

## Political participation of civil society affecting democratization

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์ (1) เพื่อศึกษาระดับประชาสังคม การมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมืองและการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย (2) เพื่อวิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความเป็นประชาสังคม การมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมืองกับการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย (3) เพื่อวิเคราะห์แนวทางการพัฒนาประชาสังคม การมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมืองเป็นฐาน และการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยและเสนอแนะแนวทางการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในบริบทของสังคมไทย กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ ผู้บริหารสภาองค์กรชุมชน/ผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิ/สมาชิกสภาองค์กรชุมชนและผู้นำชุมชน (สุ่มแบบชั้นภูมิ) จำนวน 392 ตัวอย่าง และสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกผู้ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญ จำนวน 25 คน สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ สถิติพื้นฐาน และการตรวจสอบความสอดคล้องของรูปแบบความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุ โดยโปรแกรมสำเร็จรูป

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมือง และการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยทั้งสองตัวแปรอยู่ในระดับมาก 2 ตัวแปรเมื่อแยกพิจารณาเป็นรายข้อตามลำดับค่าเฉลี่ยจากมากไปหาน้อย อันดับแรก คือ ประชาสังคม ( $\bar{x}=4.19$ ) รองลงมาคือ การมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมือง ( $\bar{x}=4.10$ ) และอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง 1 ตัวแปร คือ การพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยมีค่าเฉลี่ยสูงที่สุด ( $\bar{x}=3.30$ ) ผลการวิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์ พบว่า ทุกตัวแปรมีความสัมพันธ์ไปในทิศทางเดียวกันระดับต่ำถึงระดับสูง มีค่า  $r$  ระหว่าง .000 ถึง 1.000 โดยองค์ประกอบภายในส่วนใหญ่มีความสัมพันธ์ไปในทิศทางเดียวกันระดับมาก โดยเฉพาะตัวแปรการเป็นอิสระและการปกครองตนเองกับตัวแปรการมีส่วนร่วมในการออกเสียงประชามติ คือมีค่า  $r = 1.000$  มีความสัมพันธ์ระดับมากที่สุดอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 ตัวแปรการไม่แบ่งสรรกำไรกับตัวแปรความชอบธรรมทางกฎหมาย มีความสัมพันธ์กันน้อย ค่า  $r = .007$  ตัวแปรการไม่แบ่งสรรกำไรและตัวแปรความชอบธรรมทางกฎหมาย มีความสัมพันธ์กันน้อย ค่า  $r = .011$  ตัวแปรการเข้ามีส่วนร่วมในการออกเสียงประชามติและตัวแปรความชอบธรรมทางกฎหมาย มีความสัมพันธ์กันน้อย ค่า  $r = .011$  ส่วนตัวแปรการไม่แบ่งสรรกำไรและตัวแปรการติดต่อสื่อสารทางการเมืองในฐานะพลเมืองไม่มีความสัมพันธ์กัน มีค่า  $r = .000$  ข้อเสนอแนะแนวทางการพัฒนาระบอบประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย พบว่ารัฐต้องหนุนเสริมให้ภาคประชาสังคมมีความเข้มแข็ง ทัดเทียมกับองค์กรภาคราชการ ลดอำนาจรัฐและเพิ่มอำนาจประชาชน โดยให้ภาคประชาสังคมมีส่วนร่วมในการบริหารจัดการ ทุกระดับ และให้มีส่วนร่วมในประเด็นเสรีภาพสิทธิทางการเมือง มีความเสมอภาคทางการเมือง และมีความถูกต้องชอบธรรมทางกฎหมาย

### Abstract

The objectives of this dissertation are as follows: (1) to study the level of civil society and participation in politics and democratization in Thailand (2) to analyze the relationship between the civil society, participation of political and democratization in Thailand; and (3) to analyze the development of civil society having political participation as base and the democratization vis a vis to offer some guidelines for democratization in Thai context. The samples used in the research include members of community executive councils, experts, community councils and community leaders strategically selected totaling 392 and in-depth interviews of 25 important informants. Statistics used in this research are basic ones and tested their consistency of their causal relationship using SPSS program.

It was found from the study that both participation and democratization are at a “much” level. When considered individually in accordance with their mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), they can be ranked from the higher to the lowest

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thusly: civil society ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.19), followed by political participation ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.10) and democratization ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.30), respectively. As to the relationships between and among variables, it was found that every variable is related in the same direction from the lowest to the higher levels whose  $r$  being between .000 - 1.000 with of internal components are one directionally related at a “much” level, especially autonomy and self-governing variable and participation in public poll variable whose  $r$  equates 1.000 having their relation at the highest level with a statistical significance at .01; the non – allocation of interest their variable and legal legitimacy variable having relational a minimal level whose  $r$  = .007; while the non – allocation of interest variable and the legitimacy variable are minimally related whose  $r$  = .011; the participation public poll and the legal legitimacy are minimally related whose  $r$  = .011; while the non – allocation of interest variable are not related whose  $r$  = .000. The recommendations which the author would offer are that promotion of the strength of the civil society comparable to that of the government agencies is a must. Reduce the state power and increase the citizen power by way of allowing the civil society participate in every level of public affairs, including political liberty, political rights, equality as well as legal legitimacy.

**Keyword:** Political Participation, Civic Society, Democratization

## Introduction

The word “civil society” appeared in Thai society in the middle of 1977. There were other words that were used and had similar meaning which were “people’s politics” and “citizen politics.” Under the development and the disentanglement of Thai social forces, the phenomenon called “civil society” was created when the social activists came to work with villagers after the decline of socialism or “Age of the Second Exploration” in 1977. This phenomenon formed cultural community concept which created by non-governmental organization (NGO), the group of social activists who worked with villagers in countryside. They established a small private development organization as a tool to work with the villagers. Their priority goal was to strengthen the community organization or People Organization (PO) (Prapas Pintobtang, 2009). The appearance of “people’s politics” and “citizen politics” was used as an explanation for those who belong to non-governmental organization or non-government service and non-business organization which had been growing since the era of Prem Tinsulanonda’s government (Anek Laothammatat, 2013). This civil society consisted of NGO’s work activities that aimed to strengthen people’s organizations by using various forms of

activities focused on community or “communitarian civil society.” If considered from the social context after the event on October 6, 1980 when a lot of university students and intellectuals joined the Communist Movement of Thailand, the social activists had a chance to return to the normal society again when the Order 66/2523 or “politics led military policy” was declared after the crisis of the Communist Party. The communitarian civil society was formed after people turned their backs on Communist Party. Rejecting government power led to the growth of local organizations and the expansion of work dimension which connected local organizations all together, including Saving Group, Alternative Agriculture Network or Integrated Farming, etc. Moreover, it could also connect communities together in a term of cultural landscape, including River Basin Network, Community Forest Network, etc. The next important development was when NGO cooperated with government and business organization or other organizations. This development created work partnerships. The role of Local Development Institute (LDI) and Doctor Pravet Wasee had formed a work characteristic called “Pentagon Associates” (villagers, government officers, NGO, mass media, and scholars) or had supported “community” or “civil state” by aiming to create the

association between the organizations in society and to connect local communities with government in a characteristic of seeking cooperation, such as budget support, etc. They worked in both local communities and supporting “civic-net” (Prapas Pintobtang, 2009). The definition of communitarian civil society is including the civil society of Pentagon Associates which saw activities of civil society as cooperation between government, business, political, mass media, and people organizations. The person who started this concept was Doctor Pravet Wasee, and he also started the cooperation concept of “community,” “civil state” which focused on the cooperation between government and people and the supporter of this civil society was Local Development Institute (LDI) and Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The success of civil society movement under the “community” and “Pentagon Associates” concept depended on the reconciliation between government and other organizations. They could create the public activities where people could talk, exchange, learn, and as well as work with the government organizations through community plans. Using the resources of Local Administrative Organization through the cooperation of policy decision makers or supporting local agendas to be a part of local administrative or government organization development plans, and setting roles of representatives in regulations, such as *Political Development Council Act*, *Provincial Administration Act*, and *Community Organization Council Act*, *National Health Act* would lead to more political connection between local-district-community (Prapas Pintobtang, 2009).

Five year after the riot in May 1992, the political change of the government called “political reform” was one of the most important turning points of Thai politics in this century. The concrete result was the declaration of the new constitution on October 11, 1997 which it broadened the liberty of people. This was the important benefaction created by the various political movements, including organizations from cities and countryside who needed help from

the government, who cooperated with the government, who had conflict with the government, and as well as those who resisted the government (Krittaya Atchawanitkul and Anuchat Puangsumlee, 1999). The groups of people who involved with these social organizations would be a significant foundation in political participation more than those who did not. And social organizations would be the organizations that gave people an opportunity to be a part of making rational decisions in politics. Moreover, they worked through public areas instead of forming bargaining power or demanding something from government. They relied on themselves and focused on their goals with morality and public mind as citizenships. According to the fundamental of rural cultural capital, members of the organization were inclined to be led to intense political participation. Therefore, the political reform for the development of Thai democratization was led to the different communism since the constitution was declared in 1997. During that time, the representative democracy was only the capitalist democracy that dominated people with consumerism (Chairat Charoensinoran, 1997). Furthermore, the gap between economy, politics, and culture was formed. Applying for political positions was a political investment in democracy, seeking power, and benefits. This reflected the failure of representative democracy, and it also formed the new political movement called “civil politics.” This was a proof and a challenge of the representative democracy. Nowadays, the process of civil society development and support was put in National Economic and Social Development Plan No.8 which reflected that Thai democratization was in the right direction. In addition, people and civil society organizations would be truly supported and promoted by government. In the past, the relationship between the government and people was a dualistic relationship. They helped each other building the relationship but also distrust each other (Chetta Supyen, 2004)

Even though National Economic and Social Development Plan No.8 had always prioritized the development of people, civil society, and people’s

politics, it did not have enough power to develop the local communities efficiently because it had no law supported. This problem indicated that after the plan No.8 of National Economic and Social Development Plan, people's politics was isolated and ignored among the misery and liberty abuses of a group people who could not use political means to achieve their goals. This led to a politically disinterested culture, and people became more independent with their lives. When the Community Organization Councils were found that under Community Organization Council Act in 2008, the people's politics was strongly united as one purpose politics again after it was shattered and would not be able to be exposed in public. People's politics was an important basic foundation of the liberal democracy created under the new constitution of Kingdom of Thailand. Nowadays, the government had no answer for their people about the national political problem. The unsolved problem of the misery and the violation in privacy rights of the people who were not be able to use political means still existed in rural areas and slums in cities. Processing the problem management through the bureaucracy could not fix the problems completely. The result was that the people turned their thoughts into self-reliance. The political participation in civil society movement would benefit the new democratization and it was the important option and answer for the grass-roots in nowadays (King Prajadhipok's Institute, 2011). Democratization would make the society a strong "political society" (WisutPotan, 2007).

According to the study background, principles, purposes and as well as the problems mentioned above, the researcher who worked in a field with the movement of civil society development was interested in doing research on "political participation of civil society affecting democratization"

### Research questions

1. What are the characteristics of political participation of civil society and democratization?
2. Are there any relationships between

political participation of civil society and democratization and how are they related?

3. What are development concepts of political participation of civil society and democratization?

### Purposes of the research

1. To study the level of civil society and participation in politics and democratization in Thailand
2. To analyze the relationship between the civil society, participation of political and democratization in Thailand
3. To analyze the development of civil society having political participation as base and as well as the democratization

### Research methods

The researcher used Mixed Method Research, Qualitative Research, and Quantitative Research as research methods.

### Scope of the research

There were 3 scopes used in this research which were 1) content scope, 2) area scope, and 3) research period.

**1. Content Scope:** the researcher studied the specific contents about civil society movement, political participation, and democratization in Thai social context.

**2. Area Scope:** The area scope focused on 425 Community Organization Councils of Northeast of Thailand in Kalasin, KhonKaen, Maha Sarakham, Roi-Et, and Yasothon.

**3. Research Period:** January 2015 – July 2015

### Population and Samples

1. Population used in this research was 15,598 directors and the members of 425 Community Organization Councils of Northeast of Thailand in Kalasin, KhonKaen, Maha Sarakham, Roi-Et, and Yaso-

thon.

2. The samples used in this research were directors, committees, and the members of Community Organization Councils of Northeast of Thailand in 5 provinces, including members from sub councils. The researcher specifically studied political participation on public. The researcher used the method of stratified sampling in this research by using the concept of Determining Sample Size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size of the targets in this project was 392.

### Variables

1. Independent variable was the political participation of civil society.
2. Dependent variable was the democratization in Thai social context.

### Research Tools

The research tools used in this research were:

1. Questionnaire, which consisted of 4 parts, including 1) basic information of the participants, 2) questions about civil society movement, 3) questions about political participation, and 4) questions about the democratization
2. Semi-structured interviews, the researcher interviewed 25 persons who were directors, committees, and the members of Community Organization Councils of Northeast of Thailand in 5 provinces, including Kalasin, KhonKaen, Maha Sarakham, Roi-Et, and Yasothon.

### Data analysis

1. Quantitative data (questionnaire): the level of civil society's opinions and the relation level of civil society using descriptive statistics, such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient.

2. The level of civil society's opinions, the level of public participation, the level of democratization using descriptive statistics, such as standard deviation

3. The relation level of civil society, the level of public participation, and the effectiveness of problem solving of villages/communities using inferential statistics, such as Pearson's correlation coefficient

4. Quantitative data analysis (Semi-Structured Interviews), using analytic induction

### Research Results

1. Result of the study on civil society involvement in politics and democratization found that:

1) According to the 3 variables, two of them were in high levels which respectively were civil society and political participation. Considering each variable individually regarding their average levels in descending order, they respectively were civil society, political participation, and democratization. One variable which was in the medium level was democratization, although the average level of the variable was the highest. Opinions toward civil society from the samples of the research were agreeing in overall. Considering elements of civil society regarding their average levels in descending order, the first was nonprofit-distributing which had plenty of agreeing opinions and the highest average, the second was independence and self-regulatory, and the third was public communications network which had the least agreeing opinions. Standard deviation (S.D.) of each element was between .37 – .53, meaning that the opinions of participants toward civil society were in the same direction or consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

2) Opinions toward political participation from the samples of the research were agreeing in overall. Considering elements of political participation regarding their average levels in descending order, the first was election campaign participation which had plenty of agreeing opinions, the second was referendum participation, and the third was political communication of citizens which had the least agreeing opinions. Standard deviation (S.D.) of each element was

between .37 – .66, meaning that the opinions of informants toward political participation were in the same direction or consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

3) Opinions toward Democratization from the samples of the research were in medium level of agreeing. Considering each element of Democratization regarding their average levels in descending order, the first was political rights which had high level of agreeing opinions as well as the highest average, the second was freedom and rights which had medium level of agreeing opinions, and the third was legal legitimacy which had the least agreeing opinions. Standard deviation (S.D.) of each element was between .62– .76, meaning that the opinions of informants toward democratization were in the same direction or consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

2. Result of the study on relations between civil society, political participation, and democratization found that:

Researcher can summarize result of the study on relation between each pair of variables as follows:

1) The pair of civil society and political participation variables had the highest relation level at  $r = .688$  with statistically significant level at 0.01 which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

2) The pair of Independence and self-regulatory variables had the highest relation level at  $r = 1.000$  with statistically significant level at .01 which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

3) The pair of nonprofit-distributing and legal legitimacy variables had low relation level or no relation at  $r = .007$  which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

4) The pair of independence and self-regulatory and legal legitimacy variables had low relation level or no relation at  $r = .011$  which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from

the key informants.

5) The pair of referendum participation and legal legitimacy variables had low relation level or no relation at  $r = .011$  which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

6) The pair of nonprofit-distributing and political communication of citizens had no relation at  $r = .000$  which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

7) The relation analysis found that relations between each pair were in the same direction from medium to high level between  $r .273$  and  $.688$  with statistically significant level at 0.01, which was consistent with consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

3. Result of the analysis on civil society development guidelines, political participation as a base, and democratization found that:

The predictive test of influence toward democratization using civil society and political participation as base variables was to predict influence of all the 8 individual variables. According to the test, it was found that every variables had influence toward dependent variable democratization with statistical significance level at 0.05 which could be shown in descending order as follows: Individuality variable which had predicted influence of 81.9% ( $St_e = .099$  Sig. 000), political communication of citizens variable which had predicted influence of 64.4% ( $St_e = .034$  Sig. 000), referendum participation variable which had predicted influence of 50.5% ( $St_e = .171$  Sig. 000), election campaign participation variable which had predicted influence of 48.3% ( $St_e = .087$  Sig. 000), community or social organization event participation variable which had predicted influence of 45.5% ( $St_e = .173$  Sig. 000), participation in the election variable which had predicted influence of 36.6% ( $St_e = .037$  Sig. 000), nonprofit-distributing variable which had predicted influence of 31.5% ( $St_e = .146$  Sig. 009), and community norms and values variable which had predicted influence of 22.0% ( $St_e = .052$  Sig. 000). The test was capable to explain variance as 57.5% with test result

at  $F = 26.536$  (Sig. 000) and statistically significant level at 0.05 which was consistent with the interviews from the key informants.

The result of the study on democratization in Thailand context found that (1) Thai people have rights and freedom of expression and career as well as opportunity equality at the satisfactory level, however continuity of law protection still needs to be improved. (2) People must participate in elections and have involvement in Sub-district Administrative Organizations, Municipality Office, and other local government administration. (3) People must participate in political events such as election, political campaign, government operations investigation, as well as keep up with local administration works. (4) Sub-district community organization is an organization gathered with love, ideals, and dedication, operated individually and its actions are independent from any institution.

According to the study, researcher found suggestions for democratization as follows (1) Government must reinforce civil society so that they could be strong, united, and balanced with government organizations. (2) We should decrease power of the government. Instead, increase power of civilians by decentralizing and allowing civil society to get involved in every level of administrations. (3) We should create public space for civil society to join significant events related to liberties or freedom including political rights, equality, and legal legitimacy matters.

## Discussion

According to the study results, the researcher could use the results for discussion by classifying in categories as shown below:

### 1. Civil Society

According to the quantitative data, the researcher found that the sample group had the perspective toward the civil society at high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.19$ ). According to opinions on the composition of civil society when considered each element in descending order of highest-lowest mean, the researcher found that the first one was the opinion

on non-profit organizations was at high level and had the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.35$ ). The second one was having shared vision ( $\bar{x} = 4.28$ ). And the lowest mean was public communication network ( $\bar{x} = 3.92$ ). The standard deviation (S.D) in each sector was between .37 – .53. This indicated that the participants had the same direction of political perspectives as shown in the following interview; “every member of this local community loves and joins community with freedom in working and no profit” (Mr. Prasoblab Pinitrom, interview on March 1, 2015). And it also showed in this following interview, “we have plan structure and rule in our process. We hold meetings on regular basis. When it comes to making decisions, we use majority rule. We work for the benefit of our organization. There is no profit made for anyone. Everyone has freedom in working (Mr. Son Roobsung, interviewed on March 1, 2015). In addition, the similar result was shown in the research “The roles of civil society in Philippines” by Seeda Sonsri (2009). This mentioned research found that civil society was a society of people or citizens that had political role in giving opinions and joining activities with government in order to set the policy of Philippines. Rungsan Teerawetchareonchai (2014) studied the political participation roles of civil society by using Philippines and Thailand during 1986-2006 as a case study. The study result found that civil society organizations had a role in setting government’s policy because civil society organizations in Philippines legally registered with government under the constitution laws of Philippines. Therefore, this gave opportunities to civil society organizations to take a part of helping the government setting a policy for the country more than any other countries in Asia because the constitution declared that civil society shall be formed into organizations and participate in politics, and be able to set a foreign policy.

Community Organization Councils had a self-determination policy. The Community Organization Councils also had freedom in administration without being dominated by government. Community Organization Councils could be able to stop the

administration by using their own authority. Community Organization Councils controlled work process by themselves corresponding with Administration and Development of Community Organization Council Act 2008. The “Community Organization Council” was a foundation of a community. It gave the communities the opportunity to have self-care and self-management. It was the main key used for community development, applied community development, connecting other organizations in their local communities together with a direction, power and freedom. Moreover, it was a knowledge exchanging stage for people to talk and solve community’s problems together. This local self-determination management had been formed since a long time ago (Local Development Institute, 2008). Groups or organizations must be established by co-decision making. Joining groups or organizations must be done voluntarily, not by forcing. Being a member or participating in civil society did not have to be legal legitimacy or did not have any regulations supported. The members could join or leave as they wanted. Civil Society Movement and Local Democratization, a research by Laddawan Tantiwittayapitak (2007) found that the work procedure of civil society affected democratic and local politics development. And the strength of civil society movement related to the relationship between citizen’s participation in local public activities. To strengthen civil society movement, especially in political participation, government support in a term of a policy in local political participation played a very important part in this matter. Civil society organizations had to work systematically in order to form a democratic community by creating machinery of law as a political participation’s reassurance and creating plans in a form of democratic community council for political debating. To formulate collaborative learning that could benefit problem solving; the work process must have rules in both formal and informal manners. The informal groups with no registration under the registered organizations should regularly have meetings, memberships, and have a structure or a process for

making decision using the majority vote. The structure of social organization was formed by social groups or organization to associate and facilitate various social expressions for individuals and strengthening civil society (Anuchart Puangsumlee and Krittiya Attchawanitkul, 1999). Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University indicated that the structure of civil society organizations was a group integration that had management system for collaborative learning used for problem solving. The structure consisted of rules in both formal and informal manners. Therefore, these organizations should regularly have meetings, memberships, and have a structure or a process for making decision using the majority vote such as structure of association, a project that everyone could publicly live together (Tawinwadee Bureekul, 2009).

## 2. Political Participation

The study result found that the sample group’s opinion toward political participation was at high level ( $\bar{x}=4.10$ ). When considered specifically about the components of political participation on each element ordering from the highest mean to the lowest mean, the first one was the participation in political campaign which was at high level and had the highest mean ( $\bar{x}=4.29$ ). The next one was the participation in referendum ( $\bar{x}=4.28$ ). And the element that had the lowest mean was the political communication of the people ( $\bar{x}=3.77$ ). When considered on the standard deviation (S.D.) in each sector, the researcher found that the S.D. was between .37 – .66. It showed that the participants had the same direction of the opinion on political participation as shown in the following interview, “the sub district council is a civil society movement created for the members to meet, exchange knowledge, solve the community’s problems, develop the community to have politics, economic, social, and political growth. Our organization will support and encourage the members of the sub district council to participate in the every aspect of politics. We will also support and encourage our members *to participate in political talk, following political news, political campaign, voting in elections,*

*and transparent election. This will lead to the democratization for equal rights, equal law protection, and freedom of political participation. And people should be able to participate in the administration of sub district administration in every procedure”* (Mr. Neenawat Kenyota, interviewed on March, 1 2015).

According to the opinions of the sample group, it showed that voting was a form of political participation which was separated from the activities involved voting campaign, and activities related to political parties. However, it could be included in patriotic acts. Voting played a very important part in politics because the voting result could immediately determine or select the government or the administration of the country after the election. It was the leader selection and the most important expression of political participation under the democratic system as the ownerships of sovereignty. The political participation in a form of voting was an important format of democratic administration. However, we should acknowledge that having a lot of people participating in voting did not mean those countries have true democracy. Using the rights to vote in a form of true democracy should have these following characteristics; (1) freedom of rights which meant voting should be voluntarily and should not be forced or threatened to do so. Nor should the voters get rewarded from doing so, (2) secret vote which meant the voting should be done alone in an election booth. Only the voters knew who they voted for. They could not tell the others about who they voted for, (3) the equality in voting which meant each eligible voter could only have one vote. The voting card that had more than one mark on would consider an invalid ballot, and (4) impartiality which meant people who involved in elections should do their duties with impartiality and should not take side (Sombut Tumrongtanyawong, 2005). Therefore, the political activities that people express were very important, such as uninterested in joining activities, declaring themselves as the individual who were interested in politics by talking about politics, using the rights to vote, educating other

people about politics, encouraging people to vote the candidate they supported, taking part in elections campaign such as wearing a support shirt, putting stickers on vehicles, contacting with government’s staff or political leaders, donating money or objects for political parties or candidates, joining the meetings about voting campaign, introducing or joining political rallies, running campaigns, registering a political party, joining the activities of a political party, such as finding a budget for a political party, being a candidate of a political party, running public activities, and taking care of the activities of a political party (Weerasak Jinarat, 2013). The expressions of political activities of members of community organizations and political expression led to democratization which affected the stability of Thailand’s democracy.

The study result indicated that the importance of the democratic participation in administration was the political rally and movement. In the democratic society, people have rights and liberty to participate in a political rally and movement either it was in a supportive or unsupportive manner. The political rallies were the important expression of the political participation in democracy because they would let the government know if civilians agreed or disagreed with their work procedure (Sombut Tumrongtanyawong, 2005). Keeping up with political news, showing support to political leaders when they did the right thing and objecting when they did something bad, participation in discussing political issues, providing political knowledge to friends in the communities, giving the government attention and writing to newspaper editors, all these led people to have more political information and more political interest They would also be able to criticize the government more. (Sombut Tumrongtanyawong, 2005). Maybe it was because political system was a stakeholder in the way of life of the civilians. It also allocated the resources with equality. If people had no interested in politics, it could lead to problems affecting individuals or interest groups. Participation in community organizing to address issues and needs to government,

commenting on government policies, presentation of plans / projects for the government to take part in the allocation of resources to the communities, participation in government's work procedure or administration, participation in monitoring and tracking the budgeting process were very important (Sombut Tumrongtan-yawong, 2005). This might be because subdistrict councils were community organizations that needed to participate in problem solving and to participate in public policy proposals to address community issues and needs as well as monitoring every level of the administration of government.

### 3. Democratization

The result of the quantitative data found that the sample's opinion on democratization in overall was at average level ( $\bar{x}=3.30$ ). When considered specifically on each element ordering from the highest to the lowest mean, the first element was political rights which was at high level and had the highest mean ( $\bar{x}=3.55$ ). The next one was liberty and rights which was agreed at average level ( $\bar{x}=3.47$ ). The element that had the lowest mean was legal legitimacy ( $\bar{x}=3.06$ ). Considering from the standard deviation (S.D.), each element had the S.D. between .62- .76. It showed that the participants had the same direction of political perspectives as shown in the following statement, "*the definition of democratization is the freedom of expression, freedom to work, equality of opportunity, and equal protection of law. People must participate in voting, Subdistrict Administration, Municipality, and participate in political activities. For political participation, everyone should vote in elections, and participate in political activities, political campaign, inspecting government's work process, following up local work process. Organizations of subdistrict were established with love and passion. The members fully contribute to the communities. They are independent organizations with freedom of work that are not dominated by any other organizations.*" (Ms. Pimmada Airsiri, interviewed on March 1, 2015).

The study result found that government

officers should have good morality in mind for working in order to be good examples for society and encourage people to improve themselves to have honesty, sincerity, ambition, patience, orderliness, and transparent career path. The representatives who work in the government organization should perform their duties and serve with righteousness. Moreover, both political authorities and public servants must perform their duties with virtue and morality. At corporate level, the authorities had to be able to work efficiently and fairly for civilians. They also had to organize work systems that could meet the needs of the people and comply with the law and regulation. These were important characteristics of citizens and also the indicators of political equality (Anek Laothammatat, Freedom, 1999). According to the highest administrative law, political rights should prioritize the equality of political expression and political participation of citizens with legal legitimacy. The government should have a role in facilitating the political expression of people only (Dankwart, 1970). Using laws as rules and regulations for the country according to the legal legitimacy, the liberty and rights of people under the constitution law was the *government* of the people, by the people, and for the people. People had freedom to do anything under the limitation of the law. They would not be dominated by others. They shall respect other people and shall not deprive the liberty and rights of others. Everyone had the same rights in law, economy, and society (Albert, 1966; Seligson, 2002).

To develop the democratization in Thai social context, the researcher found that (1) government should encourage people to be strong, united, and be equal with government organizations, (2) the government power should be reduced and people's power should be increased by decentralizing power to people and allowing people to take a part in administration, and (3) people should be able to participate in main issue about political liberty, political rights, political equality, and political legitimacy. Laddawan Tantiwittayapitak (2007) stated in Civil So-

ciety Movement and Local Democratization that to strengthen civil society, government should have a policy that supports political participation of people and local democracy by creating legislative machinery as a reassurance of political participation of people.

#### Suggestions:

##### 1. Academics

1.1 The result of this study created a new body of knowledge and academic knowledge which will be a good path to learn and research about civil society movement, political participation, and democratization. Those who were interested in doing research could use this research as a guide for researching.

1.2 It could be used as a guideline or a component for every organization to create and develop the democratization in Thai social context by using the concept of civil society and people's political participation as a conceptual framework.

##### 2. Public Policy

2.1 It can be used as a policy framework to create and develop the democratization in Thai social context. It can also be used as a concept for analyzing political policy in order to develop the democracy of the country and to be completely accepted without any questions or doubts from public which can be led to the alienation like in the past.

2.2 Governmental organizations should do some research about the factors and other influences affected political participation of people since Thai citizen took so much interested in politics.

##### 3. Applications

3.1 It could be used as a basic theoretical principle to create and develop the democratization Thai social context by using civil society concept and political participation as a base. Besides focusing on democratization, political activities of civil society were also an important factor or an important condition to strengthen democratization through the process of political participation. This would strengthen the democratic development in Thai social context.

3.2 The leaders of local communities should be supported to have the important roles as role models of the communities by voicing their opinions, reflecting community's problems, listening, and solving the community's problems. This process could be successful if community, governmental and other organizations cooperate with each other.

3.3 There should be the integration of community organizations which was encouraged by the voluntary and initiative of the people and not by the government idea

3.4 The strength of citizens and community rights should be created in order to strength the community and be a foundation for democratization

3.5 There should be a network development between communities, Local Administrative Organizations, and other related organizations

3.6 There should be research done in a group of higher education scholars.

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