

# The Critical Comparison of the Green Parties' Phenomena between Indonesia and Thailand

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## **The Critical Comparison of the Green Parties' Phenomena between Indonesia and Thailand**

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**Abstract:** *The green activists realize that government policies do not enough support sustainability. Therefore, they want to make major breakthrough in dealing that issues. Establishing a green party could be an appropriate solution for implementing the green ideas. Besides, this paper attempts to analyse the green parties' phenomena in Indonesia and Thailand.*

*The research has chosen the study areas, which are Indonesia and Thailand because Indonesia and Thailand have many similarities such as demography, geography, and social. The essay, which describes to compare the green party phenomena in Indonesia and Thailand, will focus on the SWOT analysis of the green party and political and social context in each country. Besides, this essay will analyse two things. Firstly, it will look at the social and political contexts. In this context, it will try to describe the historical party in both Indonesia and Thailand. It also will examine the cultural and social contexts that manipulate the party phenomena.*

*Even, the biggest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia has already implemented the democracy values. It is a good example that Islam is compatible with democracy. The green parties already exist but they could not perform very well. Whilst Thailand has also chosen monarchy constitutional and the king pay attention on green issue but the green parties have not been existed.*

**Key words:** The green parties, Indonesia contexts, Thailand contexts. SWOT analysis.

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## 1 Introduction

Environmentalists try to reach a consensus on how to implement and build the ecology idea in reality. Many ecology ideas and perspectives could stay in the theoretical realm and are just rhetoric. Ecologists become exasperated at the thought that their ideas are just discourse and remain unimplemented. For example, resources degradation through misuse and pollution - when the north has a pollution problem and the south has a lack of resources, no country can solve and deal with this problem, although the ecologists were demanding discussion and seeking a solution. Therefore, the problems still exist and the scientists still live in their world.

According to the above context, many ecologists argue that formal and conventional politics are incapable of solving the ecological problem (Doyle & McEachern, 1998). Parties and politicians focused on pursuing their interest and they were less interested in resolving the environmental problem, so many environmentalists realise that they have to break through into a better situation. As a result, it is an urgent action that ecologists should take action in the political process, such as social movements and political parties. Moreover, some scientists said that the action has been adopted by some dominant' political movement for their promotion of alternatives to what they regard as an inherently environmentally destructive capitalism system based on constantly expanding production. For instance, the green party phenomena in Europe, the green parties which have emerged in European countries in the late 1980s have been identified as an emerging vehicle to bring the environmental idea in the practical life (Burchell, 2002; Rootes, 1999). And the second reason that created the rise of green party was the phenomena of New Social Movements (NSMs) in Europe in the late 1960's (Carter, 2007; Talshir, 2002). On the other hand, there are some criticisms that against this idea. The green parties are just a way to find power and are incompatible with bringing about the idea of environmental sustainability. Besides, they just accommodate the middle class interest (Markovits & Gorski, 1993).

Nevertheless, this essay has chosen the study areas which are Indonesia and Thailand because Indonesia and Thailand have many similarities such as demography, geography, and social contexts (Anonim, 2010a; Diamond, 2008). The essay which attempts to compare the green party phenomena in Indonesia and Thailand will focus on the SWOT analysis of the green party and political and social context in each country (Liddle & Mujani, 2006; Wattayakorn, 2006). Besides, this essay will analyse two things. Firstly, it will look at the social and political contexts. In this context, it will try to describe the historical party in both Indonesia and Thailand. It also will examine the cultural and social contexts that manipulate the party phenomena.

There are three parts, which have divided this paper; firstly, it will explain the introduction and the method that has been used. Secondly, it will compare the social and political contexts, which influences the Green parties in both countries. In addition, it will examine why the green parties rise and fall, and then the last piece of this essay will conclude and suggest what the green parties have done and should do in both Indonesia and Thailand.

## **2. Methodology and study areas**

This essay has chosen the study areas which are Indonesia and Thailand because Indonesia and Thailand have many similarities such as demography, geography, and social contexts. Thailand and Indonesia are agricultural countries where the majority of the population are farmers, but the biggest income does not come from farming activities. For example, Thailand's GDP contribution by composition sector can be seen as agriculture: 11.6%, industry: 45.1%, services: 43.3% and Indonesian GDP composition is formed from agriculture: 14.4%, industry: 48.1% and services: 37.5% (Anonim, 2010a).

In addition, their parties system is similar as well where a multi-party system has been chosen. They also conduct an election to select and choose their House of Representatives and senate members. Unluckily, the green parties have been established in Indonesia but surprisingly it does not exist in Thailand. These phenomena are a focus of this essay. What are the social and political contexts in both Indonesia and Thailand that can support the rise of the green parties and are not supportive of it? Before this will be explained, this essay will introduce briefly the role, the function of party and the party system approach.

Also, this script will use the SWOT analysis to elaborate, examine and find out the research question. The significant research and method that have been done in this century is the SWOT analysis that came from the research conducted at Stanford Research Institute between 1960 and 1970, especially it was conducted by Albert S Humphrey. The conditions the SWOT analysis rose from are the requirement to find out why corporate planning was unsuccessful (Anonim, 2010b).

Our own data also has limited reliability in some aspects but this has been minimized in terms of the validity. I have just used the secondary data that has been carried out in this area. This reveals some weakness. First, it could not find more detailed phenomena. Second, it is difficult to clarify the data from the precise actors in both Indonesia and Thailand. Third, the data could be not up to date because the events have been done a long time before the research. However, these weaknesses have been reduced with double-checking and re-checking the data. Also, the data comes from the reputable resources..

### **3. The rule and function of the party**

A Party is a modern organisation that relates to the development of the western political system. It is reflected in the degree of fragmentation of class and distribution of interest so the party has relationships between their

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program and their contemporary social and political context (Mair & Smith, 1990; Wildenmann, 1986). For example, the Labour party in Britain has existed to campaign and struggle for the interest and belief of labourers. It would be strange if they agree the privatisation of the company. They have to support any policies that can expand for the benefit of labour. Therefore, it is clear if we want to analyse the party orientation and phenomena we have to look at the linkage between the historical party identity and context.

The substantial purposes of party roles are to gain the popular vote, integrate and mobilize the masses, aggregate diverse interests, recruit public figures, formulate public policies and control the government (Duverger, 1969; Sartori, 1976; Weber, Gerth, & Mills, 1946). Besides, Party is a very important agent to gain legitimacy for government if the government wants to find the role (Mair, 1990; Wildenmann, 1986). For example, the parties should participate in the election because they can place both their party members and their program on the government. If the party cannot gain any member in the election the party will be useless and disappear on the political praxis. As a result, there are some issues that relate to the role of the party such as organisational and institutional development, decisions over who the organisation recruit and how they are managed, the impact of social change on the development of party and also issues of the electoral volatility.

Therefore, it is clear if we want to analyse the party orientation and phenomena, we have to create a link between the historical party identity and their context and their organisational issues. Therefore, this essay will analyse two things. Firstly, it will look at the social and political contexts. In this context, it will try to describe the historical party in both Indonesia and Thailand and also it will examine the cultural and social contexts that manipulate the party phenomena. I have attempted to make clear what the threats and the opportunities are in each country that support to the green party. Secondly, according to institutional and organisation issues, it will portray the strength and the weakness of green parties such as, how

they build and communicate with member and constituents, how they create and manage their resources.

### 3. Data Analysis

#### 3.1 *The Green party phenomena in Indonesia*

Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country in the world and also the third democratic country in the world after US and India. Indonesia's population is 240.2 million in 2009 and nearly 87 percent is Muslim (Nasional, 2010). Surprisingly, it is a good example that Muslim nations can align and conform to democracy. Many scientists say that democracy is suitable to be implemented in a Muslim country such as Indonesia (Hefner, 2000; Liddle & Mujani, 2006; Nakamura, Siddique, & Omar Farouk, 2001). Even though, there are also some critics' who say that Muslim nations are not compatible and could be against the democratic value (Diamond, 2008; Huntington, 1996; Lipset, 1985). However, Indonesia gives evidence that a Muslim nation can be well-matched with democracy.

Indonesia has a long history on which to build the democratic system and value. It was given independence in 1945 from the Dutch after they colonised for nearly 300 years and then from 1950 to 1959 it became a parliamentary democracy that implemented liberal democracy. After that, between 1959 and 1965 it was called a democratic leadership that is a guise of Soekarno's dictatorial system. Tragedy struck in 1965, when there was a coup d'état, led by Soeharto who became the longest Indonesia president. He ruled for 30 years, but in 1998, Soeharto fled from office following a popular uprising and Indonesia was on the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic nation. Currently, Indonesia has freedom of speech, a civil society and regular elections. The values and procedure of democracy is still blossoming successfully in Indonesia.

According to the party phenomena, there are three parties that claim to be green parties in Indonesia. The first party that existed is the Indonesian Green Party (Partai Hijau

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Indonesia). The party was declared on 21 October 1998 in Jakarta. It has a vision to bring prosperity to society and to preserve environmental resources. This party argues the Indonesian's environmental resources are enough to bring prosperity as long as we use them properly and are sensitive to sustainability issues. The second party is the Green Community Indonesia (Serikat Hijau Indonesia) which has been started in Jakarta, 4-5 July 2007. The party was created by some environmental activists who agree that politics is a way to implement the green idea. However, neither of them have joined with elections. Their activities focus on campaigning and encouraging people to be aware about ecology and the environment. They also have not yet opened any branches across Indonesia so they only have a main office in the capital city.

In addition, there is a party which claims to be a green party. This party is Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), also called People's Awakening Party, and was declared on 23 July 1998. This party has participated in the Indonesian election. In 1999 this party got 13,336,982 votes or 12.61% and also the PKB's leader Wahid became Indonesia's first democratically elected president. Moreover, in the election in 2004, it just got 10.57% (11,989,564) and then in 2009 their votes declined significantly to 5,146,122 (4.9%). When this party's leader led as Indonesian president there were some policies that related to the environment such as against illegal logging and stop mining exploration (Anonim, 2010c).

Moreover, relating to Indonesia's social and political contexts, there are some issues that occur in the Green Party in Indonesia, including opportunities that can endorse the existence of their party goals. They have very popular issues such as, degradation of environment, global warming and illegal logging. Most of them are very sensitive issues in Indonesia where many farmers have failed with their farms, lots of fishermen lost their fish and many people vanished from their forest. If they can create a good campaign and promote it in the best way, they can gain lots of voters. Currently, the Environmental problems are a burning issue in Indonesia so the green party has many opportunities to



use them as a popular issue. Secondly, the environmental issues have become a global issue, so the green party can build a global network to support their idea and then they can reach their goals soon.

On the other hand, there are some threats that can obstruct development of the green party in Indonesia. Firstly, as Indonesia is an archipelago which has thousands of islands ranging from Sumatra to Papua, Indonesia's geography is comparable to that from London to Moskow, so they have to consider this. Secondly, competition from other parties or organisations that are more effective and populist and also the pragmatist belief that reveals itself both in the society and the activists' party. For example, many people just think how to get power but they do not care how to distribute the resources. As a result, pragmatism and compromise are a common value in contemporary politics.

<b>Strength</b> Solidarity Awareness	<b>Opportunity</b> Networking (local and global contact) Popular issues Democracy
<b>Weakness</b> Resources No leader Exclusive	<b>Threats</b> Geography/location Competitor/other party or organisation Pragmatism

Table 1

**SWOT's analysis of the Green parties' phenomena in Indonesia**

Even still there are some issues why the green parties are not well-performing in Indonesia and making little contribution to the development of government policy (Table 1). These relate to institutional and organisational issues. Some weaknesses that arise in this situation include lack of resources, which could be the biggest problem of the Green parties in Indonesia. For example, they cannot create a big

project and promote their identity to Indonesian society because they have less money and human resources. Secondly, they do not have a good and charismatic leader who can rally the voters. And the thirdly, it has an exclusive organisation with an exclusive membership as well so they cannot gather many supporters. Nevertheless, they have some strengths that are embedded in their organisation. Firstly, a solitary value is a belief that every person in the organisation shares the same aim and can help each other. And also, environmental awareness that supports the implementation of ecological values and develops a good organisation.

### **3.2 The Unborn Green Party' phenomena in Thailand**

Pye (Pye & Pye, 1985) and Wilson (Wilson, 1962) state that democracy is not suitable in Asia and especially in Thailand because they have a paternalistic culture and also they do not have a middle class that can contribute to build a democratic political system (Ockey, 2004). This assumption has been created because Thailand is a monarchy and it identifies with authoritarian values and less participation. However, Duncan McCargo says that democracy is an existing phenomenon in Thailand because they conduct elections; they have a parliament and also a cabinet (McCargo, 1997). It reflects that democracy as value and belief can be implemented in Thailand even different from the West. For evidence, McCargo explains the party's system and their works in Thailand where it could be an appropriate example that Thailand has democracy.

Given the social and political contexts in Thailand, there are three main issues that relate to the party (Kachathan, 2008; McCargo, 1997; Ockey, 2004; Somchai, 2006; Thak, 2007). Firstly is the style of leadership. Patronage is quite common in Thailand where the patron or leader can command their client or follower to act as much as they want. For example, this value has been represented on the King relations with Thai society. The second one is military. The military is a main actor in Thailand politics because

there were a lot of coup d'états. The last coup d'état was to force then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to step down in 2006. It seems that authoritarianism will be back in Thailand. However, Kachathan says that the military is just moderator or guardian rather than ruler, it just happens to keep Thailand a semi-democratic country. The military have to act when a politician attempts to become authoritarian (Kachathan, 2008). The last main political actor is the middle class where it emerges through parties and any social movements. Understanding participation and the middle class can help us to analyse the development of the Party in Thailand (Hewison, 1997; Ockey, 2004).

According to the above assumption, this essay will explain why the green party has not existed yet in Thailand (table 2). The appearance of solidarity and awareness could be taken to be strengths. Many people in Thailand are conscious of environmental issues, especially when talking about river and weather changes (Wattayakorn, 2006). Although, it has some strengths, it has some weaknesses as well. The green party cannot build support in Thailand because they do not have a leader who can campaign on their ideas and also they don't have enough resources to support their goals. The other difficulty is management issues and how to make environmental issues become a populist agenda in Thailand.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>
Solidarity Awareness	King's consent Networking (local and global contact) Geography/location Democracy
<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Threats</b>
No leader Resources Non populist agenda	Competitor/other party or organisation Military

**Table 2**  
**Swot analysis of the concealment of the green Party in Thailand**

Actually, the green party can emerge in Thailand because they have some opportunities that can support them. First of all, the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, known as King Rama IX, is a person who likes farming and always encourages the development of a well managed environment (Stevenson, 2001). The king also campaigns on small-scale agricultural issues and then he suggests appropriate farming technologies, sustainable use of water resources, conservation, and flood and drought mitigation (Stevenson, 2001). In addition, he has created many projects that bring an opportunity for millions of people in rural areas across Thailand, regardless of their ethnicity or religion and citizen status (Stevenson, 2001). It is clear that a green party can maximise this chance where they can get support from the King if they know how to use it. Secondly, in terms of geography or location these are opposite to the situation in Indonesia. Unlike an archipelago, in Thailand it is easier to maintain and build many branches across this country. And then they can link to global environment organisations and the green parties across the world. The threat that occurs in Thailand and differs with Indonesia is the rule of the military. If the green party wants to exist, they have to deal with the military.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Environmental problems that occur encourage many scientists to seek solutions not only in theoretical aspects but also in practice. The green party has been created as a solution when the conventional parties cannot deal with environmental issues. It is an effort that can be useful to reduce and maintain the environmental problems. In the beginning, these phenomena established successfully in Europe 1980 where the Grunen party in Germany had been included in the election and even the first party in Australia in the early 1970's. Although there are some criticisms that are against this idea, such as Marcovits and Gorski, these ideas have been reproduced around the world like Indonesia and could be in Thailand.

The green parties have been developed in Indonesia but have not been created yet in Thailand. There are some issues

that are similar in both the Indonesia and Thailand cases in terms of social and political contexts, such as democratic values, and links to global networks. In Thailand they can gain support from the King but in Indonesia they can find support from the middle class. In addition, there are some differences, such as the military is a main obstacle in Thailand, but it does not exist in Indonesia, and also geography or location is a main obstacle in Indonesia, but it does not cause a problem in Thailand. In terms of institutional and organisational issues, both of them have problem such as, no leader, not enough resources and exclusive and unpopular agendas.

In conclusion, in every occurrence, The Green Parties in Indonesia do not perform well, so they have to push their strengths and minimise their weaknesses and then use their opportunities and reduce their threats, such as how to compete with other parties and organisations and reduce pragmatism. Also, in Thailand they can create The Green Party as much as they can use their ability and reduce their obstacles, such as how to deal with the King's consent and military.

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