

Leader for the Next Generation: The Case Study of Thai Politics¹

By Waraporn Chatratichart, Ph.D.

The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

Bangkok, Thailand

Contact: waraporn_cha@utcc.ac.th; wchatratichart@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

Leadership is one of the significant factors influencing voters' electoral decisions. A leader's attributes in comparative western and Thai literature shows salient differences, but similar characteristics can be found and types of leaders can be segregated from several perspectives. This article particularly focuses on two points of views – Thai styles of leader proposed by Ockey (1996, 2004) and Little's (1985, 1988) Western types of the leader. However, based on an empirical study amongst Thai youth, this paper argues that the leader of the new generation will not fit well into any categories previously catalogued. The results show a preference for a new and 'hybrid' leadership style. Also, with the globalisation and the development of media technology, the Thai new generation have learned from the West through satellite TVs or the Internet, therefore, they are more likely to demand their leader to be similar to those in western democracies. Thus the leaders for the next generation have to adapt themselves to the changing world and adopt more common characteristics found in western leaders.

Introduction

The issue of political leadership has long been recognised in contemporary democracies, and although this concept has been widely studied, no literature so far offers a single and broadly accepted definition of the concept (Gibb 1969 and Stogdill 1974 cited Mughan and Patterson 1992). However, the following definition has been proposed:

¹ This paper is a part of the thesis on "Attitude Towards Political Leaders Amongst Young People in Thailand and their Influence on Electoral Choices" submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in February 2010.

...the behaviour of persons in positions of political authority, their competitors, and these both in interaction with other members of society as manifested in the past, present, and probable future throughout the world.

(Paige 1977, p. 1)

This general and vague definition still does not provide a clear and concise idea of what political leadership is. Possibly, people take the definition of political leadership for granted, assuming to understand its meaning without defining it (Chatratchart 2010, p. 39).

Bean and Mughan (1989), as well as Foley (2002), believe that, in modern politics, leaders and their leadership attributes increasingly play an important role. The attributes of leadership have become a measure of political effectiveness, a theme in public discussion over time, and a key criterion of political evaluation. Image or impression plays an important role in politics because, as Bromley (1993, p. 132) explains, people are easy to perceive and understand. If voters do not understand the complex issues, they look for more visible or familiar cues, such as people. This claim is supported by Arthur H. Miller (1990) and Miller *et al.* (1986), who argue that the personality of a political actor is usually more dominant than any issue or party. According to Bromley (*op. cit.*) and Ind (1997), a leader's image or the impression towards a leader can determine voters' attitudes and their voting behaviours in the future. Thus, this article discusses Thai young people's perception towards their ideal leader in order to understand salient characteristics for the leader of the next generation.

Leader's Qualities: In Theory

In the West, literature provides for different types of characteristics or personal attributes. According to King (2005), the personality and personal characteristics of a leader can be categorised into four attributes, namely physical appearance, native intelligence, character or temperament, and political style. However, each of these attributes, except intelligence, is perceptual and can be manipulated (*ibid.*). The list was set out in alphabetical order as follows (*ibid.*, p. 9):

Bold, caring, competent, decisive, determined, effective, experienced, fair-minded, friendly, goodhumored, good-looking, honest, inspiring, intelligent, likeable, principled, self-disciplined, shrewd, sincere, strong, tough, trustworthy, vigorous, warm, willing to listen to reason, and youthful.

Kinder *et al.* (1980) demonstrates the profile of an ideal president in two dimensions, namely personality and performance. The American voters' ideal president is the person who is competent and politically trustworthy (e.g., honest, knowledgeable, open-minded, not power-hungry or unstable). An ideal president should also be perceived as being capable of making hard choices and tackling difficult problems (such as able to provide strong leadership, and resolve economic problems). However, the issue of morals appears to be paid little attention by American voters. Setting a good moral example is perceived as being less important element of an ideal president. Moreover, personal assets (e.g., inspiring, warm, humble) do not have any benefit for competing candidates. Nonetheless, the profile of an ideal president suggested by Kinder *et al.* (*ibid*) does not reflect the prototype of the ideal, since it fails to test against the presidential contenders. This prototype became a standard to assess the then incumbent president, Jimmy Carter. The study suggests that an incumbent leader can influence the public's thoughts about the attributes of their ideal leader.

To understand the characteristics of the Thai leader, reviewing sources such as research on individual leaders, observations of political analysts, and public opinion polls can help to identify the attributes of the ideal leader. Sadly, these sources are limited.

Likhit Dhiravegin (1989) proposes a comprehensive list of prominent, essential, but satirical attributes of Thai political leaders. For example, his qualities of a Thai leader are described thus:

a Thai leader must be a person on whom his followers can depend for career advancement, economic interest; a Thai leader...has to know how to compromise in order to satisfy all the parties concerned. (*ibid*, p. 36)

These two characters demonstrate the weakness of morality or integrity of Thai leaders. Moreover, he states that a Thai leader has to demonstrate self-sacrifice to work for his country. His reason for saying this is, however, ironic. He further comments, “(a leader) has to do everything possible to stay in office for fear that his departure will result in great havoc for society” (ibid, p. 36).

Dhiravegin (ibid) paradoxically claims that whoever wants to be in power or take up a high position, such as a prime minister, can use his list as criteria to check their qualifications or suitability to be a Thai leader. Nonetheless, the attributes he lists are not based upon any empirical or systematic study, but mainly upon his observations as a long-term political analyst and academic. Moreover, the list may not provide any theoretical knowledge, but may well reflect merely the political reality of Thai leadership.

Furthermore, a Thai leader may hold a quality of a *Phokun* (father) image, which is the image of a strong, benevolent and decisive leader-statesman whose responsibility is to serve the nation, not just a groups of voters (Chaloemtiarana 1979). This father image is the outstanding image of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat, Thailand’s 11th Prime Minister (October 1958 – December 1963).² Chaloemtiarana (ibid) describes the characteristics of Sarit as ‘despotic paternalism’, a hybrid of authoritarianism and benevolence. The image of Sarit “remains a controversial prototype by which political leaders are measured” (ibid, p. xxviii). The characteristic of Sarit Thanarat is also found in Major General Chamlong Srimuang, the popular ex-Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Governor. The study by Duncan McCargo (1993) of Chamlong Srimuang’s life suggests that Chamlong could be regarded as a strong and benevolent leader (ibid, p. 14), the recreation of earlier leaders like Sarit Thanarat.

Yot Santasombat (1992) studies some twenty Thai political leaders from 1957 – 1982 and summarises the general personal attributes of Thai leaders including being high achievers, highly motivated, competent and competitive, as well as hard-working, caring, visionary, risk-taking, and willing to compromise (ibid, p. 215-222). For

² According to *The Nation*’s the list of Thai prime minister (http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2007/07/01/politics/politics_30038670.php) Accessed 27 April 2009.

Callahan and McCargo (1996), to be elected as MPs, candidates should possess appropriate *bukalik* (personal characteristics) such as being attractive looking, well-spoken, or well-educated, or have a respectable appearance.

Recently, public opinion polls are becoming increasingly popular, and play a significant role in contemporary Thai politics. Research centres affiliated with universities constantly study the opinions of the public on social, political and/or economic matters. These studies can be intensified during election campaigns. The attributes of leaders or candidates used in their surveys include decisive, hard-working, knowledgeable, able to get things done quickly, visionary, honest, moral, unselfish, gentle, calm, experienced, and with a good family background (ABAC Poll Research Center 2006a, 2006b, Research Institute of Bangkok University, 2006a, Suan Dusit Poll 2007).

In Thailand, before the 2006 general election, personal characteristics or quality traits of political actors, leaders in particular, became a central issue when comparing the potential leaders of the two major political parties. Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Democrat leader (the main rival of the TRT) was accused of lacking experience for office (Chaitrakulchai 2005). Being experienced, or being perceived as an experienced person in either the political or the business world, appears to be one of the most important qualities of a potential leader in modern Thai politics which voters take into consideration when making their voting decisions.

- ***Type of Leader in relation to Personal Attributes***

The attributes of a leader can additionally be segregated from another perspective, namely the type of leader. Ockey (1996, 2004) provides cultural relevant typologies for the personalities of Thai leaders. He divides past Thai prime ministers into three categories on the basis of Thai legitimacy, namely *nakleng*-style, *phudi*-style, and new *nakleng*-style characteristics.

Nakleng, according to Chaloeontiarana (1979, p. 338-4), is a type of traditional Thai leader who is tough, charismatic, and most importantly, loyal to friends. *Nakleng* are often on the wrong side of the law, or perhaps above the law. *Nakleng*-style

characteristics were closely associated with manliness and ‘*decha*’ or power, and mostly found in prime ministers, particularly those from the military, prior to the 1970s (Ockey 2004, p. 8).

Phudi (literally ‘a good person’) in contrast, is associated with femininity and ‘*khunna*’ (moral goodness). *Phudi*-style prime ministers are skilful in compromising or acting as mediators (ibid, p. 8) and seek to address the concerns of all interest groups in a calm and deliberative style. They are expected to be incorruptible and calm. Being calm however is sometimes perceived as being aloof or indecisive. *Phudi*-style leaders have been successful in parliamentary regimes, mostly the post 1970s period. Chuan Leekpai (Thailand’s 20th PM) and the current PM Abhisit Vejjajiva can be called as *Phudi*-style leader.

The rise of rural network politicians in late 1980s (Nogsuan Sawasdee 2006, p. 29-33) brought about the emergence of new *nakleng*-style leaders (Ockey 2004, p. 16-19), such as Banharn Silpa-archa³. The new *nakleng* combines the traits of both old style *nakleng* and *phudi* (Ockey 1996, p. 353). The leaders who conform to this style are loyal to their people as was the case with the old *nakleng* leader; but at the same time they also share the benevolence of the *phudi*. Moreover, they are generous to followers, and willing to listen and compromise. Thaksin Shinawatra⁴ can also be classified as a new *nakleng*-style leader (Ockey 2004). However, Thaksin is another level of new *nakleng*-style as Ockey (1996, p. 360) predicts that the new *nakleng* will continually evolve by institutionalising generosity or preferential allocations of government budgets, and by portraying themselves as entrepreneurs rather than as *nakleng*.

However, as he also admits, Ockey’s categories of the leader describe “roughly” (Ockey 1996, p. 350) the leadership styles of the majority of Thai PMs. Furthermore, when considering Thaksin as a new *nakleng* leader, the qualities of new *nakleng* should be regarded as those of an effective CEO who is decisive, and able to control the new style party which is under the domination of the business conglomerate

³ Thailand’s 21st Prime Minister (13 July 1995 - 1 December 1996). Source: http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2007/07/01/politics/politics_30038670.php (Accessed 27 April 2009)

⁴ Thailand’s 23rd Prime Minister (ibid).

(Nogsuan Sawasdee 2006, p. 33-36) in contemporary politics. Moreover, the development of media technology, such as satellite TV or the Internet, and globalisation, allow new generation voters to learn about the leaders of established democracies, such as those in the United States or UK, and expect their leaders to be similar. Therefore, Chatratichart (2010) argues that leaders for the next generation, both new *nakleng* and *phudi*-style, have to adapt to these changes and are likely to possess personal attributes similar to world's leaders as seen from Chareonwongsak's (1996) lists of the ideal leader for the twenty-first century.

For the aforementioned reason, the types of leader proposed by Western scholars are therefore worthy of some discussion. Little (1985, 1988) thoroughly explores the relationship between leaders and followers in order to locate types of leaders in relation to types of followers. According to Little (1985), leaders can be categorised into three types, namely Strong, Group, and Inspiring leaders.

Little's types of leadership concept rests on the notion of the self/other dilemma. He delineates three types of relationships between the self and the other, namely self v. other, self-in-other, and self-and-other. These are termed by Little (ibid) as 'projects'. Each project is a way in which a person attempts to resolve the tension between the self (as an individual) and the other (to establish a connection with other people as people). This can provide a broad idea of the character or personality of a person, and it also influences a person's social and political arrangements.

In addition, Little (ibid) introduces three ensembles, or social aggregates, which match the individual projects, and these are Structure, Group and Ensemble. He further links the projects and ensembles with the three types of leader; Strong, Group and Inspiring. A brief description of each is given in the following paragraphs.

A *Strong* leader, as stated by Little (ibid), is a person who favours individual contest, progress and propriety, stimulates enterprise, gets thing done, and supports social control. The *strong* leader fits well in a society of the 'Structure' type, whose members hold 'self v. other' projects. These individuals are likely to be proud of themselves and their independence and, at the same time, look for organised social relationships, as well as having a preference for competition and control. They respect

individuals' privacy and rely upon formal rewards and sanctions. A *strong* leader, according to Little (ibid), is in demand when a society is irresolute, lacks will, fails to achieve aims, and vacillates. The relationship between a *strong* leader and his followers will depend on a high degree of social control and individuals conforming to their assigned roles. This relationship is formal and does not allow for an intimate or informal exchange.

Secondly, Little (ibid) defines a *Group* leader as a person who is eager not to dominate, always ready to listen, befriends the needy and champions the weak. He or she leads informally by consultation and through other people. For a Group leader, getting things done is not as important as that all are taken care of. Among individuals who hold 'self-in-other' projects in for example, 'Group' ensembles, the Group leader is the best type of leader. Those with self-in-other projects believe in solidarity, are against inflexible authority, and believe that life is about giving and receiving, not buying and selling. The relationship between leader and followers relies on solidarity and sentimental ties. Followers will love this leader and demand that he or she be loyal. The problem of the *group* leader lies in the exercise of power - how to act powerfully, while remaining identified with powerlessness. Therefore, the *group* leader has doubts, and he or she may hesitate and may avoid definite action. There is no way for him or her to overcome this dilemma.

An *Inspiring* leader, according to Little (ibid), is the type of leader who combines the good qualities of the other two (purposefulness and consultation) in one. The most critical job for the *inspiring* leader is to communicate his own gifts and ideas, and demonstrate that he is capable of receiving the talents and ideas of those who have them to give. The *inspiring* leader does not lean heavily on organisational control, or impose a form of solidarity. This type of leader suits the 'Ensemble' of individuals who hold 'self-and-other' projects. Such people believe that mutuality is greater than the 'group' ensemble's solidarity and that the will to achieve is more radical than the 'structure' ensemble's success-within-the-rule. The relationship between leader and followers is based upon admiration. The leader gives followers the confidence in themselves and encourages them to base their claim to success on their own excellence. However, the *inspiring* leader relies so much on communication that he or

she may run the danger of nothing happening outside the symbolic, the imaginary and the wishful.

Little (1988) investigates whether or not strong leadership is the answer to political and social needs, exploring in-depth the personal lives and work of two significant prime minister, Thatcher and Fraser, and President Reagan. He highlights the inherent problems of strong leadership. Nonetheless, Little (ibid) cannot clearly point out whether strong leadership has benefits or costs for society. The reasons for this are attributed to the difficulty of judging, valuing, and balancing the personality of a strong leader and, sometimes, insufficient evidence. Little (ibid) acknowledges that different types of leadership (Strong, Group, and Inspiring) have their days. The climate that each reflects and propagates is different, becomes persuasive, and tends to suppress the others.

Thai Leader for the New Generation: Empirical Findings

- ***Research***

The finding discussed in this article is based on a PhD thesis in the topic of “Attitudes towards Political Leaders amongst Young People in Thailand and their Influence on Electoral Choices”. The research adopted the mixed methods strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, for data collection and analysis. The project started with an Online or Internet survey, executed between December 2005 and February 2006 with young people aged 16-20. It generated 113 valid cases for analysis. A self-completion questionnaire was later carried out between December 2006 and January 2007. The 7-page questionnaire, with 31 questions, was distributed to 1,080 young people via designated educational institutions across Bangkok. In total, 1,040 questionnaires were returned, but only 797 sets were valid (95.22% response rate). The project was followed by 8 focus groups, executed between February and March 2007. Forty-six participants from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, level and type of education, and zone of residence joined the discussions.

Data from the questionnaires and online surveys, together with focus group discussions, were triangulated and complimented each other in the analysis and discussion stages. Data from three different methods was integrated in order to obtain

in-depth understanding of young people and their attitudes towards Thai political leaders.

- *Ideal Leader and Changes over Time*

Thai young people's perceptions of their ideal leader has changed when compared the results of two surveys carried out in different timeframes – one in late 2005 during Thaksin Shinawatra's regime and the other in late 2006 after the September 2006 coup d'état and the downfall of Thaksin Shinawatra.

The survey launched in late 2006 found that young Thai people of Generation Y were seeking a leader with personal integrity (+83.6%), decisiveness (+71.0%), responsiveness (+58.6%), who was well-informed (+54.7%), has the ability to get things done (+45.7%), was a visionary (+42.3%), and able to be trusted to run the country (+39.0%), as seen in Figure 1. These were the top seven traits⁵ of the ideal country leader, or prime minister, which young people would vote for in an ideal world.

From these top seven traits, it can be seen that Thai youth require their leader to have a particular mix of qualities. He or she must be competent, but reliable and of high integrity.

Chatratchart (2010, p. 151) contends that the demand for an honest leader is the result of people's disappointment with Thaksin Shinawatra's conduct and his downfall. In fact, it is widely known that many of the past Thai leaders were corrupt and dishonest, and so Thai people are generally bored with politics. They had been waiting a long time for an honest leader, and with the arrival of Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001, it seemed that their hopes for a moral leader had been fulfilled; Thaksin Shinawatra once assured the Thai public not to worry about corruption under his government because he was so rich (Head 2007). However, things did not turn out that way. After his downfall, many Thai people were sceptical about Thaksin's honesty. Therefore, the call for an honest, or moral, leader was escalating, and this had become the top

⁵ The figures shown in blankets are the differences of the percentages of the most important and the least important traits in the opinions of the respondents.

characteristic in the list of traits of an ideal leader. As one of the respondents from the group discussions commented, “a leader with capability but no, or less, integrity could harm the country in the same way that Thaksin Shinawatra had done”. They were afraid that leaders may take advantage of their position or use their power for their own interests. One respondent expressed his view thus:

A capable person may be good for the country in terms of development, but the more he works, the more he earns for himself [from corruption]. (M1, secondary school, 17, youth network)

The higher level of education of the Thai people is also attributed to the increase in the significance of a moral, or honest, leader (Chareonwongsak 1996, p. 91). The expansion of compulsory education allows Thai people, especially the new generation, to be more highly and better educated. They thus are likely to demand a more ethical, or honest, leader. However, this demand may be found only in small groups of educated people. The general public, especially those in rural areas, are less well-educated, and are likely to hold the old values of respecting people for their power and/or wealth, not their honesty or goodness. Chatratchart (2010, p. 152) argues promoting the concept of an honest leader in Thai politics may take time. Yet, as new generations replace the old ones, it is eventually possible to see a rise in the demand for an honest, or moral, leader in the future.

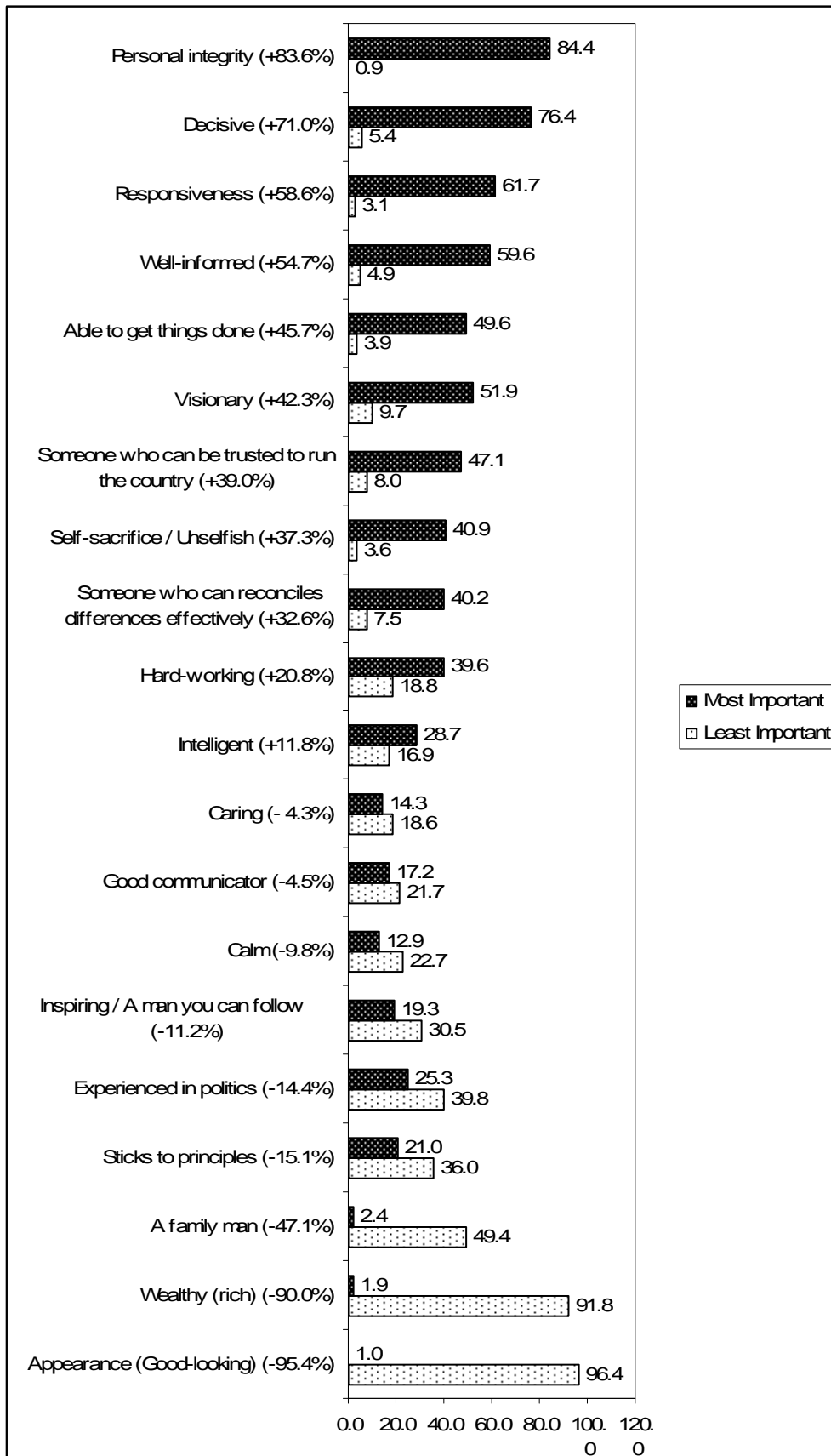


Figure 1: Traits of the Ideal Leader

Source: Waraporn Chatratichart (2010)

Being competent, including well-informed, visionary, and able to get things done, is essential for the leader of the next generation (Chatratichart 2010). The world is changing and becoming a global village due to the advance of information technology. Also, the country needs to be developed economically. Therefore, the new generation of leaders have to open themselves to new things, or keep one step ahead of the development of technology. Furthermore, under the current world economy, no country can develop alone. It has to work with the international community to negotiate power with other groups. To put it shortly, it has to be a person whom voters can trust to run the country and its economy (ibid). One of the respondents from the group discussion provided her explanation, as follows:

In the past, it may have been fine for someone with high integrity, but only a moderate capability to govern or lead the country. But at present, the world has changed. It is very competitive among the international community in terms of trade. It will be good if the country is advance developed. If we consider the leader on integrity, but he isn't competent to develop the country, it is useless.
(F2, secondary school, 16)

The qualities of the ideal leader found in Chatratichart's study (ibid) are similar to those on Chareonwongsak's (1996) list. For Chareonwongsak (ibid), a competent leader is required because the country has to compete at an international level and needs to be developed economically. Therefore, the leader has to be well-informed, visionary, decisive, and intelligent. On the other hand, the leader has to be self-sacrificing, moral or ethical (honest), articulate, and flexible. However, the difference is shown in terms of the priority of the qualities. According to Chareonwongsak's (ibid) list of the ten most favourable qualities of a leader for the next two decades (1996-2016), competence ranks in first place. Chareonwongsak does not specify that the qualities have been ranked in a particular order, but since competence is mentioned first, it can be implied that this is the most necessary and important trait in a changing world. Honesty is in seventh place on the list.

When segregating these seven important qualities into the dimensions proposed by Miller *et al.* (1986), competence is the most important dimension for the ideal leader, followed by the reliability dimension (Table 1). Furthermore, these two dimensions

play significant roles in the views of young people across genders, voter groups, and levels of political interest (Chatratichart 2010).

Table 1: Dimensions of the Most Important Qualities of the Ideal Leader

Competence	Integrity	Reliability	Charisma	Personal
well-informed (4)	sticks to principle	Decisive (2)	someone who can reconcile differences effectively	appearance
experienced in politics	personal integrity (1)	hard-working	good communicator	a family man
able to get things done (5)		someone who can be trusted to run the country (7)	caring	wealthy
intelligent		self-sacrifice	inspiring	
Visionary (6)			calm	
			Responsiveness (3)	

Source: Chatratichart (2010, p. 155)

In terms of the least important traits of the ideal leader, young people consider that their ideal leader did not need to be good-looking (-95.4%), wealthy (-90.0%), a family man (-47.1%), principled (-15.1%) or experienced in politics (-14.4%) (Chatratichart 2010). These were the five least important traits for being a country's leader. It can be said that the 'personal' dimension, according to the categories of Miller *et al.* (1986), was less influential to young people's voting decisions. The findings support the study of Kinder *et al.* (1980) demonstrating that personal assets do not have any benefit for competing candidates.

Further, the study (Chatratichart 2010) shows that some of the young people of Generation Y did not consider that their ideal leader had to stick to his principles.⁶ It is possible that these people imply that being principled means rigid or inflexible.

⁶ The word 'principle' was translated as 'rules or regulations'. Stick to principle therefore was translated as 'stick to the rules, regulations, or ideology'.

They may prefer a leader who is flexible or open to change. In special circumstances, or during a crisis, a leader sometimes has to be flexible with regulations or rules in order to resolve problems (ibid). A leader who sticks firmly to his principles may do no good to the country. For example, during the Tsunami crisis in Thailand (December 2004), Thaksin Shinawatra and his government bypassed the bureaucratic procedures in order to instantly help the Tsunami victims. If he had stuck to the rules or regulations, several aid relief projects would have been delayed.

In addition, being experienced in politics was also less important, since some young people in the focus groups viewed experience in business organisations as being more essential because, according to them, the economy is the key element in developing the country. Therefore, experience in politics is not required as long as the leader is experienced in business (ibid).

To see the change in the perceptions of young people of the traits of the ideal leader, the findings from the Internet surveys carried out in early 2006 are compared. Further, those findings help to understand the perceptions of young people before the September 2006 coup d'état. Although there was no direct question about the traits of the ideal leader asked in the Online surveys, the answer could be implied from the perceptions of two particular leaders, Thaksin Shinawatra and Abhisit Vejjajiva, to understand the characteristics of the leader they wanted.

In the Online surveys, young people were asked their perceptions of both leaders and generally, the majority of respondents felt, or would feel, self-confident and optimistic with either of the leaders governing the country. However, they were dissatisfied, less patriotic, and had a lower level of relief and involvement with Thaksin Shinawatra as prime minister whereas they would feel the opposite if Abhisit Vejjajiva was the prime minister (See Table 1 in Appendix for details).

The negative feelings towards Thaksin Shinawatra were confirmed when respondents were asked to score their general feelings about each leader in the 5-point scale. Generally Thai youth 'fairly' liked both leaders. Thaksin Shinawatra's mean score was 2.70 whereas Abhisit Vejjajiva's was 3.15, suggesting that Abhisit Vejjajiva was more likeable than, or preferable to, Thaksin Shinawatra.

In terms of the personal characteristics of both leaders, these were similarly perceived by the majority of respondents in most cases. Both leaders were recognised as people who are able to get things done, intelligent, family men, and predictable. However, the other personal characteristics were polarised between these two leaders. Thaksin Shinawatra was seen as a person who is capable of strong leadership and experience, whereas Abhisit Vejjajiva was perceived as being the weaker in these two characters (See Table 2 in Appendix for details).

On the other hand, in terms of moral and ethical traits, Abhisit Vejjajiva had more positive characteristics, such as trustworthy, honest, and compassionate. He was also seen as being non-arrogant and responsive to others' arguments, compared to Thaksin Shinawatra, who was lacking in these personal characteristics, according to Thai youth.

In short, in late 2005 during Thaksin's regime, Abhisit Vejjajiva was perceived more positively than Thaksin Shinawatra, although he may have a weaker capacity for strong leadership and experience of politics.

Nonetheless, the conflict was illustrated in the choice of the best prime minister. Thaksin Shinawatra was chosen as the person who would make the best PM for the next few years, across genders, ages, as well as the levels of political interest and knowledge. Even though young people were not satisfied and relieved that Thaksin Shinawatra was the PM, and perceived him as a person who was dishonest, arrogant, not responsive to others' reasoning, and unable to be trusted, they preferred him over Abhisit Vejjajiva, who was seen as being more likeable than Thaksin Shinawatra.

The group discussions in early 2007 endorsed these findings. When asking young people to recall their perception of the qualities of the ideal leader during the past few years, all of them, across genders, ages, levels and types of education, mentioned qualities in the competence dimension. They looked for a leader who is visionary, progressive and intelligent. Many of them clearly indicated that they would like to have a leader who is business-minded and competent in economics, due to the downturn of Thailand's economy.

However, a very small number of respondents mentioned personal integrity. Ironically, a few, mainly from a vocational college, TRT's loyalists, directly answered that they were looking for a leader who has similar qualities to Thaksin Shinawatra. Their explanations include:

Thaksin Shinawatra gave a good performance. He kept his promises. He did what he said he would do. All [projects or works] he did were successful such as scholarships for the students or the Ua-ar thorn housing [project for the poor]. He helped the poor, helped in everything. His works showed that he helped the people. (F2, vocational college, 17)

It is because he is decisive and intelligent. And there were so many scholarships from his government. (M1, vocational college, 18)

[A leader who is] similar to Thaksin Shinawatra [is my ideal leader]. He is articulate and friendly. (F1, vocational college, 17)

From the results of the Internet surveys, Chatraticart (2010) concludes that, before the 2006 September coup, young people preferred a strong and decisive leader with a high competency in economics. Most of the qualities described by the respondents were perceived to be the qualities of Thaksin Shinawatra, the then PM. Due to his outstanding performance as a PM and his dominance in the media, Thaksin Shinawatra had, to some extent, influenced young people's perception of their ideal leader. On the other hand, qualities relating to integrity (for example honesty, high morals) and reliability (such as self-sacrifice) were less important at that time in their opinion. The findings affirm that an incumbent leader can influence the public's thoughts about the attributes of their ideal leader (Kinder *et al.* 1980).

Several polls launched in 2006 confirmed the above findings. Thaksin Shinawatra remained the most popular choice for the premiership among voters in Bangkok, when compared to other politicians, particularly Abhisit Vejjajiva (ABAC Poll Research Center 2006c, d, e, Research Institute of Bangkok University 2006b). In addition, Thaksin Shinawatra topped the list when respondents were asked which

politician was the best role model in terms of ability. In terms of integrity and ethics, Thaksin Shinawatra came second, but with only 11% of the voters, after Privy Council President Prem Tinsulanonda, the Ex-prime minister. It is worth noting that Abhisit Vejjajiva was not listed in the top five as a role model in either category (ABAC Poll Research Center 2006f).

However, the findings from the questionnaires and focus groups in late 2006/early 2007 suggest changes in the perception of young people of their ideal leader. “Honesty”, “High integrity”, and “High morality” were the top three answers when respondents described the qualities of their ideal leader. They perceived that honesty and integrity were the most important qualities of a prime minister, especially after Thaksin’s regime. The discussions also revealed that the three most mentioned traits of the ideal leader, namely personal integrity, unselfishness, and responsiveness, reflected the influence of Thaksin Shinawatra’s character and behaviour on young people’s perception (Chatratchart 2010). Whenever one of those traits was mentioned, the respondents always related it to Thaksin Shinawatra. For example:

Unselfishness:

It is reported in the media that the [then] PM [Thaksin Shinawatra] considers the benefits of his allies to be higher than those of citizens. I don’t like that. That’s why the new leader must sacrifice himself to work for the country. (F1, secondary school, 16)

Responsiveness:

The PM must respect people’s decisions, both the majority and the minority of society. In the past, we have experienced a PM who responded only to the supporters of his party. The people who didn’t vote for him or his party received limited benefits or welfare, or maybe didn’t receive any at all. It is very unfair to treat citizens in the same country differently. We all are Thai people and citizens of this country. So, we have the right to be treated fairly by the leader. (M1, public university, 20, youth network)

The call for an ethical leader was also evident from several sources, such as the Research Institute of Bangkok University (2006a, 2007), or Post Today's editorial (Editorial 2006).

Furthermore, the choice of who would make the best PM had changed. Gen Surayud Chulanont, the then interim PM, was perceived to be the best PM for the next few years by the largest group of respondents (24.8%). Gen Surayud Chulanont's strength was his personal integrity with +59%, the highest score amongst the others. He was also top of the list when comparing his score with the seven most important traits of the ideal leader (Table 3 in Appendix).

The change in people's values is also commented on by Amornwit Nakhonthap, director of the Ramjitti Institute. According to Nakhonthap (The Nation 2006), in the past, young people accepted minor cheating by the country's leaders if those leaders were competent. However, they prefer honesty over ability after they doubted Thaksin's morals.

Chatratchart (2010, p. 161) suggests that the changes in the perception of the ideal leader also reflect the demand for a leader to match the country's situation. In the past, young people looked for a leader who was capable and competent to develop the country economically due to the downturn of the country's economy. However, because of the political crisis, and the downfall of Thaksin Shinawatra, their viewpoints had shifted. They required a leader who is honest, unselfish and can reconcile the country. The qualities of the ideal leader had, therefore, changed in accordance with the country's situation.

The results of two studies in late 2005 and late 2006 illustrate the changes in young people's perception of their ideal leader to some extent. The major change is in the significant role of personal integrity. After Thaksin's downfall, young people had become more concerned with this trait than in the past. However, the perceived qualities of competence and strong leadership remained important influencing factors, since they looked for a leader who has the combined qualities of three types of leader. Chatratchart (2010, p. 161) contends that Thaksin Shinawatra is likely to be used as the 'brand PM', or benchmark, to measure other leaders against his qualities. In other

words, young people look for an ‘ethical Thaksin’ to be their leader. The name of Thaksin Shinawatra will stay in the Thai political arena for the foreseeable future.

Hybrid Leader: Leader for Generation Y?

The top seven most important traits of the ideal leader suggest that young Thai people generally do not have a preference for the particular type of leader proposed by Little (1985). They prefer a leader who is a combination of Strong, Group, and Inspiring leader (Table 2). It can therefore be said that Thai young people of Generation Y would prefer a ‘hybrid’ leader who is well-rounded in all aspects (Chatratichart 2010).

Table 2: Type of Leader as the Ideal Leader

Strong	Group	Inspiring
decisive (+71%) hard-working able to get things done (+45.7%) sticks to principle ruthless	caring personal integrity (+83.6%) self-sacrifice responsiveness (+58.6%)	well-informed (+54.7%) visionary (+42.3%) inspiring good communicator

The demand for a hybrid leader was also revealed in most of the focus group sessions. They described their ideal leader as having two distinct qualities, namely “*able to compromise, but decisive*” (M1, private university, 20), “*honest, but decisive*” (F1, private university, 19 / F4, secondary school, 18 / M1, vocational college, 18), “*honest and competent*” (F1, public university, 20 / M1, secondary school, 18, youth network). For example, one respondent clarified:

My ideal leader is a person who is both competent and moral. He is capable of administering all 20 ministers. But he has to do it with good governance, including transparency, self-sacrifice, and honesty. (M1, secondary school, 18, youth network)

Chatratichart (2010, p. 184) points out that the traits of the ‘hybrid’ leader are a combination of the qualities which Thaksin Shinawatra both possesses and does not possess. Young people looked for a leader who is moral and responsive, and these two qualities are certainly not associated with Thaksin Shinawatra. However, they still

wanted their leader to be decisive, able to get things done, well-informed and visionary, and all of these characteristics can be found in Thaksin Shinawatra. This confirms that Thaksin Shinawatra is used as a benchmark to evaluate new leaders, or to measure other leaders against his qualities. As mentioned earlier, young people will look for an 'ethical Thaksin' to be their leader.

The significance of a 'hybrid' leader is also confirmed from the survey's findings when the respondents were asked to name another person they wanted to see as Thailand's PM. Considering the qualities of the top five persons, the findings endorse a hybrid leader type (Table 3 in Appendix).⁷ More importantly, the quality of personal integrity is found in all of the nominees.

Furthermore, the demand for a hybrid leader is supported by a poll conducted by the Bangkok University (2007), suggesting that young people aged 15-25 wanted their politicians to be honest, competent, and decisive, with 49.5%, 28.1%, and 9.7% respectively.

Although personal integrity was essential and ranked in the first place of the ideal leader's traits, the qualities in the dimension of 'competence' (Miller *et al.* 1986) remained significant. Young people would prefer a leader who is both honest and competent. Many respondents from the focus groups suggested that the economy is the prime and major element to develop the country. Therefore, the leader must be a person who is experienced and well-informed in economic and business related issues. At the same time, he must be honest and trustworthy, since they had learned their lesson from Thaksin Shinawatra who was highly competent, but lacked integrity, or possesses less of it.

The central role of personal integrity emerged with Thaksin Shinawatra's political crisis (Chatratchart 2010, p. 186). However, it was intensified after the coup d'état on September 19th, 2006, when Thaksin Shinawatra was ousted from office with accusations of corruption. The coup d'état and the investigation of projects and work

⁷ The results demonstrate that there would not be any difference on the findings of the type of leader or the qualities of the ideal leader if the researcher used the different lists of leader in her empirical focus of the study.

done by the Thaksin government reported in the media during the data collection period (late 2006/early 2007) were likely to have influenced the opinions of the respondents of the qualities of the ideal leader. The Council of National Security appointed Gen Surayud Chulanont to be the Interim Prime Minister. He was highly regarded and widely accepted in terms of his integrity, but he was accused by the public of being indecisive and having made no tangible achievements, which was reflected in the group discussions, and in several other polls. Therefore, young people observed that the country could not be developed under the administration of a leader who is only honest, but not very competent (F3, secondary school, 16).

A competent leader suggests that a Strong leader is significant, or in favour, even if young people are looking for a hybrid leader. The importance of a Strong leader embedded in Thai politics can be explained by the historical perspective, as Chatratchart (2010, p. 112-4) points out. Firstly, the absolute monarchy and the *Nai-Prai* relationship⁸ of the past influenced Thai people to be weak followers, and although the country has changed into a democratic polity⁹, the current king, King Rama IX, is still considered to be the country's leader in a way. Thai people respect and listen to him. They believe what the King says, and are willing to follow his word. Thai people therefore completely accept the power of the King (or leader).

Moreover, Thailand was ruled under military dictatorships for a few decades after the revolution. The country was liberal with elections in the 1980s, but it was still governed by military rulers, and more recently, a civilian leader, Thaksin Shinawatra, who has a strong personality posing as "Thailand's Chief Executive Officer (CEO)" (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005). The strong leader, coupled with the weak multi-party coalitions of the past, influence Thai people's preference for a decisive or authoritative leader on whom they can rely and in whose hands they can safely leave the country.

⁸ under the *Sakdina* (or feudal) system, every freeman had to be registered as a servant, or *phrai*, of the local lord, or *nai*, for military service and labouring on public works and on the land of the official to whom he was assigned. The *nai* had control over the lives and families of the *phrai*.

⁹ Thailand is regarded as a democratic polity, in theory, due to its political system after the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932. However, it should be noted that the country has not fully been democratic for the entire 77 year period. The development of the country's democracy has been interrupted by several coups and military dictatorship periods during which western-style democratic institutions, such as parliaments or political parties, were eliminated. Therefore, in the post 1932 period, Thailand should generally be characterised as 'semi-democratic'.

As weak followers, or bound by ‘authoritarian submission’ (Adorno *et al.* 1982), Thai people accept the power of the leader. They view themselves as being in a lower position, under the leader’s command, so they do not think or initiate anything, but wait for the leader’s orders. Therefore, they look for a decisive leader to tell them what or what not to do (ibid). An authoritarian leader is the person they are searching for.

The formation of the party is also another factor which contributes to the importance of a Strong leader (Chatratichart 2010). According to Werat Kaewklam (1981), political parties in the past were set up to support particular leaders who were strong and outstanding, not formed from the ideologies of members. Recently, the formation of the TRT also proved this contention. The party was set up for the convenience of Thaksin Shinawatra, the leader and founder, to advance his political career. It therefore confirmed that a leader (or an individual person) plays a more important role in Thai politics than ideologies.

The demand for a ‘hybrid’ leader amongst young Thai people of Generation Y suggests that Little’s (1985) leadership concept cannot directly be applied to Thai politics in the current situation. Today’s Thai youth require, or look for, a leader who can offer them every aspect. Yet, the question is whether this is only a short-term effect brought about by the aftermath of the coup d’état. Thai people in general tend to prefer a Strong leader. As found from the empirical studies, the competency of the leader to run the country, particularly in economic terms, is vital in the opinion of the new generation voters. It is likely that a Strong leader can return to play a vital role in the Thai leadership concept when the circumstances of the country are back to normal.

Nonetheless, Chatratichart (2010) argues that a hybrid leader can be an emerging trend used by the new generation in searching for their new leader. The leader of the next generation cannot clearly be differentiated as being Strong, Group, and Inspiring, as suggested by Little (ibid), or being new *nakleng*- or *Phudi*-styles, as proposed by Ockey (2004). The leader should possess a well-rounded character in order to lead a changing society. Further, Thai leader can no longer adopt traditional typologies or

characteristics in this global village. Young people see and learn from the West through the media. Therefore, they expect their leader to share similar characteristics with the western leaders in order to be the representation they can be proud in the world stage.

What's Next?

The studies revealed the significant role of personal integrity for the leader of the new generation. However, Chatratchart (ibid, p. 161) asks three interesting questions as follows:

- Will the significance of the personal integrity of the ideal leader last?
- Will this just be a short-term effect?
- Will young people consider it less important when the country is back to normal?

Therefore, follow-up studies will be beneficial. They will further help build up longitudinal data for future research in the area of political leader.

Moreover, due to the globalisation and the development of media technology, young Thai people and youth across the globe can possibly share the similar concept of leader and political psychology. Further, the leaders themselves can have political personality culture in common such as Thaksin Shinawatra and Berlusconi of Italy. Therefore, the comparative studies will be beneficial to expand the understanding of voter perceptions toward leaders at the international level.

Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings, this article illustrates the shift in traits required for the ideal leader. After the downfall of Thaksin Shinawatra and the September 2006 coup d'état, the personal integrity of a leader became more important from the perspective of young people. However, competency remained significant because, as they say, the country needs to be developed economically. Therefore, young people seek a 'hybrid' leader who is both honest and competent, a so-called 'ethical Thaksin' to be their PM. Although it may be difficult for Thaksin Shinawatra to return to politics, his qualities will be used as a benchmark by which to judge future candidates.

The name of Thaksin Shinawatra will remain in the Thai political arena for the foreseeable future.

The Western-style leader can influence the perception of Thai young people on their leader due to the development of media technology, such as satellite TV or the Internet, and globalisation which allow new generation voters to learn about the leaders of established democracies, such as those in the United States or UK. Thus, they will expect their leaders to be similar. The leader for the new generation, either 'hybrid' leader or new *nakleng*-style leader, have to adapt to these changes and are likely to possess personal attributes similar to world's leaders.

Reference

- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006a. *Kwam Kid Cheong Pramuenpol Khong Prachachon Tor Sangkom Thai Lae Khunnalaksana Khong Nayok Rattamontri Khon Mai Tee Prachachon Tong Karn (The evaluation of the public towards Thai society and characteristics of new Prime Minister)* [online]: Abac Poll Research Center. Available from: http://168.120.31.165/webbase/2549/ABAC_POLL_Survey_on_New_Prime_Minister_s_Characteristics.pdf [Thai] [Accessed 4 October 2006].
- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006b. *A-rom, Kwamroosuek Buengtong Khong Sataranachon Tor Pol Eak Surayud Chulanont Preaptheapkab Thaksin Lae Phapluck Khong Sapanitibanyathaengchat (Emotion and first impression of the public towards Gen Surayudh Chulanonda with comparison to Thaksin, and image of the legislative council)* [online]: ABAC Poll Research Center. Available from: http://168.120.31.165/ipoll/2549/Abac_Poll_Result_Situation_28102006_the_Government_and_Legislative_Council.pdf [Thai] [Accessed 30 October 2006].
- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006c. *Kwam Klean Wai Khong Sonthi Limthongkul Nai Sai Tar Prachachon (The movement of Sonthi Limthongkul in the opinions of the public)*. Bangkok: ABAC Poll Research Center [Thai].
- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006d. *Pholdee Pholsae Khong Karn Yoop Phakkarnmuangyai Nai Saitar Khong Sataranachon (Benefits and Costs on Dissolution of Two Major Parties in the Opinions of Public)* [online]: ABAC Poll Research Center. Available from: http://168.120.31.165/webbase/2549/ABAC_POLL_TRT_DEMO_dissolution.pdf [Thai] [Accessed 29 June 2006].
- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006e. *Prachachon Kid Yangrai Mue Pol. Lt. Col. Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra Klabma (Public's opinions of Thaksin Shinawatra's return)* [online]: ABAC Poll Research Center. Available from: http://168.120.31.165/webbase/2549/ABAC_POLL_Thaksin_Return_May_23.pdf [Thai] [Accessed 4 May 2006].
- ABAC POLL RESEARCH CENTER, 2006f. *Kanmuang Thai Nai Saitar Khong Sataranachon (Public Opinion on Thai Politics)* [online]: ABAC Poll

- Research Center. Available from:
http://168.120.31.165/webbase/2549/ABAC_POLL_political_situation.pdf
 [Thai] [Accessed 26 June 2006].
- ADORNO, T. W., FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK, E., LEVINSON, D. J. AND SANFORD, R. N., 1982. *The Authoritarian Personality (Abridged Edition)*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- BEAN, C. AND MUGHAN, A., 1989. Leadership Effects in Parliamentary Elections in Australia and Britain. *American Political Science Review*, 83, (4) 1165-1179.
- BROMLEY, D. B., 1993. *Reputation, Image and Impression Management*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- CALLAHAN, W. A. AND MCCARGO, D., 1996. Vote-Buying in Thailand's Northeast: The July 1995 General Election *Asian Survey*, 36, (4) 376-392.
- CHAITRAKULCHAI, T., 2005. Jak Pak Abhisit Vejjajiva Kam Tor Kam (Words by Words from Abhisit Vejjajiva). *Thaicoon*, 2, (June) 56-61 [Thai].
- CHALOEMTIARANA, T., 1979. *Thailand: The Politics of Despotism Paternalism* Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
- CHAREONWONGSAK, K., 1996. *Anakod Phoonam Karnmuangthai Nai Song Tossawad Nar (The Future of Thai Political Leader in the Next Two Decades)*. Bangkok: Success Media [Thai].
- CHATRATICHART, W., 2010. *Attitude towards Political Leaders amongst Young People in Thailand and their Influence on Electoral Choices*. A Thesis Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Requirements of Bournemouth University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Bournemouth: Bournemouth University.
- DHIRAVEGIN, L., 1989. The Attributes of Thai Leaders. *Thailand Business*, 12 (Sep-Oct), 35-36.
- EDITORIAL, 2006. Ethics, honesty in new PM vital. *Bangkok Post* [online], 26 September 2006, Available from:
http://bangkokpost.com/News/26Sep2006_news22.php [Accessed 26 September 2006].
- FOLEY, M., 2002. *John Major, Tony Blair and a Conflict of Leadership: Collision Course* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- HEAD, J., 2007. A Fit and Proper Premiership? *BBC* [online], 31 July 2007, Available from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/teams/m/man_city/6922650.stm
 [Accessed 5 December 2009].
- IND, N., 1997. *Corporate Brand*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- KAEWKLAM, W. 1981. *Phakkarnmuang Kub Karn Sarng Phoonam Tang Karnmuang (Political Parties and Political Recruitment)*. Thesis (Master). Chulalongkorn University [Thai].
- KINDER, D. R., PETERS, M. D., ABELSON, R. P. AND FISKE, S. T., 1980. Presidential Prototype. *Political Behavior*, 4, 315-337.
- KING, A., 2005. Do Leaders' Personalities Really Matter? In: A. KING, ed. *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcome of Democratic Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1-43.
- LITTLE, G., 1985. *Political Ensembles: A Psychosocial Approach to Politics and Leadership*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- LITTLE, G., 1988. *Strong Leadership: Thatcher, Reagan and An Eminent Person*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- MCCARGO, D., 1993. *The Political Leadership of Major-General Chamlong Srimuang*. Thesis University of London.
- MCCARGO, D. AND PATHAMANAND, U., 2005. *The Thaksinization of Thailand*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- MILLER, A. H., 1990. Public Judgments of Senate and House Candidates. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 15, (4) 525-542.
- MILLER, A. H., WATTENBERG, M. P. AND MALANCHUK, O., 1986. Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates. *American Political Science Review*, 80, 521-540.
- MUGHAN, A. AND PATTERSON, S. C., 1992. Introduction. In: A. MUGHAN AND S. C. PATTERSON, eds. *Political Leadership in Democratic Societies*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1-11.
- NOGSUAN SAWASDEE, S., 2006. *Thai Political Parties in the Age of Reform*. Bangkok Institute of Public Policy Studies.
- PAIGE, G. D., 1977. *The Scientific Study of Political Leadership*. New York: The Free Press.
- OCKEY, J., 1996. Thai Society and Patterns of Political Leadership. *Asian Survey*, 36, (4) 345-360.
- OCKEY, J., 2004. *Making Democracy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BANGKOK UNIVERSITY, 2006a. *Wanee Khon Krungthep Kid Yai Rai Kab Thaksin Shinawatra (What Bangkok residents think of Thaksin Shinawatra)* [online]: Research Institute of Bangkok University. Available from: http://168.120.31.165/webbase/2549/ABAC_POLL_Survey_on_New_Prime_Minister_s_Characteristics.pdf [Thai] [Accessed 12 September 2006].
- RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BANGKOK UNIVERSITY, 2006b. *Naewnom Karnmuangthai Phailang Sarnrattathammanoon Tadsin Hai Mee Karnluektang Mai (Direction of Thai Politics after the Constitution Court's Decision on the New General Election)* [online]: Research Institute of Bangkok University. Available from: http://research.bu.ac.th/poll/poll_list.php [Thai] [Accessed 11 May 2006].
- RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BANGKOK UNIVERSITY, 2007. *Karn Luaktang Krang Mai Nai Saitar Yaowachon (Young people's opinions towards the new election)* [online]: Research Institute of Bangkok University. Available from: <http://research.bu.ac.th/poll/result/detail/poll372.php> [Thai] [Accessed 23 October 2007].
- SANTASOMBAT, Y., 1992. *Amnat Bukkhalikkaphap lae Phunam Kanmuagn Thai (Power, Personality and the Thai Political Leaders)*. Bangkok: Nam Thai [Thai].
- SUAN DUSIT POLL, 2007. *Poosamak Sorsor Baeb Nai? Pakkarnmuang Baeb Dai? Tee Khon Thai Yark Lueak (What's kind of representative and political party that Thai people would like to vote for?)* [online]: Suan Dusit Poll. Available from: http://dusitpoll.dusit.ac.th/2550/2550_049.html [Thai] [Accessed 4 December 2007].
- THE NATION, 2006. Bangkokians split on Thaksin; poll gives PM good marks for decisiveness but not honesty. *The Nation* [online], 21 July 2006, Available from: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/search/page.news.php?clid=2&id=30009176> [Accessed 21 July 2006].

Appendix

Table 1: Percentages of Feelings about Leaders (the Internet surveys)

Feelings	Thaksin Shinawatra		Abhisit Vejjajiva	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Patriotic	44.6	55.4	80.5	19.5
Self-confident	81.3	18.3	67.3	32.7
Optimistic	58.0	42.0	53.1	46.9
Satisfied	42.0	58.0	61.6	38.4
Relieved	33.9	66.1	55.8	44.2
Involved	39.3	60.7	52.7	47.3

Table 2: Percentages of Leaders' Personality (the Internet surveys)

Characters	Thaksin Shinawatra		Abhisit Vejjajiva	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Capable of strong leadership	74.3	25.7	46.0	54.0
Can't be trusted	59.8	40.2	27.4	72.6
Inexperienced	19.5	80.5	54.0	46.0
Not responsive to others' arguments	67.3	32.7	15.2	84.8
Honest	32.7	67.3	75.2	24.8
Compassionate	38.1	61.9	80.5	19.5
Arrogant	61.9	38.1	16.8	83.2

Table 3: Comparison of Qualities of each Politician with the 7 Most Important Traits of the Ideal Leader

7 Most Important Traits (dimension / type of leader)	Ideal Leader	Gen Surayud	Abhisit	Chaturon	Banharn	Somkid	Thaksin	Purachai
Personal integrity (integrity / Group)	+83.6	+ 59	+ 15.5	+ 2.3	+ 6.6	+ 7.4	- 26.9	+ 29.6
Decisive (reliability / Strong)	+71.0	+ 40.3	+ 8.6	- 0.5	+ 1.3	+ 8.2	+ 70.2	+ 28.1
Responsiveness (charisma / Group)	+58.6	+ 44.1	+ 25	+ 10.5	+ 19.2	+ 9.5	+ 16.4	+ 18.7
Well-informed (competence / Inspiring)	+54.7	+ 52.7	+ 49.3	+ 32.9	+ 29.1	+ 38.9	+ 69.6	+ 40.9
Able to get things done (competence / Strong)	+45.7	+ 33	+ 14.3	+ 6.1	+ 10.8	+ 16.3	+ 38.6	+ 24.1
Visionary (competence / Inspiring)	+42.3	+ 47.7	+ 40.6	+ 17.2	+ 2.31	+ 25.6	+ 49.3	+ 30.0
Someone who can be trusted to run the country (reliability)	+39.0	+ 56.7	+ 8.6	- 6.4	- 0.8	- 0.9	- 21.2	+ 20.2

Table 4: Type of Leader of Top 5 Persons Respondents would like to see as PM

Top 5 Persons (in orders)	Strong	Group	Inspiring
Gen Prem Tinsulanonda (the ex-PM and current statesman)	able to get things done	personal integrity (62.5%) self-sacrifice	well-informed visionary inspiring
Gen Sonthi Boonyaratkalin (the Chairman of Council of National Security)	decisive hard-working sticks to principle	personal integrity (39%) self-sacrifice	caring well-informed inspiring
Chuan Leekpai (the ex-PM from the Democrat party)	hard-working able to get things done	personal integrity (48.6%) self-sacrifice	well-informed visionary
Chuvit Kamolvisit (the outstanding and outspoken politician)	decisive sticks to principle	personal integrity (17.9%)	visionary inspiring good communicator
Pridiyathorn Devakul (the ex-interim deputy PM and ex Finance Minister of the interim government)	decisive hard-working able to get things done	personal integrity (18.2%)	well-informed visionary

Author's biography

Waraporn Chatratichart received her first degree in public relations with the second class honour from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and a master degree in communications from Queensland University of Technology, Australia. After working for 8 years in both PR industry and academic, she continued her doctoral study in political communication, and recently awarded the PhD from the Media School, Bournemouth University, England. Her thesis focuses on the young Thai people's perception towards political leaders and their influences on the electoral choices. She is now working for the School of Communication Arts, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, Thailand. Her research interests include political marketing, campaigning, image management, political psychology, and women in politics. She can be reached at wchatratichart@yahoo.co.uk or waraporn_cha@utcc.ac.th