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Political parties and populist policies in Thailand

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Abstract

This research is aimed to study the role of political parties and populist policies in Thailand. During Thaksin Administration populism was used as a mechanism to alleviate poverty in Thailand and as a political strategy to win elections. Populist policies help increases people's well-being through policies that provide health care, education, pensions, allowances etc. Even though populist policies had redistributive element, which see benefits being shared with the wider electorate. However, many policies had a negative impact to the society as well, such as rice pledging scheme, first car tax rebate policy, 2000 baht help cheque, and the national welfare scheme card etc. as some of them led to fiscal mismanagement and ineffective during implementation process. Today populism subjected to 2017 Constitution Article 142 aimed at prevent economic mismanagement of the past. However, the policy approaches introduced by political parties in the 2019 election had shown that most of political campaigns did not follow the guidance of the new constitution because there are few explanations about the sources of revenues including the policy strategic plan, expected outcomes from the payments and policy evaluation process etc. As a result, populist policies can backlash and cause negative consequences to the economy and society as happened in the previous governments if political parties did not concern the adverse impacts of populist policies.

Keywords: Populist policies, Political campaign, Redistribution, New constitution