

ดุษฎีนิพนธ์

THESIS ABSTRACTS

VOTING BEHAVIOR IN MUANG NAKORN PATHOM DISTRICT ON DECEMBER 15, 1957,

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It is generally known that free elections are a symbol of democracy. The question is therefore specifically how many persons go to cast their votes. In some countries, it is considered that voting is not only the right of the people, but also their duty. In such countries, a compulsory act is promulgated to make sure that all the qualified voters go to cast their votes. In Thailand there is no such an act, and this is an indication of political freedom for the people. If the people are compelled, they may go to the polls willy - nilly and without consideration of political policy or qualifications of the candidates. If so, the election has no meaning at all. What is considered in this thesis is mainly how to increase the percentage of the participants who vote of their own free will. In order to understand the problem correctly, we ought to analyse the main causes of abstention. We can then determine what should be done to increase the percentage of the participants. Moreover, we ought to analyse the cases which lead the people to participate in order to know whether they go to vote because they recognize the importance of the election or for other motivations which may change the objectives of the election.

All data relating to sexes, ages, professions, educational backgrounds, marital status and incomes are studied in order to analyse the percentage of participation and abstention and their relationships with the election. The findings will show the percentage of the participants which will in turn show the trend of its fluctuation in each electoral area.

This analysis has been made by a survey based on the last election of December 15, 1957, in Muang Nakorn Pathom District. The people in this district have many things

similar to those of other districts, namely, character, profession, education, religion, communication and economic situation. It is not possible to make a survey in every district all over the country due to the limitation of time, labor and expenditures.

In the survey, the method of interviewing has been employed by sampling out the qualified voters from the registration record and selecting one out of every ten. 3,536 samples or 10 % of the qualified voters were interviewed.

The survey was begun on April 1, 1960 which was during the harvesting season, when rice had already been reaped, and the farmers were free to answer the questionnaires; and, in addition, it was more convenient for interviewing. Time spent was 3½ months in the survey, and 3½ more in analysing and evaluating.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The result of the analyses and findings may be summarized as follows:

1. **Sexes** The number of male voters exceeds the number of female voters in the election. Thus, sex has a relationship to the election because the analyses indicates that male voters participate more and females less. The reason that underlines this analysis is the Thai belief that women should stay at home and take care only of domestic affairs while men attend to political affairs.

2. **Ages** The middle ages of 30-39 and 40-49 participated more in the election, and the younger and the older-ages comparatively less. But in case of abstention, the younger has the larger share and relatively less when the age is higher. Moreover, age has its relationship with the election for the middle-ages participated more, but the number of abstention and participation of the younger are relatively equal. But the old-ages have more share in the abstention than in the participation. The difference in ages does not change the causes of either participation or abstention. The causes that determine the participation and abstention are the same at every age level.

3. **Professions** Rice-growing occupation has more than a half of its share in the participation, while the occupations of plantation, civil service, business, labor and landlords are respectively less. In case of abstention, rice-growing occupation has more than

half of its share in the whole number of the abstainers, while the occupations, of business, plantation, labor, civil service and land-lords have respectively less share in the abstention. We may notice that rice-growing has the largest share in the participation and the abstention. It may be clarified by the fact that most of the people are farmers. Occupation has relationship with the election because through the analyses, the percentage of the land-lords in the participation are highest but the least in the abstention, while labor has a bigger percentage in the abstention. Those in government service, plantation, farming and business have smaller percentage in the participation. The causes that determine the participation are somewhat different, that is to say, the civil servants and the land-lords participated because they realize the importance of the election more than the others, and they can devote their time for the political affair. But the causes that explain the abstention of each profession are quite similar.

4. **Education** 3/4 of the participants have only elementary education, and 1/5 of them have secondary education. Those who have pre-university education participate the least, so that we could say that it does not have any effect on election at all. In case of the abstention, the ratio is similar in every level of education. Education has relationship with the election, for the voters with high education have bigger number in the participation, while the lower have more share in the abstention. The causes that underlie the participation derive from the findings that voters with high education participate because they are more impressed by the importance of the election than those of lower education. In other words, those who have higher educational background study and examine the candidates' qualifications or the parties' policies. But the percentage of participation of those who have lower educational background derive from the trend that they are looking forward for any kind of bribery or to win the betting. The causes of the former come from the fact that they have no trust in the candidates and learnt their lessons from the last election while the latter come from the fact that they do not realize the importance of the election and have no interest at all.

5. **Marital Status** Married couples have more share in both the abstention and participation, because the number of the married people is trifold over that of the

single. Marital status has no relationship with the election because the ratio of the single who participate and abstain are half and half which is the same for the married, thus the percentage of the participants and abstainers are relatively equal. The causes that determine the participation and abstention for the single and the married are the same.

6. **Incomes** Income is herein defined as the gross income per capita per month. Those who have incomes under 501 baht are more than half of the whole number of the participants. Those who have income between 501 and 1,000 have less share in the participation and those who have income above 1,000 baht have the least because very few of the people are earning that much. In case of abstention, the ratio is similar to the number in the participation. In this case we can see that those who have income less than 501 baht have the biggest number in both the participation and abstention, because the majority of the people have income less than 501 baht. Moreover, income has relationship with the election because we can see that the people with high income have higher percentage of participation than in the abstention, while on the contrary, those who have smaller income abstain rather than participate. Difference in the amount of income determines participation, because people with high income are more civilized and well educated than the people with lower income, and they participate on the basis of the importance of the election except a small number of them who just care for other benefits. Those who have smaller income are less educated and know little about the election, or they participate only because of bribery. The causes of the abstention come from the fact that the people with small income are ignorant about the election, while the other from the untrustworthiness of the candidates. This analysis and evaluation come from the comparison of the percentage of each level of income.

Now, we can see that sex, age, profession, education and income have relationship with the election similar to mercury and heat in a thermometer. Hence, these qualifications which have their relationship with the election will, through these findings, help illustrate the percentage of participants which will in turn show the trend of its fluctuation in each electoral area.

7. **Causes that determine the participation and abstention** Causes of the participation can be classified into three categories according to the degree of importance as follows: (1) Because the voters realize the importance of the election, (2) Because of the expectation of bribes and other benefits, and (3) Because of other influences.

Causes of the abstention can be classified as follows according to degree of importance: (1) the ignorance of the importance of the election, (2) the deficiency and defectiveness of the governmental operations and procedures of the election, (3) the untrustworthiness of the candidates, (4) economic reasons and (5) other environmental factors.

The improvement in these respects can be brought about by the following methods according to degree of priority: (1) The improvement in educational system, (2) The application of the party system, and the creation of only 2 or 3 major parties, (3) The cleanliness in hands and souls of the candidates, and the improvement in themselves to be trustworthy and reliable, (4) The election procedure should be clean in practice, (5) The development in economic situation to raise the standard of living of the people to get their income adequately, (6) The improvement of certain environments, and (7) The last but not the least, the motivation of the people by all means to participate wisely in the election.

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