

Geography 484
Southeast Asia
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Lecture #13a
November 30, 2011

Political Crisis in Malaysia

- Mahathir vs. the US/IMF
- Mahathir vs. Anwar
- Mahathir and the “War on Terror”
- Mahathir vs. Badawi
- The decline/persistence of UMNO
- Economic liberalization

Political Crisis in Thailand

- The Thai political cauldron
- The class basis of the red shirt movement
- The erosion of royalist hegemony
- The 2010 massacre

- *Thailand at the Margins: Internationalization of the State and the Transformation of Labour* (Oxford University Press, 2004).
- “‘The Provinces Elect Governments, Bangkok Overthrows Them’: Urbanity, Class, and Post-Democracy in Thailand,” *Urban Studies* 47, 6 (May 2010): 1301-1323.
- “Cracking Hegemony in Thailand: Gramsci, Bourdieu, and the Dialectics of Rebellion,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, 1 (February): 25-46.

The Thai Political Cauldron

From economic to political crisis I

- 1986-96: economic boom, royalist hegemony
- 1990-97: resurgent social militance
- 1996-99: Thai/Asian economic crisis
- 1997: Democrats take power, implement IMF structural adjustment program
- 1998-99: formation by Thaksin Shinawatra of Thai Rak Thai (TRT, Thais Love Thais) Party
- 2000: TRT populist, anti-neoliberal platform

From economic to political crisis II

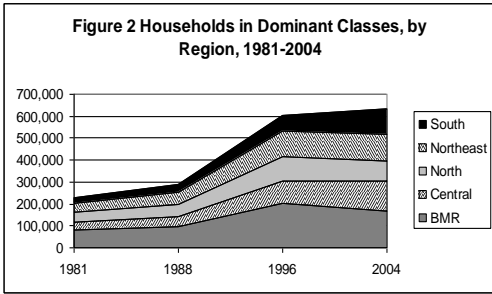
- 2001: TRT implements populist/social welfare state policies; Thaksin survives asset concealment case, harasses media
- 2002: Thaksin begins restructuring Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC), established by Prem in 1980s
- 2003: “war on drugs,” more than 2,000 deaths
- 2004-06: southern violence escalates

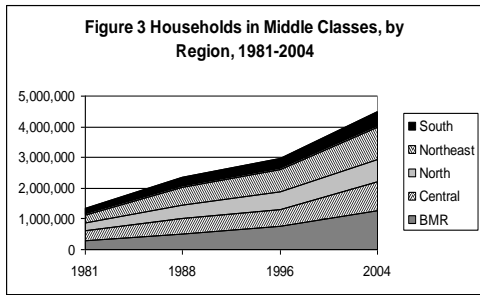
From economic to political crisis III

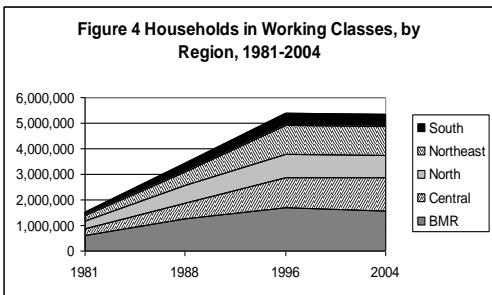
- 2005: TRT wins larger parliamentary majority; opposition to Thaksin forms (Sondhi Limthongkul, state enterprise workers)
- 2006: People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protests Thaksin’s sale of Shin; TRT calls snap elections; elections nullified by courts (King intervenes); military coup of September 19 (pre-empting new elections and military reshuffle); 1997 constitution nullified; SBPAC

From Thaksin to Red Shirts I

- 2007: opposition to coup regime among Bangkok taxi drivers, groups in North and Northeast; new constitution narrowly ratified; courts dissolve TRT; TRT re-formed as People’s Power Party (PPP), wins December elections, with Samak Sundaravej made PM
- 2008: Democrat/PAD destabilization campaign (no confidence hearings, Preah Vihan incident, Government House and airport seizures); PPP







The Erosion of Royalist Hegemony

Re-education

“If they win what they have dubbed their “final battle,” Bangkok-based People’s Alliance for Democracy members say they will start a campaign to tell “the truth” to the country’s rural majority, which has elected parties linked to former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra four times since 2001. ‘Rural people have good hearts but they don’t know the truth like we do in Bangkok,’ said Noppakoon Lagum, 37, a surgeon helping to occupy the main international airport. ‘It is our duty to re-educate them.’”

- *Bloomberg.com*, 1 December 2008

Embodied Knowledge

“The Bangkok protesters have a bad impression of the northeast, but they never come to see for themselves what it’s like,” said Angkana Duangaew, 32, as she herded buffalo through a muddy, fly-filled pasture in Udon Thani. “Poor people were very happy under Thaksin.”

- *Bloomberg.com*, 14 October 2008
