

# DEVELOPING A MODEL OF GREEN POLITICAL LEADER UNDER THE PRINCIPLES OF DECENTRALIZATION

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## Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to propose a model development of green political leaders under the principles of decentralization. Focus group discussion was used for data collection conducted among 16 key informants who were local leaders, independent organization representatives, government officials, and graduate students. Content analysis was employed in this study.

Results of the study revealed that knowledge development was the development of political leaders who were knowledgeable about principles and the society. The development of political leaders to have code of conduct (ethics) needed to instill them decentralization principle. Also, to make them be public – minded it needs to enhance their spirit not to ignore the society (Volunteer)

**Keywords** : green political, principles of decentralization

## Introduction

The previous Thai politics was severe political competition and grabbing. Some politicians did everything to hold a political position regardless of codes of conduct e.g. vote buying and cronyism. Besides, some government officials lacked of public consciousness to serve people willingly but they preferred to serve politicians for their position promotion. Meanwhile, some groups of people sold their votes to some cheating politicians regardless of political participation awareness. Consequently, this low political quality led to various problems which could not be solved and political conflicts appeared. An alternative for solving the political problem is the principles of decentralization which is a strategy used for country managerial administration by the government under the democrat-

ic system. That is role of the central agency are reduced and local people have an opportunity to participate in local community management more than before. (Office of the permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health, 2000: Online system )Power and benefit sharing should be in the hand of people more than ever under the principles of decentralization.

As a matter of fact, political leaders are people representatives who can make a decision which is consistent with current situation and local context. This is because it can well respond to local needs since they know local problem and needs. Besides, it makes local people be responsible for themselves making their community strong. (Kiewkingkao, no publishing year: p.102) Good characteristics of a model of a model of green politicians comprise the follow : 1. having knowledge or knowledgeable in organizational management, strategic policy determination, project planning, integrated managerial administration, local community economy, local culture, basic infrastructure, information technology, technology needed for livelihoods problem analysis, and problem solving ; 2. having righteousness, acceptance by people in the community, tolerance, carefulness, and high leadership; 3. having ethics – corruption avoidance, responsibility, good governance, conflict of interest avoidance, no vote buying, etc. ; and 4. having spirit – public consciousness, group work leadership, integrated operation of all levels, etc.

The characteristics of green politicians are abstract. Thus, it needs to investigate a model of green political leader development so that it will be concrete. This aims to make local politics have green political leaders under the principles of decentralization.

### **Objective of the research**

Specifically, this study aim to develop a model of green political leader under the principles of decentralization at the municipality level base on community political leader participation.

### **Methods**

Scope and Limitation of the Study 1) Content – Developing a model of green political leader under the principle of decentralization.; 2) Key informants – in this study, there were 16 key informants comprising mayor, deputy mayor, chief municipal officer of the National Countercorruption Commission, Director of the Election Commission of Thailand, Chiang Mai province, lecturers of Faculty of Political Science and Public Admin-

istration, Chiang Mai University, Lecturers of School of Administrative Studies, Maejo University, and Graduate school students at Maejo University.; 3) Locale of the study –Mae Fack, Nongharn and Chedi Maekhrua municipalities, Sansai district, Chiang Mai province. Research Instrument and Data Collection Method – Data were collected through focus group discussion which aimed to find correct data for answering particular research questions and hypothesis testing. (Sathapitanon, 2006: p.234)

## **Results**

The development of political leaders to be knowledgeable in principles and social aspect could be described as the support on knowledge development and the enhancement of local leader potential in terms of redtapism, official missive, laws, and knowledge about modern managerial administration focusing on the society; attention on the development on the basis of need perception and problems of people; and knowledge about the contexts in relation with political, economic, social, and technological aspects.

The development of political leaders to have righteousness need system design as a priority and after being a politician. This involved the selection of a political leader in terms of educational security, family, and occupation which no one force him to be selected. In addition, it must have the prevention of sell votes, asset disclosure of all politicians must be done.

The development of political leaders to have ethics which must put the importance on decentralization principle. That was, local people were given an opportunity to participate in task management. Knowledge was extended to people were persuaded to learn the process of democracy learning.

The development of political leaders to be aware of service-minded or public consciousness (volunteer) and sacrifice. This will truly be beneficial to people or the public.

## **Discussion**

Political leaders must be knowledgeable in principles or academy, including management principles and legal regulation. This conforms to political leader concept proposed by Theerawakhin (2005). He claimed that the political leader must have knowledge and understanding about

various problem issues together with data ready for cause analysis. Meanwhile, the political leader must be able to use data and analyze problems which the country is confronting. Also, the political must be able to utilize knowledge as a basis for research analyses in order to apply it with task or problem management (Theerawekhin, 2005: Online system) The political leader must specially have social knowledge. That is, he pays attention in the perception of needs and problems of people for improvement and development. This conforms to Kiewkingkao's concept which reveals that the political leader is a representative of people and he can make a decision based on the consistency with situations and local context since it can well respond to needs of the local community. Besides, local people are encouraged to be responsible for Self-governing more than ever making the community be strong (Kiewkingkao, no publishing year: p.102) Important characteristics of the political culture of democracy type include the following: 1. People must be attached to the democratic governing system comprising five important aspects – sovereignty of people, freedom, equity, legal, and plurality; 2. People must be broad-minded without putting the importance on their ideas rather than other's ; 3. People must have trustworthiness and acceptance of others' capability ; 4. People must perceive value of political participation; 5. People must respect democratic rules and regulation; 6. People must always be interested in politics and governing and; 7. People must be brave and dare to criticize politics creatively (Thamrongthanyawong, 1996: p 277 - 278)

The political leader must possess righteousness by designing a system before and after being a politician. It aims to screen a person having readiness on educational attainment, family, job, and be ready to work with honesty or accountability. This conforms to a political leader concept of Theerawekhin who cited that the political leader must make himself to be widely accepted in terms of art of speech, excellent background, and inspiration others to work together. Plato pointed out that a powerful person must possess the righteousness (Theerawekhin, 2005: Online system) Political leaders can be understood as persons having special characteristics and they are able to access spirit of masses with capability in problem solving effectively and together with visions / work maturity. Four distinct aspect of an ideal political leader comprise the following: 1) knowledge and understanding about various problem issues and good capability in problem analysis; 2) capability beneficial to managerial administration; 3) political leadership with excellent background and inspiration to motivate people to achieve the goal ; 4) codes of conduct – Plato used to state 2,000

years ago that a good ruler is the king who is a philosopher Confucius claimed that a powerful person must have righteousness (Theerawekhin, 2005: online system)

The political leader must possess ethics and put the importance on decentralization principle. People are given an opportunity to participate in government service in order to develop their quality of life. This conforms to the concept on political participation of Rat-Ammarit who revealed that giving an opportunity for people to participate in public affairs more than ever; expansion of municipal area; and an increase in manpower and finance can be a mechanism for local governing and worth while to local people. In the case of financial weakness, the government can assist it by the amendment of tax structure such as value-added tax and juristic person tax. The municipal Act can be amended to make local people participation in the municipal affairs such as opinion expression, being municipal council members, municipal council member impeachment, etc. (Rat-Ammarit, 1977: p 76 – 77)

The political leader must be aware of public – minded or public consciousness and sacrifice for social assistance. This conforms to Khunwapanikul's concept on political reform. It was revealed that the political reform must prepare a transformational leader and campaign for executive of public administration system reform and core leaders pushing various aspect of reform to be concrete (Khunwapanikul, 2005; p 102).

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Knowledge development was the development of political leaders who were knowledgeable about principles and the society. The development of political leaders to have code of conduct (ethics) needed to instil them decentralization principle. Also, to make them be public – minded it needs to enhance their spirit not to ignore the society (Volunteer)

Political leaders should have creative political cause, social responsibility, accountability, corruption avoidance, cronyism avoidance, unity, and benefit sharing to people. This is in accordance with the democratic system considered to be green politics.

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Green politics refers to creative political cause, accountable politics, public sector organization with responsibility, and sustainability creation for green society taking care of natural resources and environment.

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