

Creating Political Strengthening of Dr. Mahathir Mohammad

RawikarnAmnuay

PhranakhonRajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to study the process of creating political strengthening of Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, the former prime-minister of Malaysia. This research is a qualitative research by conducting document analysis, interview, and non-participatory observation. The essential data is gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The in-depth interview has been done on the key informants consisting of academics, Malaysian community leaders, and Malaysian citizens. According to the research, it was founded that; Dr. Mahathir Mohammad had been creating political stability by promoting nationalism by emphasizing the consolidation and the pride of Malay's race. This made him get supported by the people across the country through general election. Visibly, he had been elected and in the premier position consecutively for 22 years. In addition, being legislatively legitimated, the stability of his government had been created by imposing laws which was described as authoritarianism to effectively control and rule the country. It is also founded that his vision to make Malaysia to be a developed country by declaring the 2020 Vision had made him noted as the most high-vision leader, and he strongly got supported by the people in Malaysia. Dr. Mahathir Mohammad is one of the memorable and outstanding leaders of Malaysia and ASEAN. His political stability was not only created by implemented the authoritarian practice and making people support him via nationalism, but also his vision to make Malaysia become a great country.

Key words: *Political Strengthening, Mahathir Mohammad, Malaysian Politics*

INTRODUCTION



Picture 1 Map of Malaysia

Some of the former leaders of the countries in South East Asia were either described as the nationalist, the nation builders, or the high visionary leaders. The most important characteristic of these leaders, even in the

countries with democratic or authoritarian regime, is the strong ambition to make their countries great.



Picture 2 Malaysians are of many nationalities.

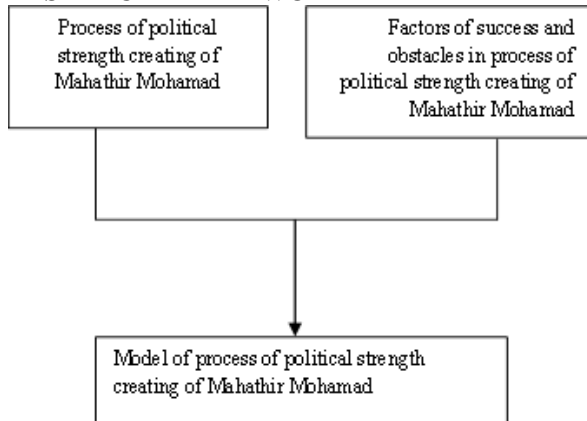
To achieve such the intention, sometimes it is not easy to do so, as there are many factors, both internal and external factors, involved in the development process. Geographical factor, for instance, determines the growth of the countries: the archipelago country with diverse ethnic groups or

the land-locked countries seem to be less successful than those countries which are located in the mainland with proper maritime routes. Moreover, the big countries with large amount of population may need more effective management skill to rule the country, in comparison with the smaller countries which may find less difficulty in administration. The countries, being colonized for a long time and the influence of controlling countries still exists, are facing with the problem in country's consolidation and unity; these caused by the influence of the cultures and norms of the dominant countries. Nevertheless, one of the successful countries among those that able to build their nation to be the front tier of ASEAN is Malaysia.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

To study the process for creating political stability of Mahathir Mohamad.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative research by studying relating documents such as books, articles, researches, and electronic medias, conducting in-depth interview the key informants, and non-participatory to gather the relevant data from the people living in Malaysia.

RESEARCH RESULTS



Picture 3 Mahathir Mohamad is the 4th prime minister of Malaysia

Malaysia gained independence from United Kingdom in 1957 A.D. [1]. The remarkable leader

of the country is ThTunDato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohammad, the 4th prime minister of Malaysia, who had stayed in the position consecutively for 22 years (1981 – 2003) considering as the longest serving in premier position of Malaysia. He joined UMNO party (The United Malays National Organization), the largest and influential political party of Malaysia and dominated Malaysian politics since gaining independence from Britain. He joined the party in 1946 A.D when the party was initially formed up. During he had been in the post for 2 decades, he had effectively managed to consolidate the country and make Malaysia become high potential country in Southeast Asia [2]. According to the research, it was founded that Mahathir Mohammad had established his political stability in three mains aspects: Promoting the role of nationalist and effective politician, law imposing and implementation, and establishing political stability through effective governmental administration.

1. *Creating political strengthening through election*



Picture 4 Mahathir Mohamad Creating political strengthening through election

In term of promoting the role of nationalist and effective politician, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad entered to politics and was initially elected to be a member of the house of the representative under UMNO party [3] and later he was elected to be a member of the house of the representative for 14 year .Afterwards, he had the position of a senator and minister of education which subsequently he was elected to be the 4th prime minister of Malaysia using racial ideology as the key concept to gain support from Malaysians by using “being Malay” to be the symbol of the states and nation and offering the privileges to Malay-born people [4].



Picture 5 Malaysia Prime Minister from UMNO's party



Picture 7 Mahathir Mohamad used laws Internal Security Act to be country security's tool



Picture 6 Mahathir Mohamad stayed in the position of the prime minister as long as 22 years

In addition, Mahathir used network and mechanism of patronage to support party members to win elections which help him to win elections continually and stayed in the position of the prime minister as long as 22 years. Having won the 5 general election in the role [5], it made Dr. Mahathir Mohammad secure him his position. The political legitimacy through election made him confidence to decisively administrate the country; this led to the domination of power over other branch of nation power. It indicates that the outcome of the general election had advocated Dr. Mahathir Mohammad's political stability in which he could claim for political legitimacy to be in the position and can lead the country in the way he desired[6]. The election process had been taken advantage of allowing the prime-minister to be authoritarian leader without social resistance; this was due to the lack of power the opposition side also.

2. Creating political strengthening through laws implementation

In the aspect of law imposing and implementation, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad used laws to create righteousness for the government by announcing the use of laws in a way that promote authoritarianism [4]. For an example, he used internal security act as a crucial tool for the Malaysian government to maintain peace in the country for a long time by which this law gave a prominent level of authority to the government and the security officers. The officers can arrest a person suspecting to be harmful for the stability of the government immediately and can imprison the person without time limitation without the need for the person to be investigated publicly and without a prove for the charge whether it is a violation according to the accusation. Later, the government of Dr. Mahathir Mohammad also made changes to some sections of the constitution to increase the power for the government and reduced the role and power of the judiciary and the monarch [3]. From his mentioned work, Mahathir then could maintain power in UMNO party and stayed in the leader position of the country consequentially. In addition Dr. Mahathir Mohammad's government had imposed Internal Security Act to detain activists, non-mainstream religious figures, and political opposition side including the Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. According to the legislation profits taken advantage by the government of Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, it conveys that he strengthened his political stability by utilizing law to eliminate the opposition people or groups, as well as, to control the situation and society in the way he wanted. This totally advocated him political strength; even there was strong critics from international community, especially western countries, but it did not affect to the way of his administration.

3. Creating the political strengthening through governmental administration.



Picture 8 The Mahathir Mohamad's working

In the area of establishing political stability through effective governmental administration, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad's had created the political stability through governmental administration by implementing effective economic policies to make the country to be higher tier of development. The effectiveness of his administration advocated more supports from people and this attributed his political stability. Serving as the prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad's government had faced with the international trend in development and modernization [7]. By his far-vision to make Malaysia to be the great in Southeast Asia, he initiated a number of policies to make economic sustainably growth by investing in construction infrastructures projects which made him projected as the talent nation developer. He declared the 2020 vision as the road map to Malaysia to be in the first world country[2]. Mahathir adhered to a policy to focus on the east as a key policy by focusing Japan as a model for the development of the country referencing to the Asian values to solve problems by self-reliance rather than asking for support from other countries. This becomes the model for the development and he also used a strategy to take Malaysia to the world stage leaving the image of a rubber seller away from Malaysia. The administration of Dr. Mahathir Mohammad gained a lot of supports from Malay people which advocated a strong leader political stability.

Having been governing the country for 2 decades, Mahathir Mohammad had accumulated and strengthen his political stability by projecting himself as the talented politician in order to gain supports from the people, as a result; he and his political party members had been elected and able to totally control the parliament. Having been promoted nationalism my highlighting the status of ordinary Malays (Bumiputra) [1], he managed to consolidate Malaysian society to cooperate in build up the country. Moreover, Mahathir Mohammad had utilized the patronage connections which are clearly seen in Malaysia society to extend his popularity and gain his party's members the supports from people.

In the aspect of law imposing and implementation, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad had established political legitimacy by imposing authoritarian law to legally empower him and his government. Since he was able to decisively control the parliament, the laws were easily passed, these even more stabilized his position. In addition, he had promoted the Asian democracy which is different from what western society perceived: this was to legitimize him as the appropriate leader for Asian society and not easily to be dominated by other countries. The more he could liberate from the west and showed his assertiveness, the more he gained supports from his people. After having been colonized by western countries for centuries before gaining independence after World War II, the reason why he was necessary to be assertive was due to the need to effectively unite the country which formally there are a number of sub-ethnic groups and sultan states.

The government administration was managed by using modern economic policy [2], vision declaration 2020, and a policy that focused on the East as a key policy by focusing to Japan as a model for the development of the country together with referencing to the Asian values. The policy also laid foundation emphasizing on self-reliance reducing support from other countries which it gained a lot of popularity for Mahathir even if it had characteristic of dictatorial concept but it turned Malaysia from an agricultural country to an industrial country for the future causing Malaysia to be an example of a developing country. By the concept of Machiavelli which there is no limit for gaining the power, maintaining the power, and stepping out from the power even if it may not come from a rightful way, Machiavelli had the concept that a leader should have a characteristic combining that of a lion and a fox which is to have power and intellect. In an important situation or event, a leader may have to use force to eliminate people who create the disturbance which this is deemed to be rightful [8]. C.Wright Mills [9]presented an idea of "popular leader" by which he saw that general people do not have the true power to determine policies but there are only 3 groups of people controlling the power and they have the power to determine policies. These groups are high ranking soldiers, wealthy businessmen, and prime minister, ministers and government officers in high positions which this can be found mostly in developing country.



Picture 9 Main Policy in Malaysia Reform and Development

DISCUSSION



Picture 10 Mahathir Mohamad, the great political leader who lay foundation and builds the futyre for Malaysia

Plato suggested that leaders in each society should come from the selection by people in that society and the leaders should have distinctive characteristics of intellect, honesty, nationalist, and decisiveness (in some cases, the leader may use decisive authority for existence) [10].

CONCLUSION

Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, a prominent and outstanding leader of Malaysia, who had created the political stability through election process by using racial ideology, "being Malay. He also made use of laws in a way that promote authoritarianism as a crucial tool to suppress the opposition groups and to effectively control the country. His administration of the government used modern economic policy in which attributing the effective and high proficient leader to make Malaysia great advocated political stability to him. By his strong personality, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad was recorded as the tough leader of Southeast Asia who was not easily dominated by westerns countries.

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