

ABSTRACT

Title of Research Paper : Thailand's Political Party Unification : A Case Study of
Small Political Party

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This research emphasizes the unification between small political party and a large party as a core party in forming the government ; it was the first incident of political parties unification after the general election since propagating the Constitution, B.E. 2540. It aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the political party unification from the politician's perspectives and to find out causes behind the decision to unify the parties.

Data collection is based mostly on documents coupled with the interviews of core members of almost every important political parties, particularly those from the small party that has dissolved itself into the large one.

Results of the study can be summarized as follows :

Political party unification according to the Political Party Act, B.E. 2541 can be done in 2 ways, i.e., first, unification to form a new political party and, second, to unify with a main political party. The phenomena concerning unification of a small party with a large party to form the government is in the second category. Most of the politicians interviewed have the opinion that political parties to unify into one must have similar ideology, concept and policy according to the intent of the Constitution. They seem to support the phenomena of political parties unification because they want larger political

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party and reducing the number of political party at the same time. However, some politicians think that the unification occurs because of the settled mutual interest.

As for cause of the unification , most politicians interviewed reasoned that, according to the laws, 20 members of parliament or more can propose a draft law for consideration in the parliament ; a small party of lesser than 20 members of parliament cannot ; it is therefore difficult to persue political activities meaningfully. They therefore seek to unify with a large party with similar ideology and policy. Other cause may be from higher expenditure for the next general election ; a small party may not be able to afford it.

Recommendations emerged are as follows :

1. There should be a law with complete procedure for political party unification.
2. The law should include clauses for members of the absorbed party to have right of decision making in the form of referendum.
3. The people should be encouraged to think of politics as a system more than individual politician ; this is to foster strong political party system in the future.