewise opposed, 59% of Reds sided with the minority in preferring that convicted politicians be pardoned.[46]

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[46] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.11 Pardoning Coup Makers

What about the coup-makers? They were pardoned under the 2007 Constitution. Should those pardons be revoked, and the coup-makers prosecuted; or to reduce the potential for further political conflict should the pardon be kept? (Q85)
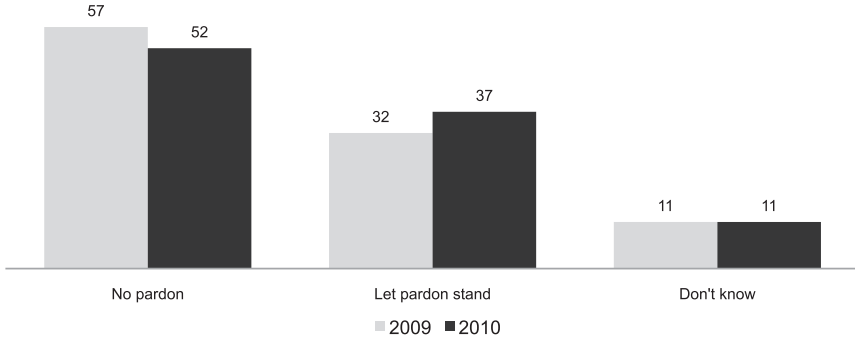
Between 2009 and 2010 there also was a decline from 57% to 51% in the percentage of respondents not willing to pardon the instigators of the 2006 coup. This sentiment was stronger in rural areas (55%) than in urban households (43%), while the highest support for letting pardons stand was in Bangkok (57%). Men (54%) were more supportive of prosecuting the coup makers than women (49%), but there was little further variation among color, education, and income sub-groups.

8.12 Prosecuting Military for Crackdown on Demonstrators

The Government and Army have been accused by some people of human rights abuses during the recent crackdown on demonstrations in Bangkok. To reduce political conflict and promote reconciliation should those who are threatening to bring charges and lawsuits against the Government and Army stop making those threats? (Q86)


	Don't prosecute	Prosecute	Don't know
National	51	37	11
Urban	54	35	11
Rural	50	38	12
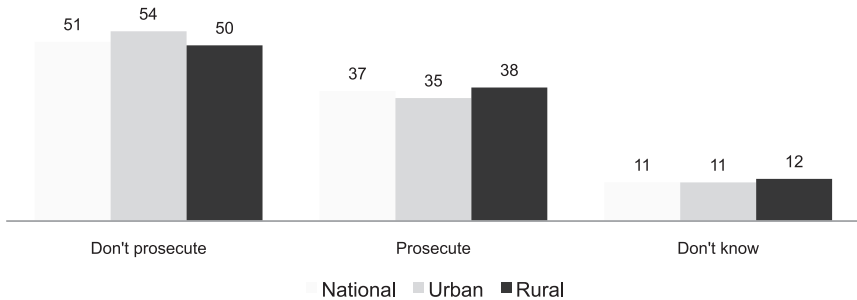
The general public was slightly more lenient in its attitude toward prosecuting the government and military for their crackdown on the 2010 political demonstrations in Bangkok, with 51% saying that people should stop making threats to prosecute. This sentiment varied by region, from a low of 42% in the North to 60% in Bangkok, the epicenter of the crackdown. Less than half (48%) of primary school graduates believed that charges against the military should not be pursued, while 54% of those with a university degree were willing to give the military the benefit of the doubt.

Among those who did not identify with any color affiliation, a slight majority of 51% opposed prosecution of the government and military, along with 69% of the Yellows. Once again, the Reds sided with the minority on this issue, with 52% in favor of prosecution.[47]

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[47] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.13 Prosecuting Reds on Terrorism Charges

What about the Red Shirt leaders who have been accused of terrorism; should charges against them be dropped to promote political reconciliation? (Q87)
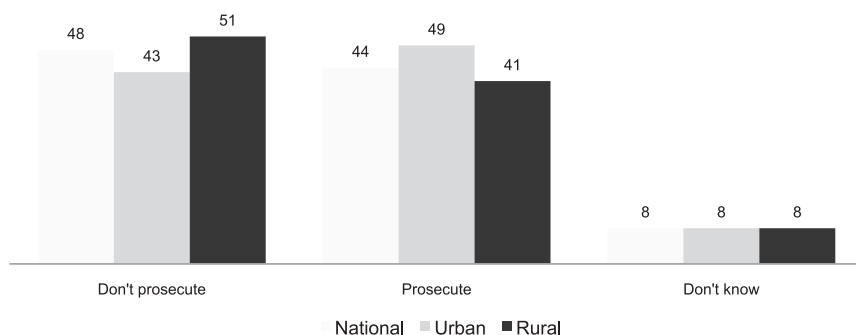

Respondents were divided on the issue of prosecuting Reds on terrorism charges, with 48% opposed to and 44% in favor of prosecution. There was little regional variation on this issue, except that 70% in the South supported prosecution and 60% in the Northeast opposed it. Support for prosecution of the Reds increased with higher levels of education among respondents, from 39% among primary school graduates to 54% of those with a university degree. Lower income respondents also were more disposed to the Reds, with only 40% supportive of prosecution as opposed to 55% of those in the upper income sector.

Those with no color affiliation were evenly split 45% in favor of prosecution and 45% opposed, while 66% of Yellows favored prosecution and 75% of Reds wanted all charges dropped.[48]

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[48] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

8.14 Prosecuting Yellows on Terrorism Charges

And finally, what about the Yellow Shirt leaders who have been accused of terrorism; should the charges against them be dropped to promote political reconciliation? (Q88)


	Don't prosecute	Prosecute	Don't know
National	50	42	9
Urban	46	46	9
Rural	52	39	9
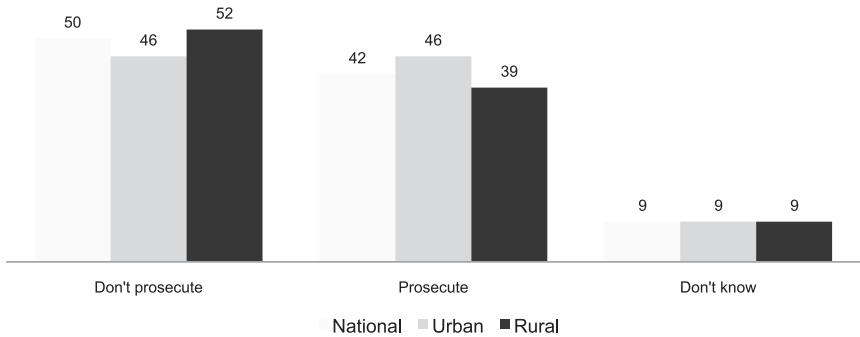
Respondents had a slightly more lenient attitude toward the Yellows, with 50% willing to drop charges, particularly in rural areas (52%) – most notably in the Northeast (56%). Again, those with less education were more willing (51%) to drop charges than university graduates (41%).

Although only 47% of those with no color affiliation were in favor of dropping charges, a slight majority of both Yellows and Reds were willing to drop charges to promote political reconciliation.

8.15 Reinstating Banned Politicians

Should previously banned politicians be reinstated in the interest of political reconciliation? (Q89)
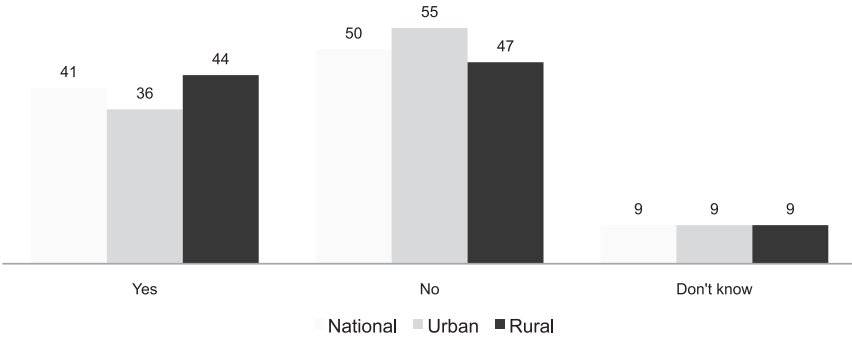
By a slim majority of 50% to 41%, most respondents did not want to see previously banned politicians being reinstated in the interests of political reconciliation. This view was most strongly held in the South (80%) and Greater Bangkok (60%), with the least support in the Northeast where the majority (57%) wanted the banned politicians to be reinstated. Favor for the ban increased progressively with education levels, from a low of 43% among those with only a primary education to 60% among university graduates. Household income was also a factor, with only 49% of respondents from lower income households favoring the ban compared to 56% of those in the upper income strata.

A slight majority of those with no color affiliation (51%) wanted to retain the bans, as did 68% of Yellows. Reds, however, were solidly in favor (65%) of reinstating the banned politicians.[49]

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[49] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

# 8.16 Decentralization to Reduce Urban-Rural Conflict

Some people say that one way to reduce tension between urban and rural areas and improve governance would be to devolve some powers from the central government to local governments and to directly elect governors and other local officials (as is done in Bangkok). Other people believe that government will be more effective and efficient if centrally controlled. Which is closer to your view? (Q90)
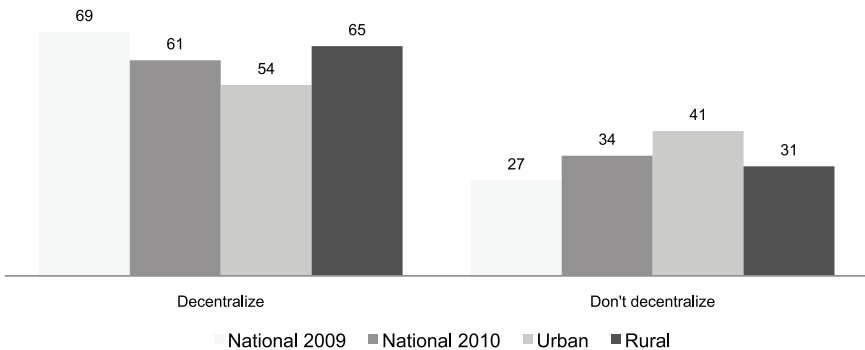
A solid majority of 61% believe that decentralization would both improve governance and reduce tensions, though this is down from 69% in 2009. Although it would appear that rural residents were significantly more in favor (65%) of decentralization than urban residents (54%), nationwide decentralization had significant support among urban and rural respondents: 67% in the Northeast, 68% in the North, and 72% in the Central Region. Only in the urban South and Greater Bangkok did the majority (55%) prefer the current centralized system. Those with lower education tended to be more in favor of decentralization than those with a higher education, declining progressively from 63% among primary school graduates to a still strong majority of 56% among university graduates. All color variations were strongly in favor of decentralization.

8.17 Decentralization to Reduce Yellow-Red Conflict

How about this statement: "Political decentralization might help reduce the political conflict between Reds and Yellows." Do you agree or disagree? (Q91)
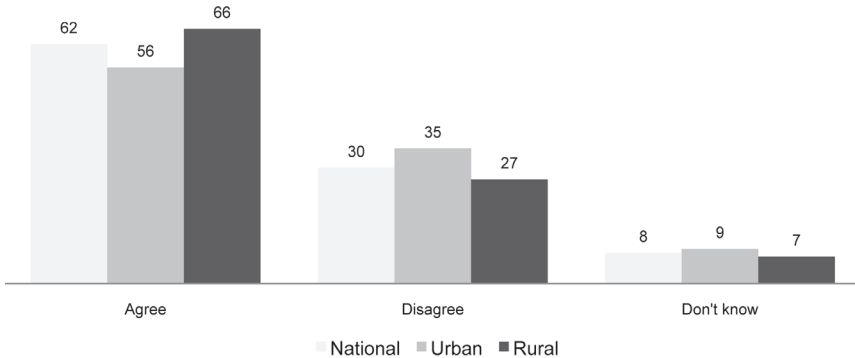

A strong majority (62%) of respondents also expressed the view that decentralization might reduce the Red-Yellow conflict. This view was most strongly held in the North (82%) but rejected by 44% in Bangkok, where another 25% stated that they did not know. Primary school graduates and respondents from lower income households were more confident (63% and 62%, respectively) that decentralization would help than were university graduates or upper income respondents (52% respectively).

A similar majority of those with no color affiliation and those affiliated with the Reds or the Yellows were confident that decentralization would reduce conflict.

8.18 Decentralization to Reduce Southern Conflict

Similarly, some have suggested that political decentralization or limited autonomy might help resolve the long-term conflict in Southern Thailand. Do you agree or disagree? (Q92)

National 2009 ■ National 2010 ■ Urban ■ Rural
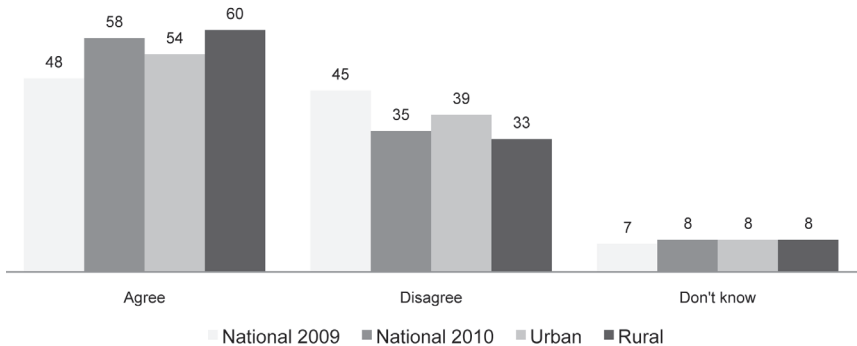
There was less confidence (58%) that decentralization would help resolve the long-term conflict in the three southern border provinces, although this was a significant increase from less than half (48%) in 2009. This view was most strongly held (77%) in the Central Region and least strongly held (41%) in Greater Bangkok. Polled separately, 62% of respondents in the three southern provinces thought decentralization would help.

8.19 Role of International Community in Reducing Conflict

Because of recent events in Thailand, international interest in Thailand has increased. Do you think the international community could play a positive role in helping to resolve the political impasse in Thailand? (Q93)
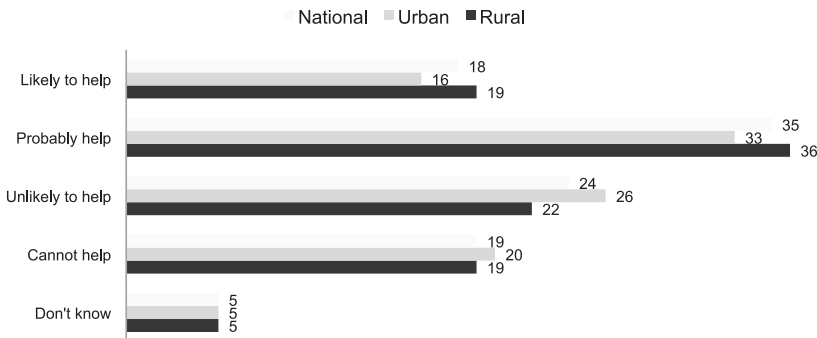
A majority (53%) of respondents thought that assistance from the international community would likely (18%) or probably (35%) help in resolving Thailand's political impasse. Secondary school graduates (57%) were more confident in the international community than either university graduates (50%) or those with just a primary school education (47%). Confidence declined progressively with increased age, from a high of 60% among those aged 18-19 to 44% among those aged 60 and over.

8.20 Accepting International Assistance

Some countries and multinational organizations have offered to help me-diate or provide other assistance in the conflict between the government and the anti-government protesters. Should the government accept these offers? (Q94)
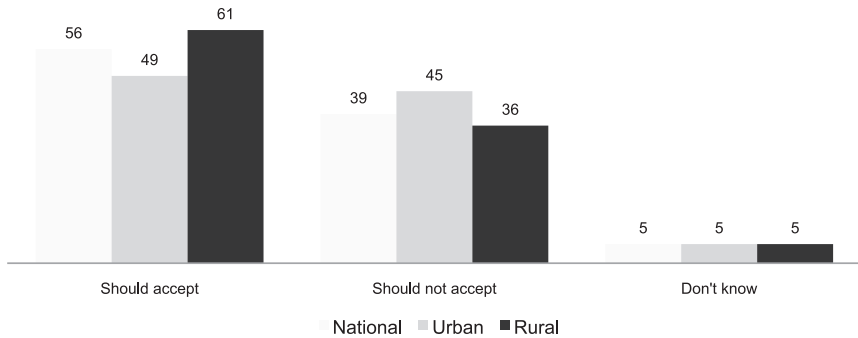
The majority of respondents (56%) stated that if the international community offered to help, the government should accept the offer. However, just under half (49%) of urban residents disagreed, while 61% of rural residents thought that an offer of assistance should be considered.

CHAPTER 9
POLARIZATION OF THAI POLITICS

Democratic Values

The political elite are normally defined as those who hold public office and wield power officially, as well as political activists who use their formal or informal power to influence national polices. Among the most politically active in any society are those who are elected to public office. To ensure that this survey represents the views of citizens and not formal political actors, the survey specifically excludes any household in which someone is a politician, political party official, Member of the House of Representatives or Senate, or any locally elected politician at the provincial, sub-district, or village level. For this chapter, two survey questions were used as proxy to identify political activists – that is, those who attempt to influence public policy and are representative of the Thai political elite.

How interested are you in politics? Very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not interested at all? (Q28)

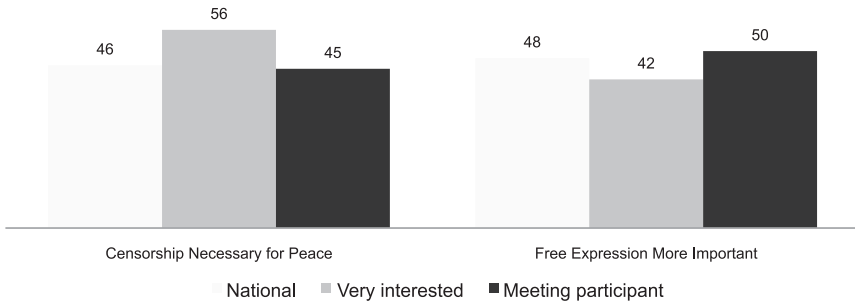*In the past two years have you attended any political meeting? (Q31)*
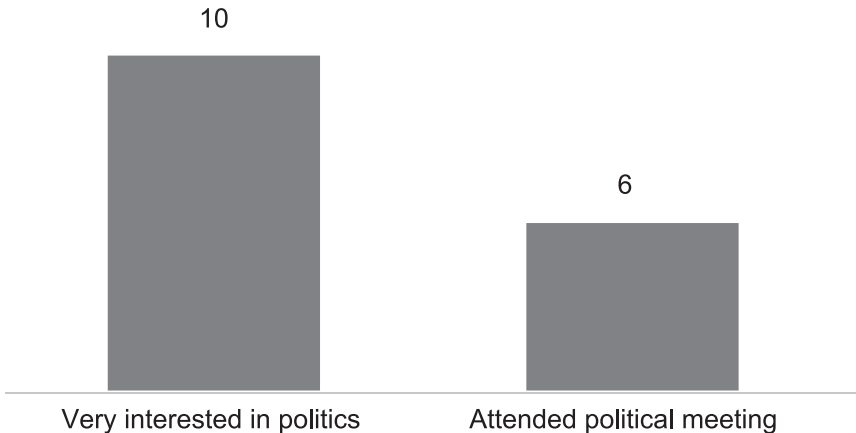
Only 10% of respondents stated that they were very interested in politics. A smaller number (6%) had attended some political meetings. Personal identification with a color, either Red or Yellow, was not synonymous with being a political activist. Even among core or slight color advocates only 10% to 15% were very interested in politics or had participated in political meetings.

Data in this chapter is presented in narrative and chart format; however, not all data is presented in both formats. Some figures are not graphically represented in the charts and there are instances where the data is solely presented in the narrative.
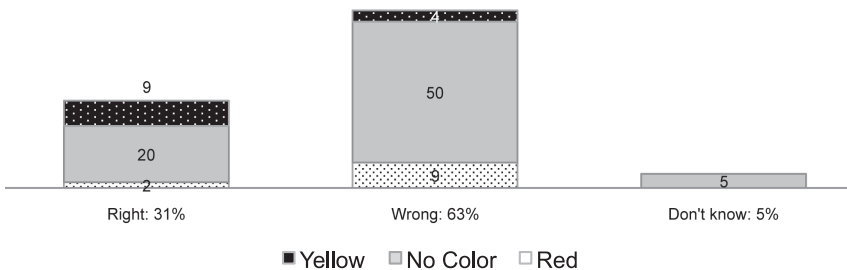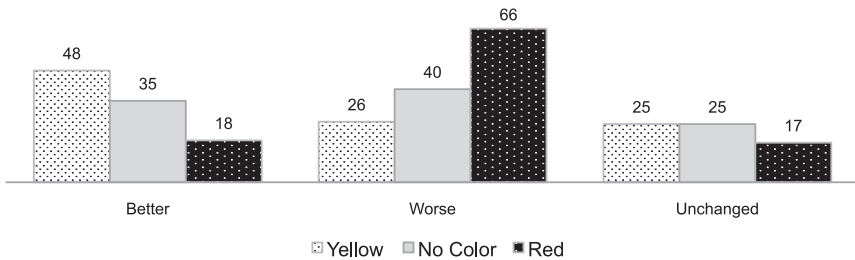
There are three comparisons included in this chapter: 1) National versus political activists; 2) Yellows versus Reds versus No Colors; and 3) the total respondent based broken down by color affiliiation.
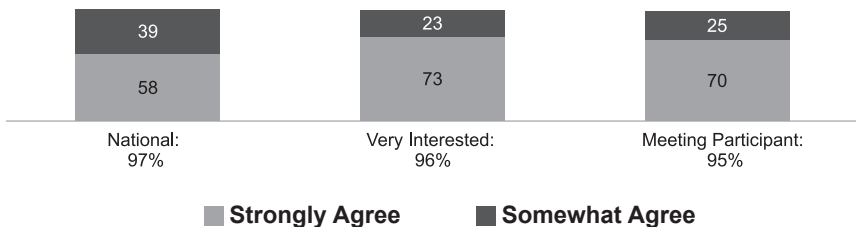For example:

1)

Censorship Necessary for Peace   Free Expression More Important

☐ National   ☐ Very interested   ■ Meeting participant

2)

Better   Worse   Unchanged

⊡ Yellow   ☐ No Color   ■ Red

Right: 31%   Wrong: 63%   Don't know: 5%

■ Yellow   ☐ No Color   ☐ Red

9.1 Unity in Diversity

Despite our differences, as Thais we have many values that unite us. To what extent do you agree or disagree? (Q11)

42	39	40
57	58	56
Yellow: 99%	No Color: 97%	Red: 96%

■ **Strongly Agree**   ■ **Somewhat Agree**
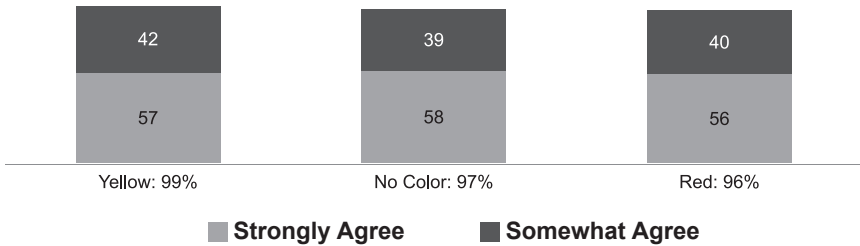
Although pundits may regard Thais as being highly divided politically, nearly all respondents (97%) asserted that Thais, in spite of their differences, are united by common values. A majority of ordinary citizens, Yellows, and Reds all strongly agreed on this issue (58%, 57%, and 56%, respectively).[50]

39	23	25
58	73	70
National: 97%	Very Interested: 96%	Meeting Participant: 95%

■ **Strongly Agree**   ■ **Somewhat Agree**

With an increase in respondents' degree of political participation – from interest in politics to participation in meetings – there only was a marginal decline (96% to 94%) in concurrence that there is more that unites Thais than divides them. Perhaps of greater significance, while less than 60% of the general population and Yellows and Reds strongly agreed with this statement, more than 70% of politically active respondents across all sub-groups strongly agreed.[51]

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[50] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

[51] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10%, Reds +-7% and politically active +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.
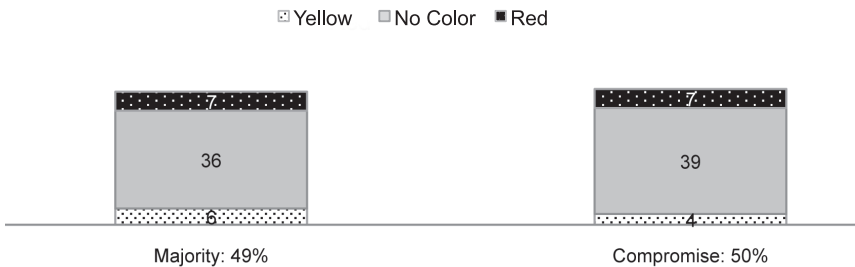
9.2 Majority Rule vs. Compromise

Some people say: "Decisions should be made based on what the majority wants, even if the minority disagrees." Others say: "It is more important to get as much agreement as possible between the minority and majority, even if the majority must compromise." Which is closer to your view? (Q9)

	Majority	Compromise	Don't know
National	48	51	2
Very Interested	50	49	1
Meeting Participant	47	50	3
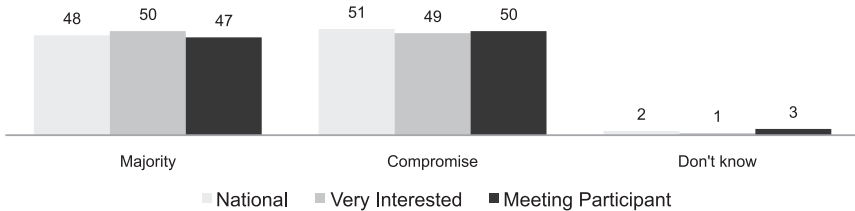
There is no significant difference between the general respondent population and the politically active groups on the issue of majority rule versus seeking consensus. Nationwide, about half the population (51%) preferred compromise, while slightly less (48%) preferred majority rule. Politically active and color groups were equally split on this issue.

As a percentage of the population, those with no color affiliation were split on this issue (with 39% favoring compromise and 36% preferring majority rule), as were both the Reds (7% compromise, 7% majority rule) and Yellows (4% compromise, 6% majority rule).[47]


Yellow	No Color	Red

Majority: 49%	Compromise: 50%
7	7
36	39
6	4

As a percentage of the population, those with no color affiliation were split on this issue (with 39% favoring compromise and 36% preferring majority rule), as were both the Reds (7% compromise, 7% majority rule) and Yellows (4% compromise, 6% majority rule).[52]

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[52] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

9.3 Reaction to Authoritarian Rule

On some occasions, democracy doesn't work. When that happens there are people that say we need a strong leader who doesn't have to be elected through voting. Others say that even if things don't function, democracy is always the best. What do you think? (Q12)
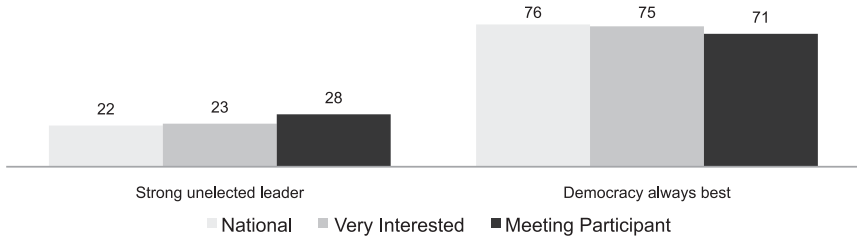

A strong majority of respondents (76%) believe that democracy is always the best option; however, those who attend political meetings were 6% more likely to support a strong unelected leader (28%). Reds preferred an elected leader more strongly (85%) than Yellows did (60%).
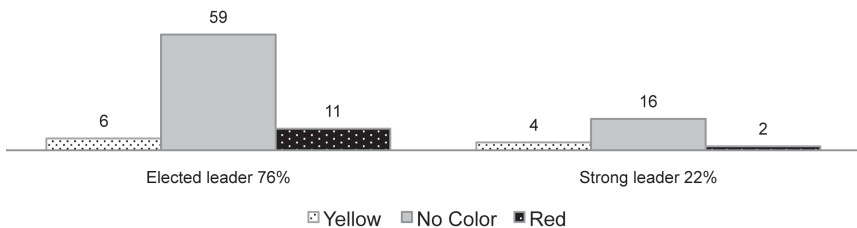
A strong majority of respondents (76%) believe that democracy is always the best option; however, those who attend political meetings were 6% more likely to support a strong unelected leader (28%). Reds preferred an elected leader more strongly (85%) than Yellows did (60%).

Many people think the army plays too big a role in politics in Thailand, while others see the army as an important independent institution that has helped safeguard and stabilize the country. Which is closer to your view? (Q65)

In spite of their views against unelected authoritarian leaders, the majority of Thai citizens (63%) stated that the Thai military, which has historically played the unelected authoritarian leadership role, is an important institution that safeguards and stabilizes the nation. Politically active groups were 11% more likely to believe that the army is too big (42%).

National ■ Very Interested ■ Meeting Participant
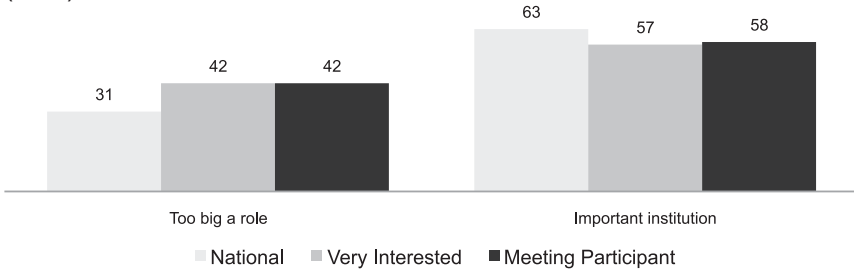
Two-thirds (66%) of those with no color allegiance believed that the army is an important institution, as did 82% of Yellows. However, more than two-thirds (69%) of Reds declared that the army plays too large a role.


Yellow ■ No Color ■ Red
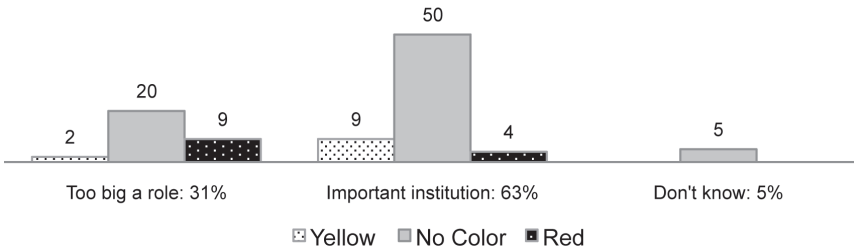
As a percent of total population, reflecting trends in the general voter population, a small minority of Reds (4%) believed that the army is an important institution, while 2% of Yellows believed that it is too big.[53]

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[53] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

9.4 Reaction to Elite Rule

Here are two ways of thinking about democratic government: the best government will include representatives from all areas of the country and levels of society; the best government will be provided by the most intelligent and best educated. Which is closer to your view? (Q24)


National   Very Interested   Meeting Participant
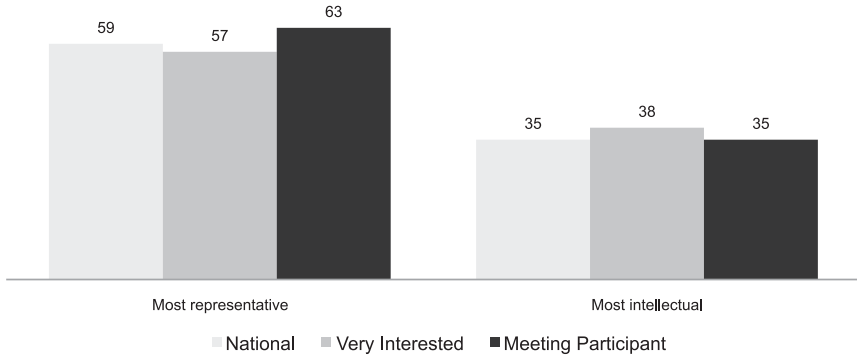
A solid majority of respondents (59%) preferred a government that is most representative of society, although nearly a third (35%) would prefer a government of intellectuals. Although 41% of Yellows stated a preference for a more educated government, there was a majority consensus among Reds (61%) and Yellows (56%) in desiring a government that is inclusive.[54]
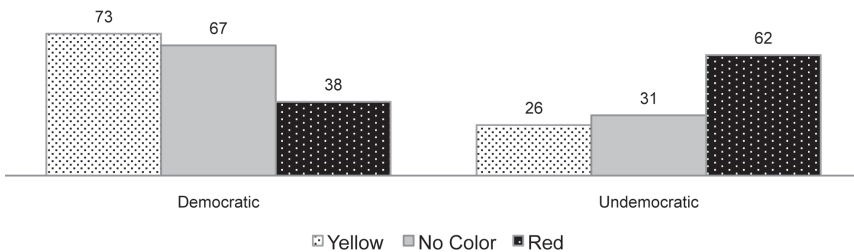
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[54] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

9.5 Personal Perceptions of Thai Democracy

In your opinion, is Thailand very democratic, somewhat democratic, not quite democratic or undemocratic? (Q14)
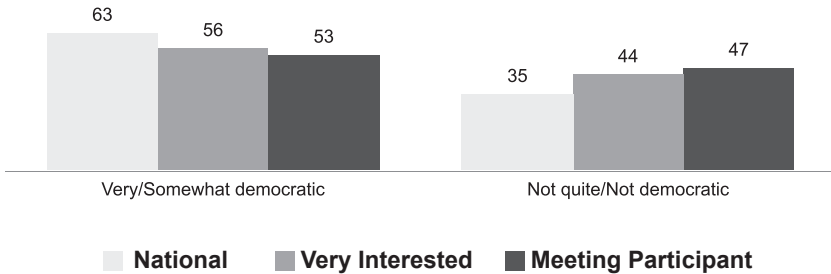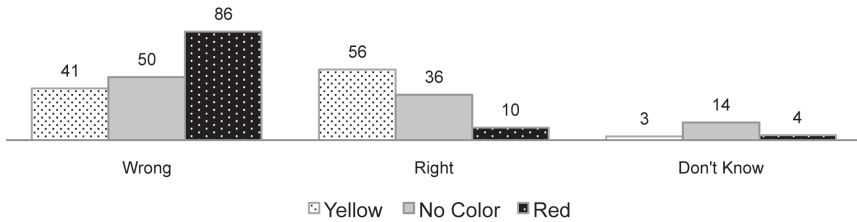

A strong majority (63%) of respondents believed that Thailand is very (12%) or somewhat (51%) democratic. This optimism fell with increased degrees of political activism, from 65% among those who were not politically active, to 56% among those very interested in politics, and down to 53% among meeting participants.
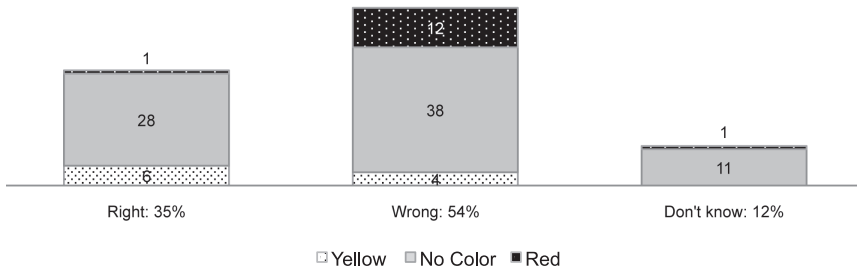

While 73% of Yellows and 67% of those with no color affiliation perceived the country to be democratic, 62% of Reds stated that it was undemocratic.[55]

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[55] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Generally speaking, do you think things in Thailand today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction? (Q1)

Wrong — Yellow: 41, No Color: 50, Red: 86
Right — Yellow: 56, No Color: 36, Red: 10
**Don't Know** — Yellow: 3, No Color: 14, Red: 4

☒ Yellow ☐ No Color ■ Red

Reds were significantly more pessimistic (86%) than Yellows (41%) or those with no color affiliation (50%). The majority of Yellows thought the country was going in the right direction (56%).

Right: 35% — Yellow: 6, No Color: 28, Red: 1
Wrong: 54% — Yellow: 4, No Color: 38, Red: 12
Don't know: 12% — No Color: 11, Red: 1

☐ Yellow ☐ No Color ■ Red

Nevertheless, as a percentage of total respondents, Yellows were split on this issue, comprising those who think that the nation is going in the right direction (6%) and those who think that it is going in the wrong direction (4%). Among the Reds, only 1% think that the country is going in the right direction, compared to 12% who believe that things are going in the wrong direction.[56]

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[56] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the job the national government is doing? (Q7)
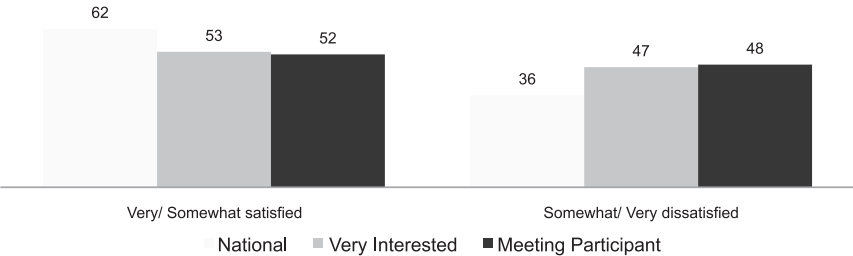
A solid majority (62%) of respondents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the government (65% among those not politically active). The view declined with increased levels of political activism, with 48% of meeting participants somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the administration.
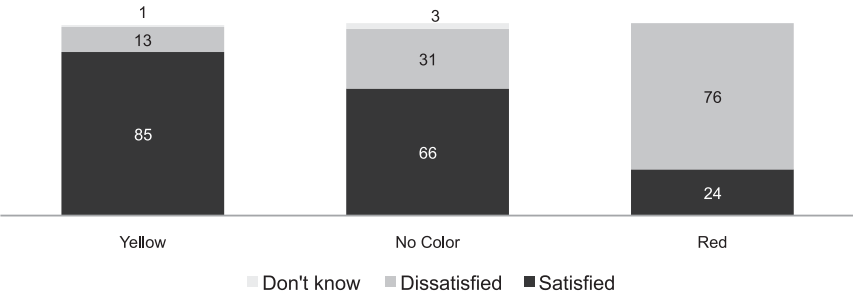

Reds and Yellows were opposed on this issue, with 76% of Reds dissatisfied and 85% of Yellows satisfied.[57]

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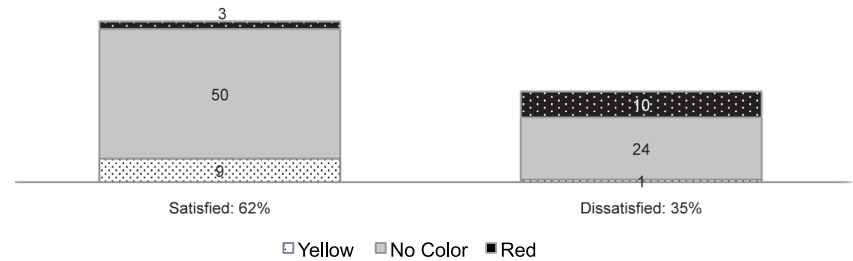
[57] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Although Reds constituted 10% of the total respondent population that was dissatisfied with the government, they also represented 3% of those who were satisfied.

Thinking about your own personal economic situation now compared to two years ago, would you say you are much better off, better off, worse off, much worse off or about the same? (Q6)
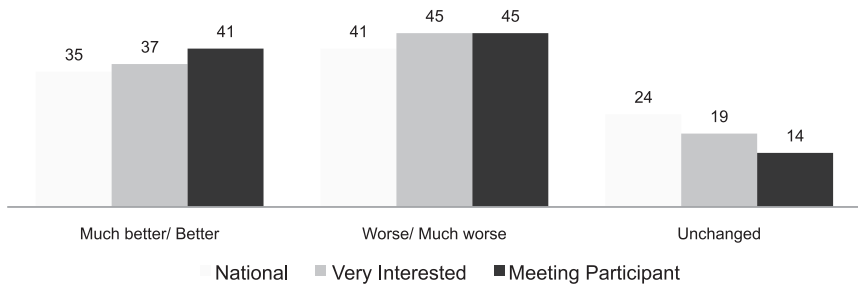
While 24% of national respondents felt their economic situation had not changed over the past two years, politically active respondents had stronger feelings either way with 41% of meeting participants stating they were better off and 45% worse off.
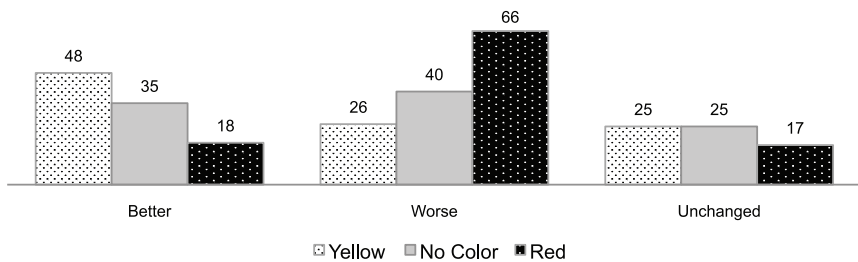

In general, two-thirds (66%) of Reds tended to see themselves as worse off while only a quarter (26%) of Yellows perceived themselves to be worse off.

Better: 35%   Worse: 41%   Unchanged: 24%

▣ Yellow   ▢ No Color   ■ Red
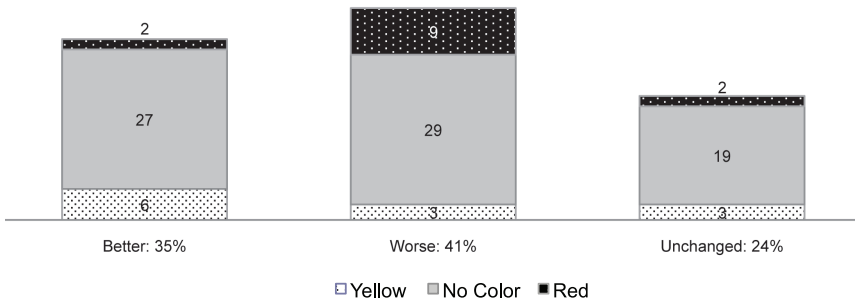
Reds constituted 9% of the total respondent base that found themselves worse off and 2% of those better off, while Yellows constituted 6% of those better off and 3% of those worse off.

Thinking about the future, do you see the situation in Thailand improving or deteriorating over the next year? (Q5)

Better   Worse   Don't know

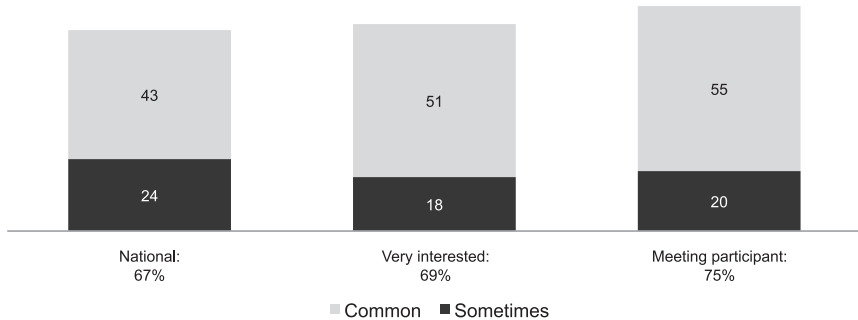▢ National   ▢ Very Interested   ■ Meeting Participant
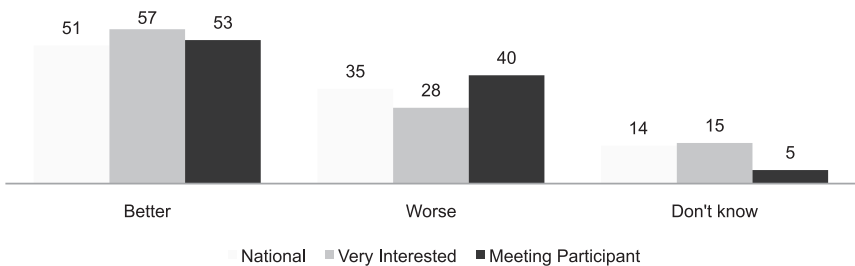
A slight majority (51%) of respondents saw the situation in Thailand improving over the next year. Fifty-seven percent of those very interested in politics shared this view.

Better   Worse   Don't know

▣ Yellow   ▢ No Color   ■ Red
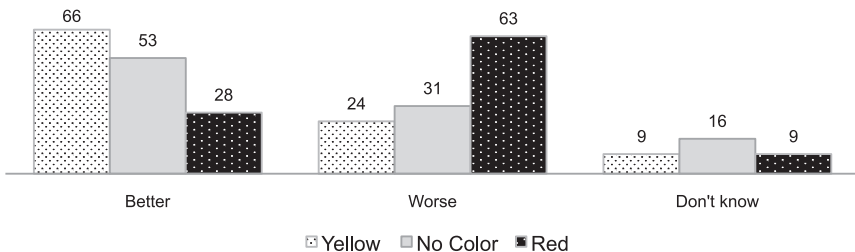
Yellows tended to be much more optimistic (66%) and Reds much more pessimistic (63%). Of the total respondent base that believed that things will improve (51%), the Reds comprised 4%, Yellows 2% and No Color, 45%.

9.6 Political Issues

Do you think there are different standards of justice (double standards) for different groups in Thailand? (Q57)

| National: 67% | Very interested: 69% | Meeting participant: 75% |

▢ Common ■ Sometimes

A significant majority of the population (67%) believed that double standards exist in Thailand. This rate increased with the level of political activism from 69% among those very interested in politics to 75% among meeting participants.

Yes / Sometimes   Rarely/ None   Don't know/ Don't want to give opinion

▨ Yellow ▢ No Color ■ Red
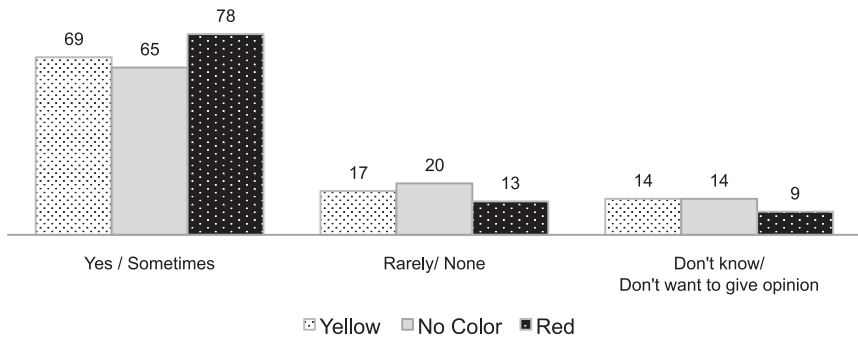
Belief in double standards also increased among respondents with professed color associations from 65% among those with no color affiliation, to 69% among the Yellows, and up to 78% among the Reds.

Some politicians have been convicted of crimes, but say that they are innocent and that the convictions were politically motivated. To reduce political conflict, should these politicians be pardoned, or should their convictions stand? (Q84)
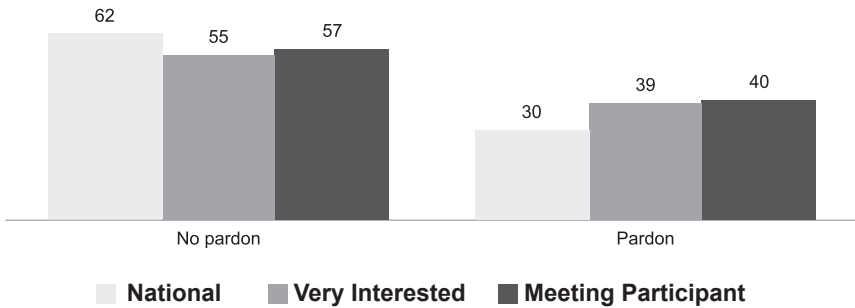

There was a strong national consensus of 62% of total respondents who do not want to pardon politicians previously convicted of crimes, although this declined to just over half (55%) among those very interested in politics. Yellows (69%) sided with the majority on this issue while Reds (59%) sided with the minority view.
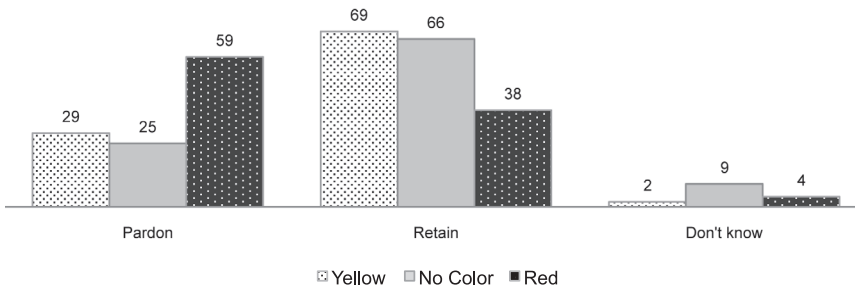
What about the coup-makers? They were pardoned under the 2007 Constitution. Should those pardons be revoked, and the coup-makers prosecuted; or to reduce the potential for further political conflict should the pardon be kept? (Q85)
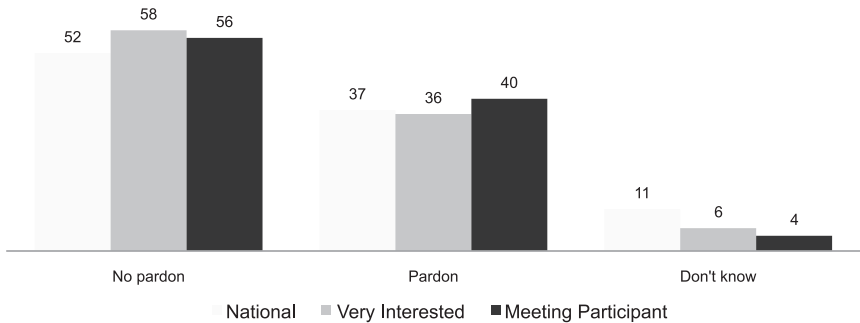
There was a consensus among respondents (51%) that those behind the 2006 coup should not receive a pardon. Just over a third (37%) of respondents were willing to allow the pardon to rest under the terms of the 2007 Constitution, while 12% did not know.
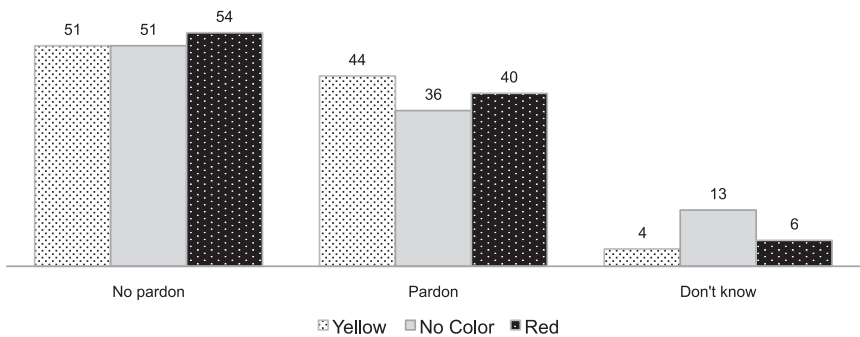
Should previously banned politicians be reinstated in the interest of political reconciliation? (Q89)
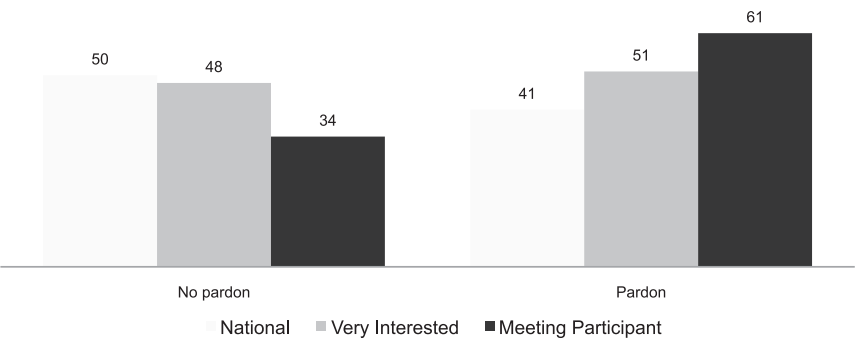
A slight majority of respondents with no color affiliation (51%) and those not politically active (50%) believed that previously banned politicians should not be pardoned. Only among the politically active and the Reds (65%) did the majority think that there should be a pardon.
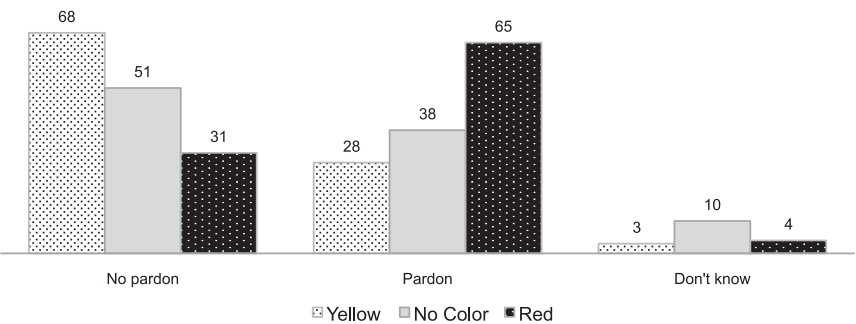
9.7 Freedom of Speech

Do people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live? (Q21)
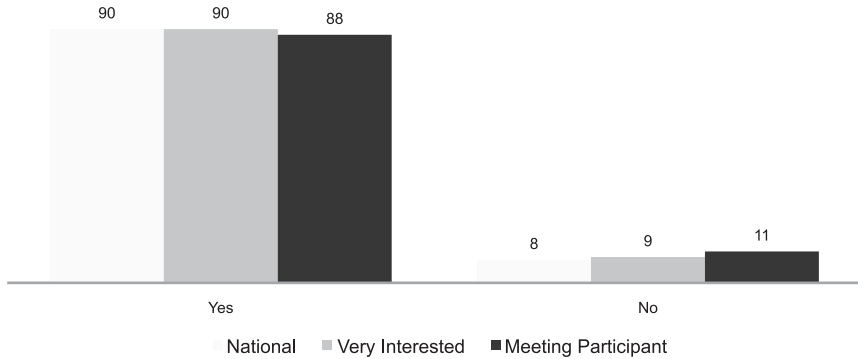
Nine out of ten Thais (90%) felt free to express their political opinions, including those who are more politically active. Likewise, Yellows and Reds also expressed this view (93%).

Do you think that all political parties, even the ones most people do not like, should be allowed to hold meetings in your area? (Q18)

□ Yellow   □ No Color   ■ Red

Yes: 79%   No: 18%
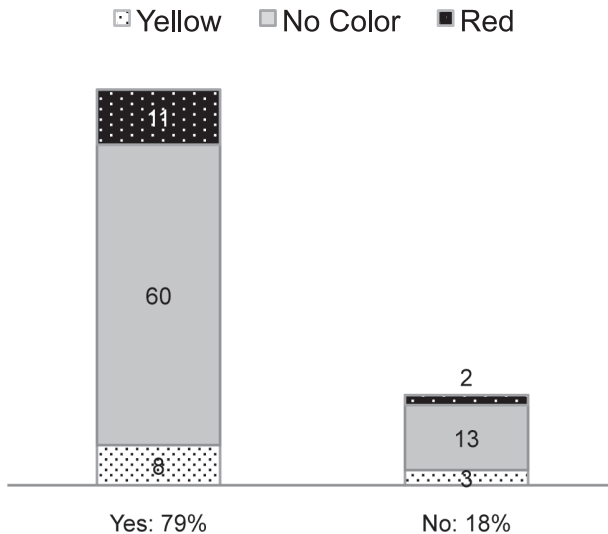
Those least intolerant to allowing political parties they do not like to hold meetings in their area were those who are very interested in politics (16%) and those who attend such political meetings (14%).
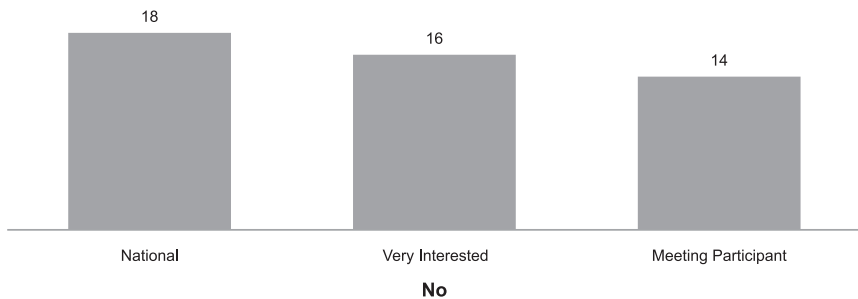
Regardless of color affiliation, there was strong agreement that all political parties should have the right to hold meetings in any area they wish: those not affiliated with any color (79%), Reds (80%), Yellows (76%). Although nearly a quarter of Yellows (23%) were opposed to this idea, as a percentage of the total respondent base that supported party meeting freedom, 8% were Yellows, compared to only 3% of Yellows who opposed such freedom.

Suppose a friend of yours supported a color movement (red or yellow) that most people did not like. Would you accept that, or would it end your friendship? (Q20)
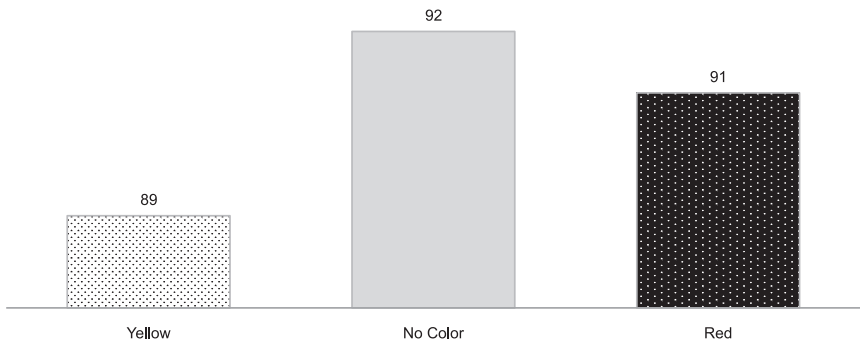
The majority of respondents (92%) placed friendship at a higher level than any political or color differences they might have. Nevertheless, a small minority of nearly 7% would end a friendship if a friend was associated with a color that they did not approve of. This includes 1% of Reds and 1% of Yellows.

The government has used the Internal Security Act and Emergency Decree to restrict or shut down some media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and websites). Some people think this was necessary to help promote social peace and stability; while others think it's more important to let everyone have their say. Which is closer to your opinion? (Q22)
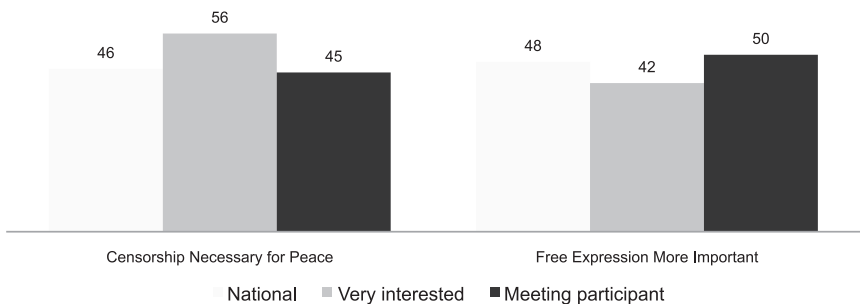
Respondents were split 46% to 48% over whether or not censorship is sometimes necessary to help promote peace and stability, although a majority (56%) of those very interested in politics asserted that freedom to express one's opinion must sometimes be limited.
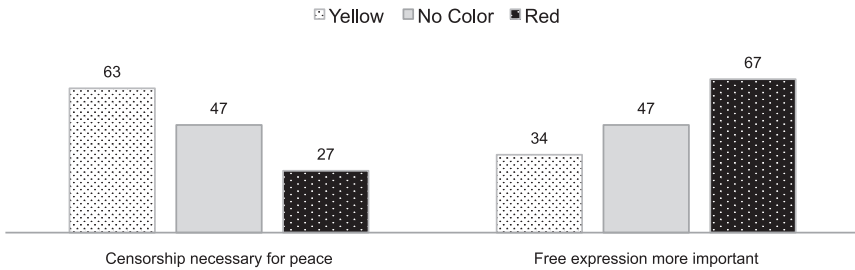
Those with no color affiliation were split equally 47%-47% on censorship. Sixty-three percent of Yellows would accept censorship to promote social peace and stability, while two-thirds of Reds (67%) asserted that freedom of expression is always more important.
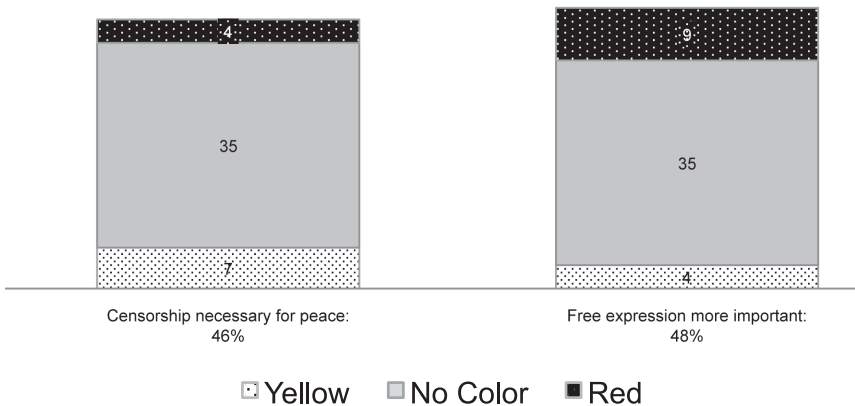
As a percentage of the total respondent base, those with no color affiliation were equally split, with 35% in favor of some censorship and 35% opposed. Yellows and Reds were not as evenly split, with 4% of Reds and 7% of Yellows open to censorship, compared to 9% Reds and 4% Yellows opposed.

9.8 Freedom to Demonstrate

Political demonstrations are allowed in most democracies, but in Thailand they seem to have caused a lot of conflict in recent years. Should large demonstrations be allowed, or should they be banned? (Q60)
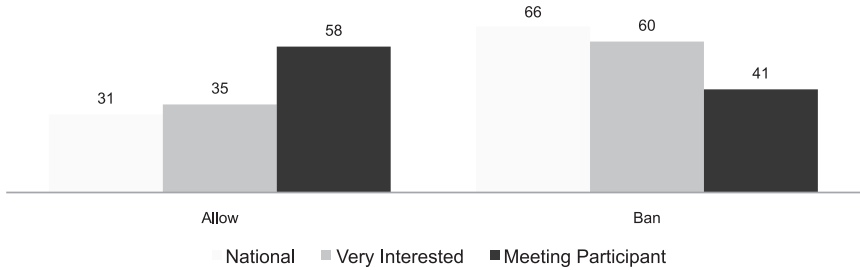
While two-thirds of respondents (66%) overall, and almost as many of those very interested in politics (60%), would be willing to ban large demonstrations to reduce conflict in society, over half of those who attend political meetings (58%) were opposed to banning demonstrations.
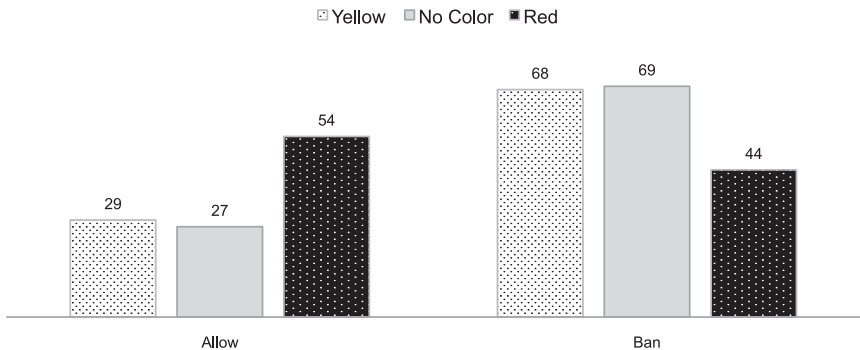
Those with no color affiliation (69%) and Yellows (68%) were open to demonstration bans, while over half (54%) of the Reds believed that large demonstrations should be allowed.

The government has been criticized by some for using force to end the demonstrations in May 2010; while others say force was necessary to limit damage and restore order. Which is closer to your view? (Q61)
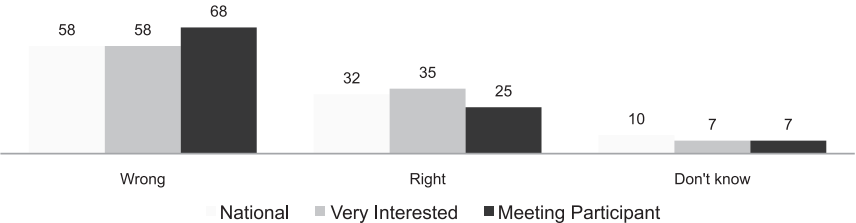
The majority of respondents and those very interested in politics (58% respectively) believed that the use of force to break up the May demonstrations was wrong. Yellows and Reds held divergent views on this issue, with 56% of Yellows stating it was right and 85% of Reds believing it was wrong.
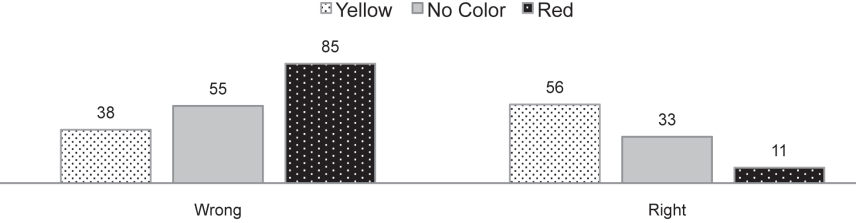
And who do you think was primarily responsible for the deaths in May? Do you think it was mostly the demonstrators fault for holding an illegal demonstration, or mostly the government's fault for using excessive force to end the demonstration? (Q62)
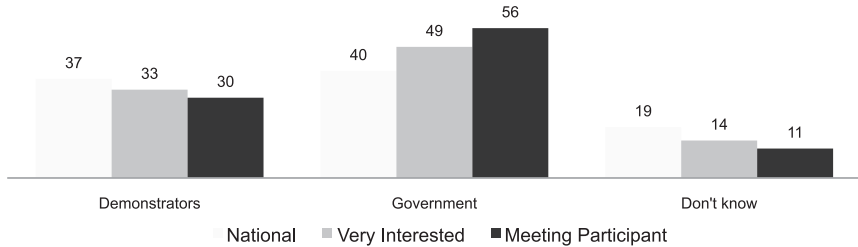
Respondents were divided on who was responsible for the deaths that occurred in the May demonstrations. A third (37%) of the population thought that the demonstrators were responsible, while 40% thought that the government was responsible, and 19% did not know. With an increase in political activism among respondents, however, there was a corresponding rise in tendency to blame the government, with just under half (49%) of those very interested in politics and 56% of meeting participants blaming the government.
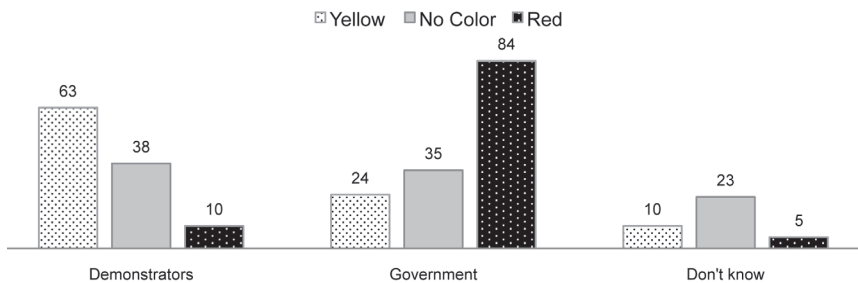
Reds and Yellows again held divergent views, with 63% of Yellows holding the demonstrators responsible and 84% of Reds blaming the government. Those with no color affiliation were split, with 38% blaming the demonstrators, 35% holding the government responsible, 4% stating that both were equally responsible, and 23% stating that they did not know or declining to give their opinion.[58]

The Government and Army have been accused by some people of human rights abuses during the recent crackdown on demonstrations in Bangkok. To reduce political conflict and promote reconciliation should those who are threatening to bring charges and lawsuits against the Government and Army stop making those threats? (Q86)

Legend: National ▪ Very Interested ▪ Meeting Participant

	Stop	Proceed	Don't know
National	52	37	11
Very Interested	52	42	6
Meeting Participant	47	42	11
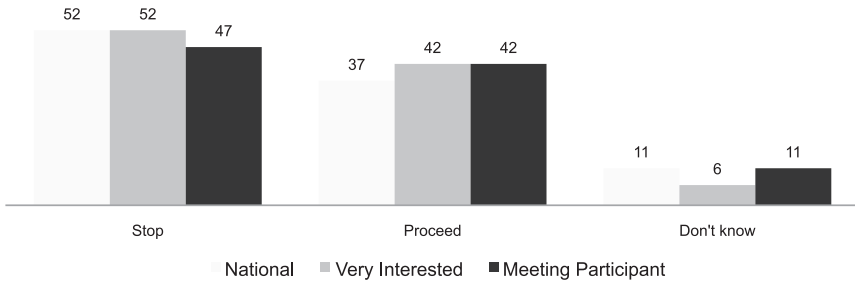
A slight majority of respondents (52%) did not think that the government or military should be prosecuted for the crackdown on the demonstrators in Bangkok. Only a slight majority of the Reds (52%) believed that prosecution should proceed against the government and military, while 69% of the Yellows wanted all threats of lawsuits against the government and military stopped.

Legend: Yellow ▪ No Color ▪ Red

	Stop	Proceed	Don't know
Yellow	69	25	6
No Color	51	36	13
Red	44	52	4

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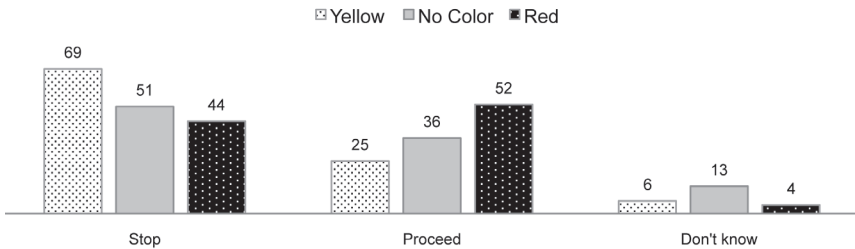
[58] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

What about the Red Shirt leaders who have been accused of terrorism? Should charges against them be dropped to promote political reconciliation? (Q87)
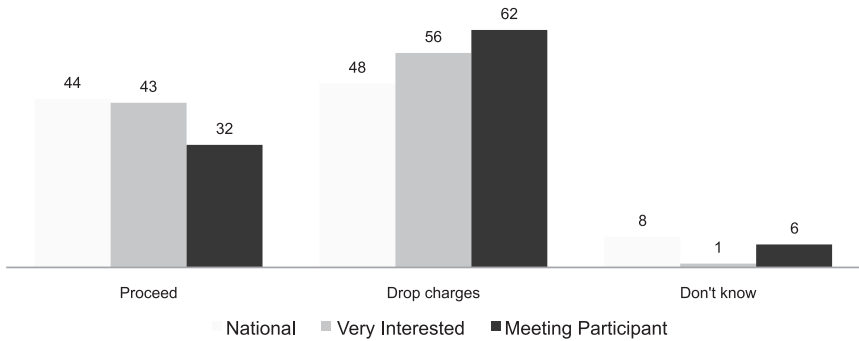
The majority of respondents with no color affiliation were split 45%-45% on whether charges should be brought against Red leaders. Only among Yellows (66%) was there a strong desire for prosecution.
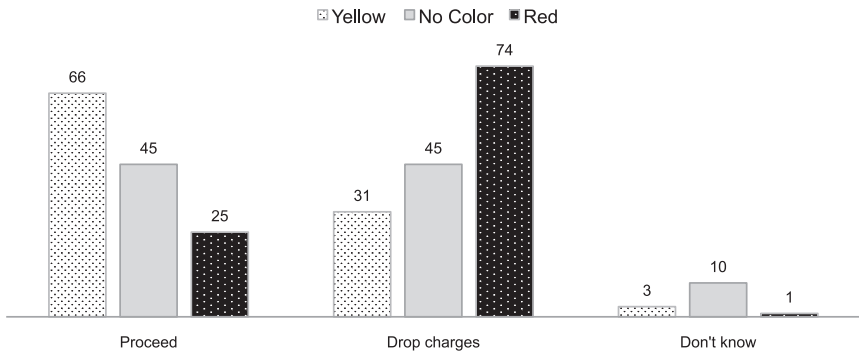
And, finally, what about the Yellow Shirt leaders who have been accused of terrorism? Should the charges against them be dropped to promote political reconciliation? (Q88)
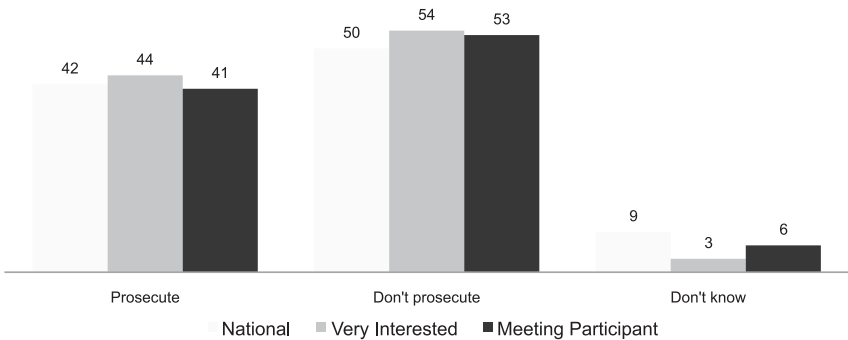
A slight majority of 50% would not like to see the Yellows prosecuted. Even the majority of Reds (55%) were willing to see charges against Yellow leaders dropped.
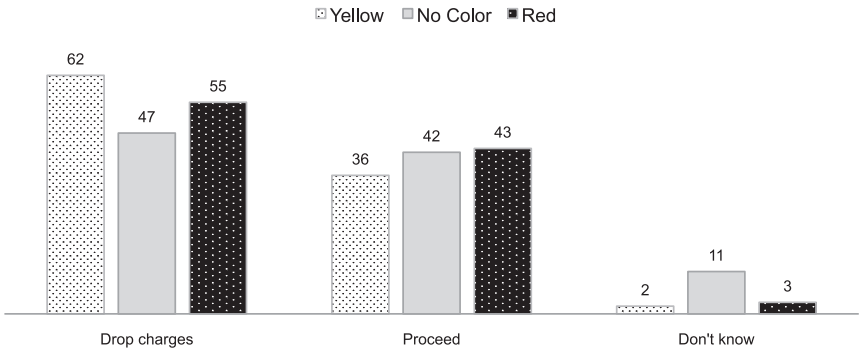
9.9 Elections

Some people have suggested that there must be a reconciliation process to reduce conflict in society before elections can be held; while others think reconciliation is not possible until elections have been held. What do you think? (Q79)

	Before	After
National	79	15
Very Interested	77	18
Meeting Participant	74	19

National ▪ Very Interested ▪ Meeting Participant

⊡ Yellow ▫ No Color ▪ Red

	Before	After	Don't know/ Don't want to give opinion
Yellow	83	14	3
No Color	79	14	6
Red	75	22	3
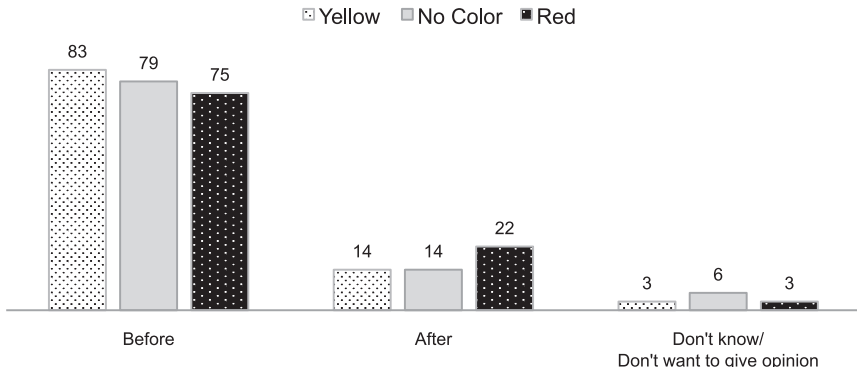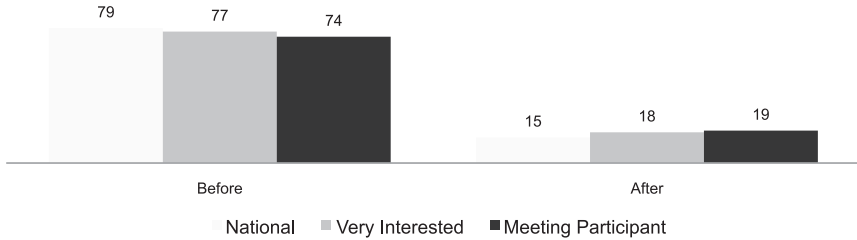
A strong majority of 79% of respondents preferred reconciliation prior to elections. The only difference among the politically active sub-groups and colors was the intensity of their support for this recommendation.

What will be more important in helping you choose a candidate in the next election; their color affiliation or their party affiliation? (Q38)
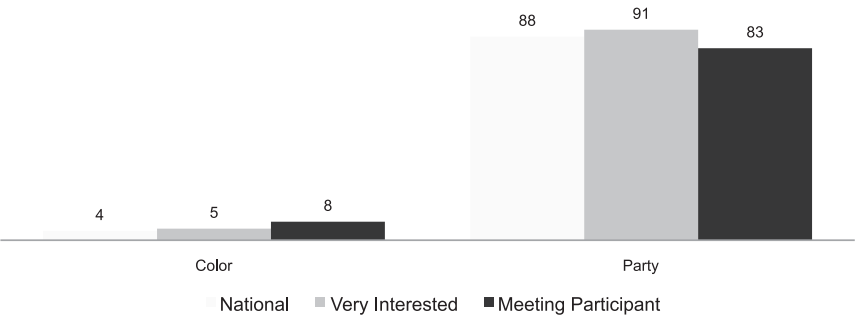
The color debate had very little influence on respondents. Nationally, only 4% would consider a candidate's color affiliation as an important consideration in choosing who to vote for.
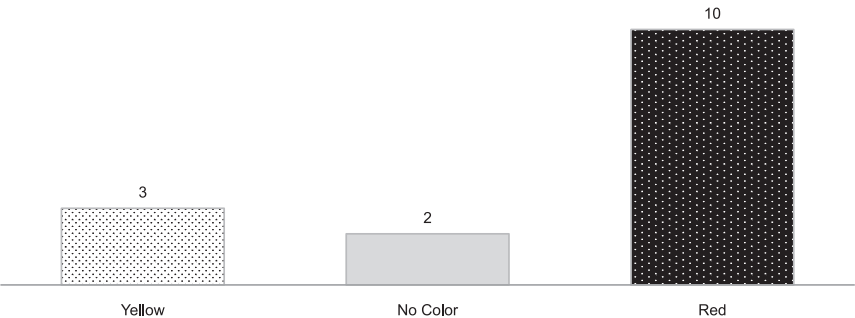
Only 2% of those not affiliated with any color would use color as a criteria in choosing their candidates. On the other hand, 10% of Reds would base their candidate decision on color.

9.10 Constitutional Amendments

When thinking about possible changes to the Constitution, which of these options would you prefer? (Q83)
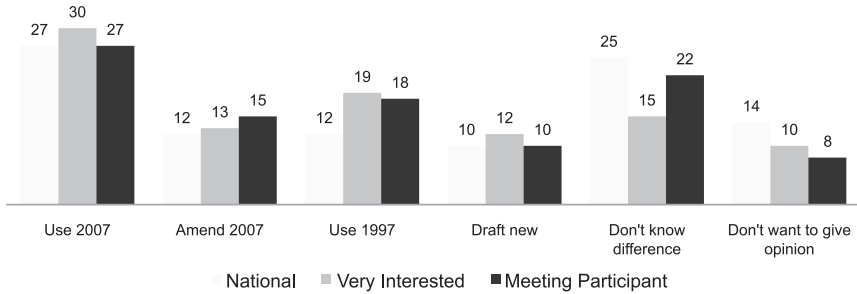
On the issue of amendments to the 2007 Constitution, there was no consensus among respondents. A little over a quarter wanted to retain the 2007 Constitution without any changes, although this rose to 54% among Yellows. Another 11% wanted to continue with the 2007 Constitution, but with amendments. More than one in ten (12%) would prefer going back to the 1997 Constitution, although this rose to a third (33%) among Reds. Another 10% wanted to draft a new Constitution. Twenty-five percent admitted that they did not know the difference between the two charters.[59]


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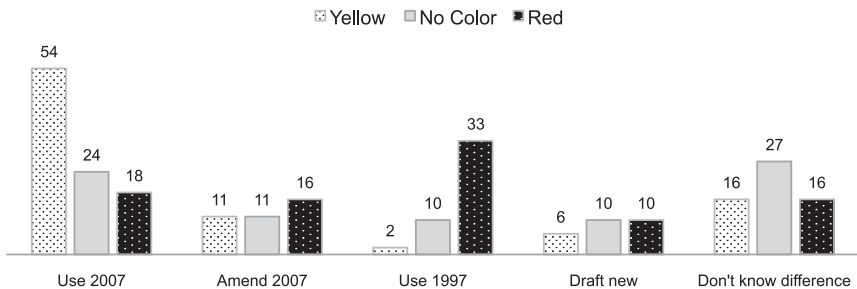
[59] The margin of error for Yellows is +-10% and Reds +-7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

9.11 Decentralization

Some people say that one way to reduce tension between urban and rural areas and improve governance would be to devolve some powers from the central government to local governments and to directly elect governors and other local officials (as is done in Bangkok). Other people believe that government will be more effective and efficient if centrally controlled. Which is closer to your view? (Q90)
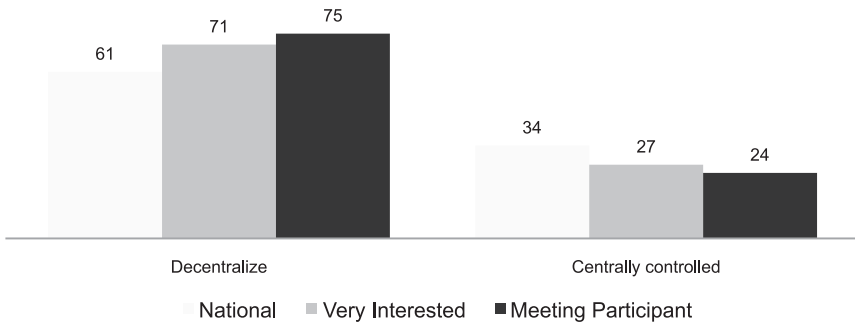
There was a strong consensus among respondents (61%) in favor of decentralization. This increased with individual levels of political activism and was an issue on which both Reds and Yellows agreed.
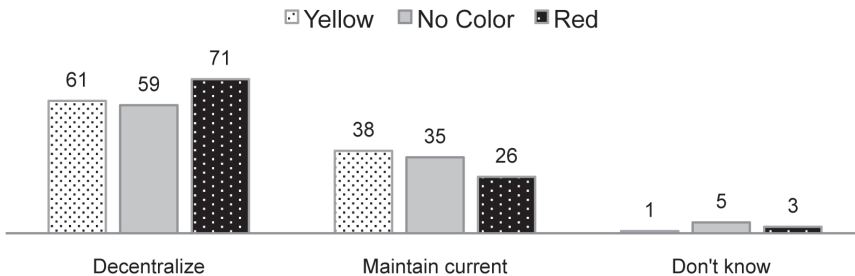
9.12 Summary Analysis of Polarization Data[60]

Democratic Values

Regardless of color affiliation or level of political activism, the vast majority of respondents (97%) believed that, in spite of their differences, Thais are united by core values.

The majority was against authoritarian rule by an unelected leader (76%) or rule by a government of elites (59%). The opinions of both the politically active and those with strong or some degree of color association tracked these majorities, with similar associated minorities among the general population that would be willing to accept an unelected leader when democracy did not seem to be working or preferred a government less representative of Thai diversity in favor of government by the best and brightest.

Two-thirds of respondents who were not politically active (65%), or who did not associate themselves with any color (67%), believed that Thailand is very or somewhat democratic. Politically active members of the electorate were more skeptical but a majority did concur. The colors were clearly polarized on this issue, with 73% of Yellows stating Thailand is democratic and 67% of Reds stating it is not quite democratic or not at all democratic.

Only just over a third (35%) of respondents thought the country is currently going in the right direction. Concern about the wrong direction increased significantly with higher levels of political activism. Colors were again polarized, with 86% of Reds stating that Thailand was going in the wrong direction and 56% of Yellows claiming that it was going in the right direction. About half the population (51%) felt that the situation would improve over the next year, particularly Yellows (66%), while a significant majority of Reds (83%) thought it would become worse.

Even though a majority may have thought the country was going in the wrong direction, nearly two-thirds (65%) of those not politically active stated they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the current government. Among the politically active, a smaller majority was satisfied. There was significant polarization among the colors, with 85% of the Yellows satisfied and 76% of the Reds dissatisfied.

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[60] "Yellow" and "Red" conclusions are derived from sub-set analysis and have a larger margin of error than the national sample. The margin of error for Yellows is +- 10% and Reds +- 7%. For more details regarding the sample size and margin of error please refer to Appendix 2.

Satisfaction with the government may have been influenced by respondents' perception of their own personal well-being. For example, in 2009 only a third (33%) of respondents thought their economic situation had improved or remained unchanged over the previous two years. This increased to 59% in 2010. While those who held this view included 66% of Yellows, 63% of Reds stated that they were worse off or much worse off than they were two years ago.

Political Issues

At a theoretical level, there was no polarization in Thailand on the issue of double standards in the judicial process, with two-thirds (67%) of respondents agreeing. Political activists and those affiliated with a color all tended to believe this even more strongly. Nevertheless, there was some variation when it came to application of the law versus reconciliation to promote political stability. Nearly two-thirds of respondents did not wish to see convicted politicians pardoned, with smaller majorities of 51% and 52%, respectively, opposed to any pardons for those who instigated the 2006 coup or for banned politicians. While the majority of all respondents believed that coup makers should not be let off, Reds and Yellows were polarized, with 59% of Reds favoring a pardon for convicted politicians and 65% wanting the same for banned politicians, while 69% of Yellows would uphold the convictions and 68% the bans.

The vast majority (90%, up from 80% in 2009) of respondents of all persuasions believed that Thais feel free to express their political opinions. The majority (79%) asserted that all political parties should have the opportunity to organize meetings in their area, even if not popular there, while 92% indicated that they would not end a friendship over color differences. Nevertheless, respondents were split on the issue of censorship to promote peace and stability, with 46% supporting censorship under some circumstances and 48% professing that freedom of expression is always more important. Polarization on this issue was color sensitive, with 63% of Yellows in favor of censorship, 67% of Reds opposed, and those with no color affiliation split equally 47% for and 47% against limited censorship to promote stability.

At the same time, electorate support for freedom of speech did not extend to large demonstrations. Two-thirds of respondents (69%) with no color affiliation approved of banning large demonstrations. The majority of those participating in political meetings (58%) thought such demonstrations should be allowed, with 68% of Yellows favoring bans

and 54% of Reds opposed. That stated, 58% of the respondents thought the government was wrong in using force to crack down on demonstrators in May 2010, with 56% of Yellows approving the use of force and 85% of Reds opposed.

There was no consensus, however, on who was responsible for the deaths. Among those with no color affiliation, 38% blamed the demonstrators, 35% held the government at fault, 4% blamed both, and 23% did not know. The majority of Yellows (63%) blamed the demonstrators while 84% of Reds faulted the government. Nevertheless, a slight majority of respondents (52%) thought the government and military should not be prosecuted for the deaths, along with 69% of Yellows. A slight majority of Reds (52%), however, thought they should be prosecuted.

As for the demonstrators, society was split on the issue of prosecution. Those with no color affiliation were split 45%-45% on whether or not to prosecute the Red leaders, while 47% were opposed to and 42% in favor of prosecuting the Yellow leaders. Two-thirds (66%) of the Yellows wanted to prosecute the Red Leaders but drop charges against Yellow leaders (62%). Reds wanted prosecutions dropped against both Red (74%) and Yellow (55%) leaders.

There was a general consensus (79%) among respondents generally and political subgroups among them that reconciliation efforts are needed to reduce political conflict before elections are held. The vast majority of respondents (97%) indicated that color would not be a consideration when selecting a candidate for election to Parliament. Only among a minority (10%) of the Reds would this be an issue, and this group constitutes barely a tenth of one percent of all respondents.

There was no consensus among respondents as a whole, activists, or those affiliated with color groups on options for constitutional reform. Just under a quarter (24%) were willing to live with the 2007 Constitution unchanged, while approximately 10% each were in favor of amending the 2007 Constitution, reverting to the 1997 Constitution, or drafting a new constitutional charter.

One of the most divisive political issues that has pitted citizens against the state is whether or not Thailand should continue on the path of decentralization required by the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions. There is a strong consensus among respondents (61%), political activists, and those affiliated with color groups that decentralization should move forward.

Consensus and Color Polarization in Thai Society

In analyzing a list of 49 questions from the national survey, there was strong consensus nationally on 23 issues among the majority of respondents that professed no color affiliation (76%), the Yellows (10%), and the Reds (14%). They all supported democracy and believed that common values unite them in spite of differences. They rejected unelected, authoritarian leadership and preferred the most representative government to the most intelligent, although they believed the wealthier and better educated had a duty to take care of the less fortunate. They did not think that they had much influence on government policy. They thought there was freedom of speech in Thailand and upheld the right of all parties to hold political meetings in their area. They would not reject a friend because of party or color differences. While they did not trust people in general, they did trust their neighbors. All perceived that double standards exist in Thai society and feared further political violence in the next year, although they had high confidence in their own personal security.

The majority believed that reconciliation efforts must be initiated before elections are held and that it would be good to have impartial election observers. They do not believe that pardoning the 2006 coup makers or prosecuting the Yellow or Red leadership would be useful in reducing national conflict, but believed that if international assistance is offered to help reduce the conflict, it should be accepted. They believed that decentralization would help to reduce conflict between urban and rural society, between the colors, and between divided factions in the Deep South.

There was strong national consensus among the majority of respondents and the Yellows on 16 issues. The Reds held divergent views on these issues and believed that the future of the country would not improve over the next year and that their personal economic situation had worsened over the past two years. The Reds were not satisfied with the present government and the way Thai democracy functions, nor did they believe Thailand was very democratic or that the next elections would be free and fair. Reds opposed any effort to ban large demonstrations and opposed the prominent role of the army in monitoring and maintaining security in demonstrations. In general, they thought the army was too big.

Reds wanted to amend the Constitution as soon as possible, pardon convicted politicians, prosecute the military for its role in the May

demonstrations, and reinstate banned politicians. They had no trust in the Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission and did not believe that the courts or the military were neutral and unbiased.

There was strong national consensus among the majority and the Reds on five issues, with the Yellows in the minority. Yellows thought by slim margins that the nation was moving generally in the right direction; that the government cares about what people think; and that majority rule should take precedence over compromise. They also believed that the use of force to end the May demonstrations was correct and that accepting international assistance will not do much to reduce political conflict.

The majority of respondents was split on five issues where the Yellows and Reds held significantly different perspectives. Yellows believed that censorship is sometimes necessary to promote peace and stability while Reds held that freedom of expression is always more important. Yellows blamed the demonstrators for the deaths in the May demonstrations while the Reds blamed the government. Reds wanted elections as soon as possible while Yellows called for reforms in advance of elections. Yellows believed that postponing the elections would reduce political conflict while the Reds rejected this proposition. Finally, the Yellows insisted on prosecuting the Red leadership on terrorism charges while the Reds demanded that the charges be dropped.

Appendix 1

Media Exposure and Information Sources

When thinking about possible changes to the Constitution, which of these options would you prefer? (Q83)

Everyday/almost everyday: 87 (2009), 86 (2010)
3–4 days per week: 7 (2009), 8 (2010)
1–2 days per week: 4 (2009), 4 (2010)
Less than once a week: 1 (2009), 1 (2010)
Never watch TV: 1 (2009), 1 (2010)

2009 ■ 2010
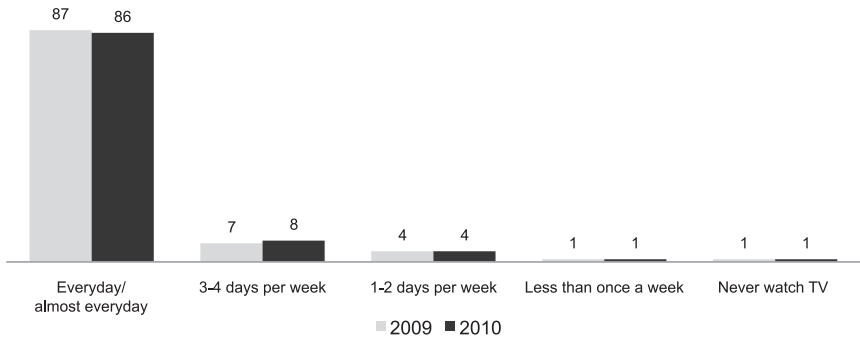
During what time do you regularly watch TV (one or two responses are allowed)? (Q103)

5-8 am: 17 (2009), 17 (2010)
8-12 am: 8 (2009), 12 (2010)
noon-5 pm: 9 (2009), 10 (2010)
5-9 pm: 71 (2009), 68 (2010)
9-11 pm: 25 (2009), 24 (2010)
Sporadic: 8 (2009), 9 (2010)

2009 **2010**
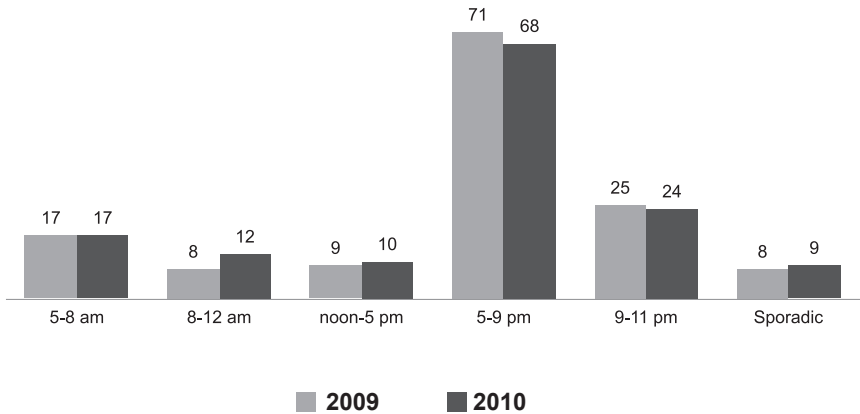
Which TV channel do you watch most often? (Q101)

	Channel 7	Channel 3	Channel 9	TPBS	Channel 5	NBT	Other	UBC
National	46	40	4	3	2	2	2	1
Urban	37	47	5	2	1	3	2	1
Rural	52	37	3	3	2	1	2	1

National   Urban   Rural
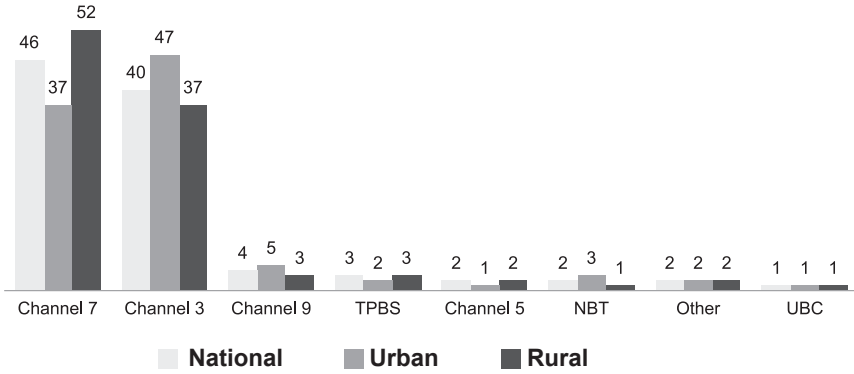
Is there any other TV channel that you watch often in second place? (Q102)

Channel 3	Channel 7	Channel 5	Channel 9	NBT	None	TPBS	Other	UBC
40	36	9	7	2	2	2	1	1
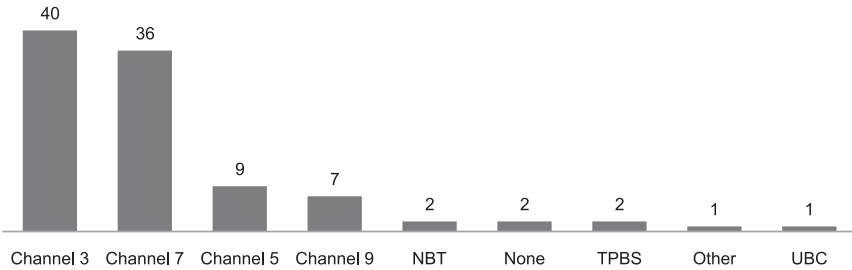
How many days a week do you listen to the radio? (Q104)

	Everyday/ almost every day	3-4 days per week	1-2 days per week	Less than once a week	Never listen
2009	25	9	10	4	52
2010	20	9	8	6	60

2009 2010
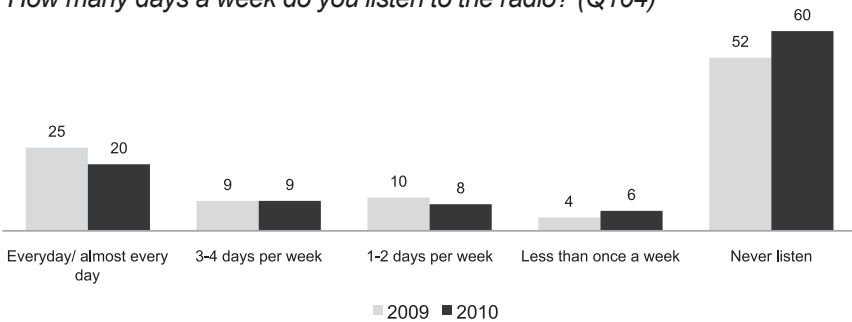
During what time do you regularly listen to the radio (one or two responses are allowed)? (Q107)

	5-8 am	8-12 am	noon-5 pm	5-9 pm	9-11 pm	Sporadic	N/A
2009	11	14	13	7	5	10	52
2010	8	13	12	6	5	7	60

■ **2009**   ■ **2010**

Can you read Thai? (Q108)

	Yes	No
2009	96	4
2010	97	3

■ **Yes**   ■ **No**
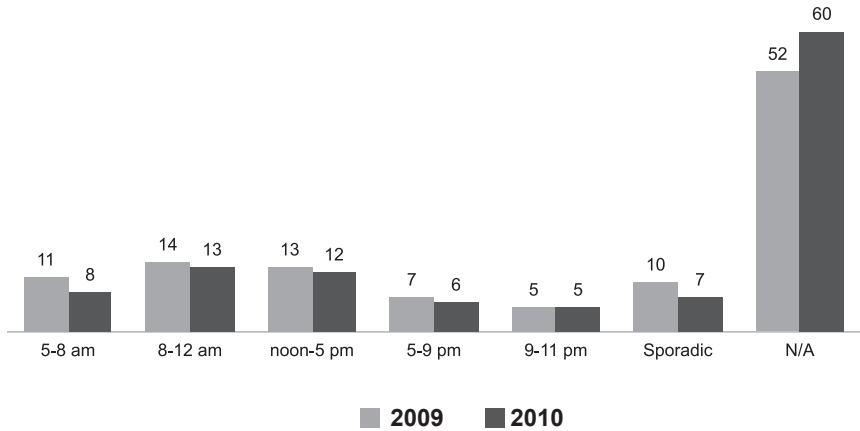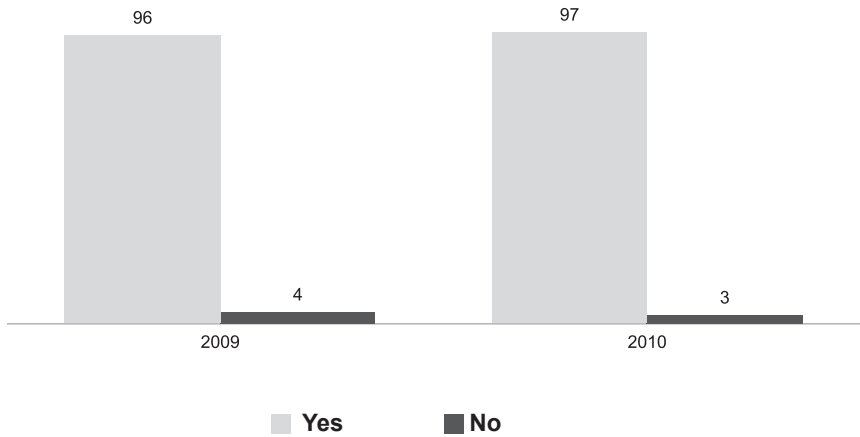
How often do you normally read a newspaper? (Q109)

	2009	2010
Everyday/ almost every day	23	19
3-4 days per week	14	14
1-2 days per week	22	23
Less than once a week	11	14
Never read newspaper	31	31

■ 2009 ■ 2010
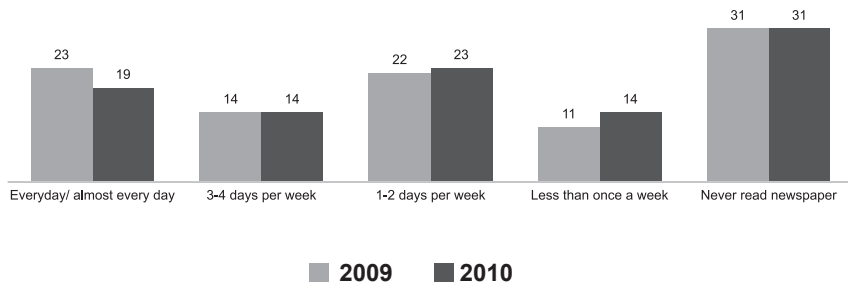
Normally, what source of information do you mainly use to get news about what is happening in the country? (Q110)

Television	Newspapers	Radio	Family/friends	Internet	Village head
89	5	2	2	2	1
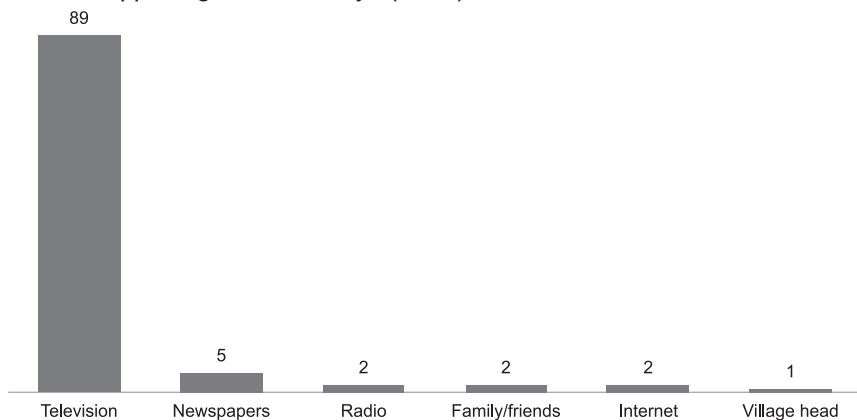
And what is the second source? (Q111)

Newspapers	Family/friends	Radio	Television	None	Internet	Village head	Other
35	22	16	9	7	5	4	3
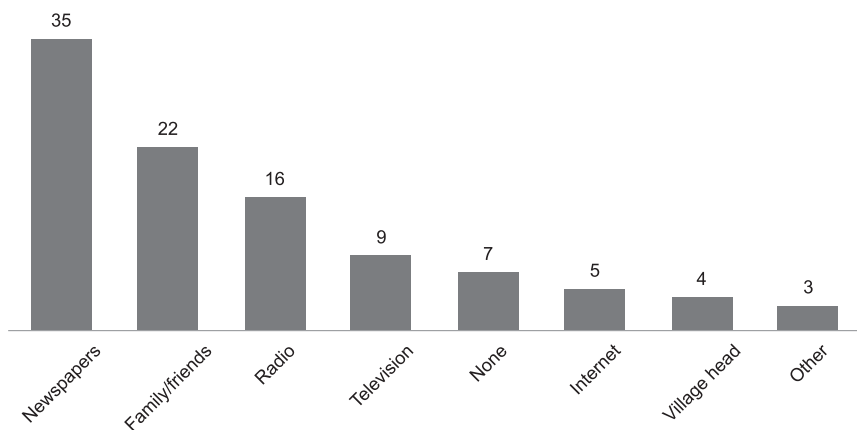
Appendix 2

Survey Methodology

Stratification

Both the 2009 and 2010 surveys were stratified into five geographic strata. The sample of 1,500 was allocated to each stratum in proportion to the stratum population. The geographic strata used were: Greater Bangkok; Central; North; South; and Northeast.

In 2009, the three southern border provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani were excluded due to concerns for interviewer security and the absence of trained enumerators who could administer the survey in local dialects. As a result of on-going efforts to develop research fieldwork capacity in the Deep South, and with the support of local networks, the decision was made to include these three provinces in the 2010 survey.

Although these provinces are technically part of the Southern region, it was decided to define a new sixth stratum for the 2010 survey, made up of just these three provinces. In this way, full national estimates, based on all provinces in Thailand, can be produced by taking the survey results from all six strata. On the other hand, 2010 results could be limited to the original five strata to make comparisons with the results from the 2009. Except where specifically noted in the study, all comparisons between 2009 and 2010 are based on the original five strata, excluding the strata composed of the Deep South.

To enable better comparison between the 2010 survey results and those from the 2009 survey it was decided to retain the sample size of 1,500 for the five regions sampled in 2009, and to allocate an additional sample of 100 to the new stratum made up of the three southernmost provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani. Table 1 below shows the sample size by region for the 2010 survey.

Table 1: Sample Size by Region, 2010 Survey			
Region Numbe	Region Name	Population[61]	Proportional Sample for Region
1	GBKK	10,161,694	248
2	Central	11,165,157	272
3	North	11,879,369	289
4	South (excluding Deep South)	6,915,043	168
5	Northeast	21,442,693	523
6	Deep South	1,840,098	100
Total			1600

Selecting the Sample Provinces

Within each geographic stratum, the optimum sample design is to select a sample of provinces with probability proportional to their size and then, within each province, to select a fixed number of respondents. This gives a self-weighting sample within each stratum (meaning that each dwelling is selected with the same probability) as well as providing the design with the lowest sample error.

The sample design issue was to determine the number of provinces to be selected per stratum. There is a cost-quality trade-off in this decision. The fewer the provinces selected, the more clustered the sample across each stratum. This would mean that a small number of provinces would be used to represent the full stratum, leading to a higher standard margin of errors. On the other hand, if a large number of provinces were selected then only a small number of dwellings would be selected per province, which could significantly add to the cost. The best design, then, is a compromise between these two extremes.

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[61] Source: The 2000 Population and Housing Census report of the National Statistical Office of Thailand (TNSO)

The design option chosen for both the 2009 and 2010 surveys was to select six provinces per stratum and then to select an equal sample size within each province. This would mean, for example, that for Greater Bangkok, which has a sample size of 248, the sample size per selected province is 248/6 = 41.3, rounded to 40. In order to better measure changes in respondent replies between 2009 and 2010, it was decided in 2010 to select the same provinces chosen in 2009.

In 2009, this selection was achieved by ordering the provinces according to their size and then taking a systematic sample with probability proportional to size. This required the calculation of a skip interval, calculated as the population size divided by six. A random start between one and the skip interval was also randomly generated. Given the skip interval and the random start, selection numbers were then generated using the formula:

Selection number k = random start + (k-1) x skip interval, for k=1,2, ...n

The selection numbers were then applied to a list of provinces in the size order in which the population sizes were cumulated. A given province was selected if one of the selection numbers corresponded to one of the cumulative counts corresponding to that province.

A province could be selected more than once in this process if its population size was larger than the skip interval. This happened in the case of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and Nakorn Sri Thammarat, as can be seen in Table 2. In this case, the number of dwellings to be selected from the multiple selected provinces is greater – as shown.

Sample Design for the New Region
A systematic probability proportional to the size sampling process was applied to the sixth region formed for the 2010 survey from the three additional provinces in the South. This was the same sampling process used to select the provinces in 2009, with a revised constraint that only three selections could be made given the smaller size of this new region. This led to each of the three provinces being selected. Accordingly, the sample design for the 2010 national public perception study is a set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Provinces Selected, 2010 study

Region	Stratum	Province	Population Selected[62]	Times Size	Sample Size
1	Greater BKK	Bangkok	5,710,883	3	120
1	Greater BKK	Pathum Thani	929,250	1	40
1	Greater BKK	Nonthaburi	1,052,592	1	40
1	Greater BKK	Samut Sakhon	478,146	1	40
2	Central	Suphan Buri	844,498	1	45
2	Central	Ratchaburi	835,861	1	45
2	Central	Lop Buri	753,801	1	45
2	Central	Rayong	598,664	1	45
2	Central	Prachin Buri	459,379	1	45
2	Central	Sing Buri	215,551	1	45
3	North	Chiang Rai	1,227,317	1	50
3	North	Phayao	487,386	1	50
3	North	Lamphun	405,125	1	50
3	North	Phetchabun	96,231	1	50
3	North	Kamphaeng Phet	726,213	1	50
3	North	Uthai Thani	327,586	1	50
4	South Nakhon	Srithammarat ithammarat Thammarat	1,513,163	2	60
4	South	Surat Thani	983,486	1	30
4	South	Phuket	327,006	1	30
4	South	Songkhla	1,335,768	1	30
4	South	Trang	614,869	1	30
5	Northeast	Khon Kaen	1,756,101	1	85
5	Northeast	Sakon Nakhon	1,116,034	1	85
5	Northeast	Nong Khai	906,877	1	85
5	Northeast	Nakhon Ratchasima	2,565,117	1	85
5	Northeast	Buri Ram	1,541,650	1	85
5	Northeast	Surin	1,375,560	1	85
6	Deep South	Yala	476,019	1	33
6	Deep South	Narathiwat	720,943	1	34
6	Deep South	Pattani	643,136	1	33
					1,600

[62] Source: The 2000 Population and Housing Census report of the National Statistical Office of Thailand (TNSO)

Weighting of Survey results

Differential response rates by age, gender and region can lead to survey bias through the over- and under-representation of certain demographic groups in the sample. To reduce this potential for bias the survey results were weighted using best available population estimates by age, gender and region.

Margin of Error

This is the second year that The Asia Foundation has conducted a national public perception survey of the Thai voting age population. The initial study conducted in 2009 with a sample size of 1,500 was designed to achieve a 3% margin of error on national estimates. The 2010 survey was designed with the same 3% margin of error.

The margin of error is a measure of the uncertainty in survey results because they are based on a sample, not the full population. So, if a survey result of 70% had a margin of error of 3%, one can be 95% confident that the actual population value (the result that would have achieved if the full population had been measured) is in the range 70% +/- 3%, that is 67%-73%.

The 3% margin of error for this survey applies to results based on the full sample. Care should be taken in applying the 3% margin of error across all results reported, as it only applies to the whole sample base. For results based on a sub-sample of the national respondent base – for example, results for one of the geographic regions of the country – the margin of error will be larger than 3%. This is because those results are based on smaller sample sizes.

The table below shows the margin of error for a range of possible sample sizes:

Sample size	Margin of error	Sample size	Margin of error
100	10%	900	3%
200	7%	1,000	3%
300	6%	1,100	3%
400	5%	1,200	3%
500	4%	1,300	3%
600	4%	1,400	3%
700	4%	1,500	3%
800	3%	1,600	3%

This table can be used to calculate the margin of error in the following way. The sample size for results for the North region is 304. The closest sample size to this in the above table is 300, for which the margin of error is 6%. This means that results for the North region will have a 6% margin of error.