

## Decentralization Reforms and Social Changes in Thai Municipal Governments

Chandra Mahakanjana\*

### Abstract

In order to improve the performance of public institutions, Thailand over the past century has focused on institutional design--changing the incentives that confront actors in hopes of altering their behaviors. This article provides brief analysis of the institutional strategies through decentralization policy, and presents new data on associated changes in level of municipal government stability and municipal political leadership. The discussion also examines trends in political participation in municipalities, trust in local government, and political accountability in municipal government. The data presented in this article make clear that there have been substantial changes in the political leadership of larger municipalities in Thailand over a 30-year period spanning the adoption of important decentralization reforms. Also we can see a trend of more stable municipal governments under the new system of direct elections, higher levels of education among elected leaders, more political participation, higher levels of trust toward in government, and possibly higher levels of local political accountability.

**Keywords:** Decentralization, reform, constitution, political leadership, political participation, trust in local government, political accountability

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## A Theoretical Model of the Organizational Performance of Social Enterprises: Combining the Resource Dependence and Resource-Based Views

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### Abstract

Social enterprise is seen as a new organizational type which differs from other kinds of organization. The objective of this paper is to propose a model that explains the organizational performance of social enterprises. The study is focused on the organizational resources that are necessary for organizational survival and growth. By integrating resource dependence and resource-based view, the findings suggest that three characteristics of organizational resources-acquisition, uniqueness, and utilization are required for enhancing organizational performance. Additionally, two main sources of organizational resources, social entrepreneurship (social innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking) and social capital (social trust, networks, and public sector engagement), are also required for organizational performance. Combining the two theories can explain organizational performance better than using only one theory, and provide a process for organizational resources. A structural relationship among social entrepreneurship, social capital, and organizational performance is proposed. Empirical testing is strongly recommended for future research to confirm the model.

**Keywords:** Organizational performance, social entrepreneurship, social capital, resource-based view, resource dependence theory

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## The Commitment of Employees to Quality: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Organizations

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### Abstract

The objectives of this article are to study the factors influencing employees' quality commitment in public and private organizations and to compare the levels of employees' quality commitment in public and private organizations. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 717 employees in two ministries and 696 employees in private sector companies.

The factors influencing the employee's quality commitment were analyzed by using a structural equation model based on 6 latent variables and 26 observed variables. According to the model, the factors with a direct influence on the employee's quality commitment in the public organizations were transformational leadership, continuous improvement and job satisfaction. The factors indirectly influencing quality commitment were transformational leadership, quality of work life and empowerment. The factor with the most influencing effect on quality commitment was transformational leadership, followed by job satisfaction, empowerment, continuous improvement and quality of work life. On the other hand, the factors with a direct influence on the employees' quality commitment in the private organizations were transformational leadership, empowerment, continuous improvement and job satisfaction. The factors indirectly influencing the quality commitment in the private organizations were transformational leadership, quality of work life and empowerment. The factor with the most influencing effect on quality commitment was transformational leadership, followed by empowerment, job satisfaction, continuous improvement and quality of work life.

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A comparative analysis of the levels of employees' quality commitment in public and private organizations shows that both types of organizations had a high level of employees' quality commitment and that the difference between public and private organizations was not statistically significant.

**Keywords:** Quality commitment, transformational leadership, quality of work life, empowerment, continuous improvement, job satisfaction

## Evaluating a Local Administrator Training Program: An Empirical Study of the Thai Local Administrator Development Program, Department of Local Administration

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### Abstract

Training and development is a management practice basically aimed to enhance employees' competencies in fulfilling organizational missions. This article explores how participants in the Thai Local Administrator Development Program view contemporary problems of Thai local administration, and the extent to which the Program has addressed those problems. In addition, the training process and its success is investigated. The research instruments were a pre-post learning test, an open-ended questionnaire, unobtrusive observation, focus group, and semi-structured interviews conducted with two batches of a total of 134 executive trainees and five program administrators.

The results reveal that Thai local administration is facing issues such as budget deficits, lack of community participation, conflicts of interest, corruption and patronage, and unreadiness for mission transfer. It was found that the current training program does not address preventive issues or corrective measures. The HRD guiding paradigm of the development program is still primarily occupied with training and education approaches even though aiming for a strategic goal-based approach. At its inception in 1989, four system components were included in the program: needs assessment, training design, implementation, and follow-up evaluation. However, most recent attention has largely concentrated on implementation. The other three components are essentially ignored. Trainees

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expressed considerable positive reaction to the fulfillment of training objectives. The post-training gain scores of both batches exhibited statistical significance which implies that participants achieved learning. The article concludes with recommendations and suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** Training evaluation, leadership development, Thai local administrators, human resource development

## Barriers to Participation in Development Planning of Municipal Governments in Northeastern Thailand\*

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify problems and barriers to participation in development planning of municipalities in Northeastern Thailand. A qualitative research design was employed in which data were gathered through in-depth interviews. Triangulation techniques were used to check responses, and content analysis was performed on the data.

The study results found the following key obstacles to people's participation in development planning of local government councils: first, a lack of enthusiasm to participate on the people's part; second, budgetary issues in the implementation of projects under the municipalities' development plan; and third, obstacles to people's participation stemming from management and staff of municipal government.

**Keywords:** Participation, development planning of municipal governments.

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## Emergency Management in New Zealand: Arrangements, Laws and Structures

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### Abstract

New Zealand suffers potential risks from natural hazards and disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floodings, landslides and severe winds because the country is set on an active fault zone (lies across the boundary of Australian and Pacific tectonic plates) located in the South Pole. These are the reasons which have compelled New Zealand to provide an emergency management system to reduce the risks from hazards, which has turned out to be extraordinarily effective to this day. The purpose of this paper is to examine lessons learned from the development of New Zealand's emergency management system with respect to: the driving force behind the impetus for the emergency management system; the development of the organizational structure; relevant legislation; and future challenges.

**Keywords:** Emergency management, disaster management, New Zealand emergency management

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