

Participatory Planning in Municipal Development in Thailand

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a full understanding of the extent of participatory planning in Thai municipalities within the context of a highly centralized state and dominance of local business people in public decision determination. In this ‘alternative’ mode of planning, various interests groups determine their local development plans collectively. Essentially, such planning aims to provide a political sphere of different groups of interests within the current pluralistic society.

The research examines outcomes of the decentralization process regarding: municipal ability for local development planning; the legal framework promoting citizen participation in local public decisions; attitudes of local politicians (who are essentially business people) towards participatory planning; and the contributions of local associations in municipal development, particularly the local planning system.

The study finds that highly centralized state policy undermines the local planning system. Municipalities have insufficient necessities (authority, duties, resources) for performing their local planning effectively. In the legal framework, the government aims to use citizen participation to obtain information from the grassroots, rather than collective public decision determination. All significant public decisions remain within representative forms (municipal executives and councils).

In local politics, local business elites dominate Thai municipalities and manipulate citizen participation for their personal benefits. Such an imbalance of power among civil society reduces the ability of other interests to be involved in public decisions. Although much participation is taking place in municipal practice, the local planning system fails to be a central political sphere for various interests to participate in local public decision. Some local groups who have high electoral vote power benefit from legal planning procedures; others use their tight connections to politicians to pursue their aims outside legal planning procedures; there are also those who neither have mass support, nor support of politicians and therefore stand little chance for pursuing their interests.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation gibt einen umfassenden Einblick über das Ausmaß von „Participatory Planning“ in thailändischen Gemeinden im Kontext eines stark zentralisierten Staates und der Vorherrschaft ortsansässiger Geschäftsleute im öffentlichen Entscheidungsprozess. Diese alternative Art der Planung gibt den verschiedenen Interessengruppen die Möglichkeit zusammen über ihre regionale Entwicklung zu bestimmen. Im Grunde zielt diese Planung darauf ab, unterschiedlichen Interessengruppen in der heutigen pluralistischen Gesellschaft einen politischen Spielraum zu bieten.

Die Arbeit untersucht die Ergebnisse des Prozesses der Dezentralisierung in Bezug auf die kommunalen Fähigkeiten bei der lokalen Entwicklungsplanung, die gesetzlichen Rahmenbedingungen für die Förderung der Mitwirkung der Bürger an öffentlichen Entscheidungen, die Haltung kommunaler Politiker (welche im Grunde Geschäftsleute sind) zu „Participatory Planning“ und die Beteiligung ortsansässiger Vereine an der kommunalen Entwicklung insbesondere am örtlichen Planungsverfahren.

Die Studie stellt fest, dass die stark zentralisierte staatliche Politik das lokale Planungsverfahren untergräbt. Die Gemeinden haben nur unzureichende Möglichkeiten (Befugnisse, Pflichten, Ressourcen) um ihre lokale Planung effektiv zu gestalten. Innerhalb des gesetzlichen Rahmens benutzt die Regierung die Bürgerbeteiligung um Informationen von der Basis zu erhalten anstatt öffentliche Entscheidungen gemeinschaftlich zu treffen. Alle wesentlichen Entscheidungen werden nach wie vor in einer repräsentativen Form (durch die kommunale Führungskräfte und Räte) getroffen.

In der Lokalpolitik beherrschen die dortigen Wirtschaftseliten die thailändischen Gemeinden und manipulieren die Bürgerbeteiligungen zu Gunsten persönlicher Vorteile. Solch ein Kräfteungleichgewicht in der Zivilgesellschaft schwächt die Leistungsfähigkeit anderer Interessen bei der Beteiligung an den öffentlichen Entscheidungen. Obwohl in der kommunalen Praxis an vielen Stellen eine Beteiligung stattfindet, scheitert das öffentliche Planungsverfahren am zentralen politischen Spielraum in dem verschiedene Interessen an den kommunalen öffentlichen Entscheidungen mitwirken können. Einige Gruppen die ein hohes Wählerpotenzial haben profitieren vom rechtlichen Planungsverfahren, andere nutzen ihre engen Beziehungen zu Politikern, um ihre Ziele außerhalb der planungsrechtlichen Verfahren zu verfolgen aber es gibt auch solche die weder die Unterstützung der Massen noch die Unterstützung von Politikern besitzen und daher kaum eine Chance haben ihre Interessen zu verfolgen.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| AEC | Assets Examination Committee |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asia Nations |
| BCL | Business and Community Leadership Development |
| BMA | Bangkok Metropolitan Administration |
| CDA | Constitution Drafting Assembly |
| CEO | chief executive official |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CODI | Community Organization Development Institute |
| COPE | Community Organization Project on environment |
| CPT | Communist Party of Thailand |
| DLOC | Decentralization to Local Government Organization Committee |
| DOLA | Department of Local Administration |
| DPT | Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GPP | Gross Provincial Product |
| GTZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| JPPCC | Joint Public-Private Cooperative Committee |
| LDC | Municipal Development Plan is the Local Development Committee |
| LDPSC | Local Development Planning Supportive Committee |
| MOI | Ministry of Interior |
| NGO | nongovernmental organization |
| NGO-CORD | Coordinating Committee on Rural Development |
| NESD Board | National Economic and Social Development Board |
| NESDP | National Economic and Social Development Plan |
| NSM | New Social Movement |
| OAG | The Office of the Auditor General of Thailand |
| ONEP | Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning |
| PAD | The disagreement forms the People Alliance of Democracy |
| PAO | Provincial Administrative Organization |
| SIF | Social Investment Fund |

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| SRT | State Railway of Thailand |
| TAO | Tambon Administrative Organization |
| THPF | Thai Health Promotion Foundation |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| USOM | United States Operations Mission |
| VAT | value added tax |

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

Participatory Planning in Thailand

‘Participatory Planning’ was initially adopted in Western urban planning in the 1960s. Unlike conventional approaches, this alternative method of planning encourages citizens to share public decisions with the state. It was expected that participatory planning would enhance the quality of plans by making them more responsive to a diversity of interests; reducing corruption in the planning process; and generating a consensus that would make plans implementable.

In Thailand, participatory planning at the local administrative level intensified in the late 1990s. The ‘Constitution of 1997’ – so called the first ‘People’s Constitution’ – underlined decentralization and good governance as key principles. Subsequently, people participation in public affairs became central to the national agenda and was promoted in every administrative level including the municipality.

Participatory planning has now been promoted in Thailand for over a decade; however, there is much evidence of its shortcomings. For example, the number of corruption cases in local administrations has increased; City Comprehensive Plans that claim to involve citizens in planning and design processes are scarcely implemented, while other projects outside of such plans have been dubiously constructed.

Such unsatisfactory outcomes raise two questions for research: (1) *Does local development planning provide effective political space for various interest groups to participate in public decisions?* (2) *What are the hindrances to participatory planning in Thai municipalities?* Accordingly, this research focuses on two key issues: (1) the dominance of the central government in locality; and (2) the primacy of business people in local public decisions.

Weaknesses at the Municipal Level in Thailand – State Dominance

Municipality is a form of local government. At this level, citizens elect their representatives to work on their behalf in public decision-making processes. It is at this public administrative level that citizens can be effectively involved in public affairs.

The weakness of the municipality in its authority and ability translates to state dominance of local decisions in local public affairs. When central government retains key powers in localities, local development planning becomes less relevant as important local issues are decided externally. Thailand has a considerable history of centralized state control (commencing in the late 1890s) within which central administrations have often attempted to undermine local governments. Consequently, local administrations are typically weak and have no major role in local development, which in turn contributes to failures of local participatory planning.

Decentralization

A significant transition in Thai administration occurred in 1997 when the ‘People’s Constitution’ was promulgated. It called for extensive administrative and political decentralization in order to facilitate greater efficiency and effectiveness in providing public goods and services. The decentralization policy also aimed at privatizing various local public services, promoting the emergence of civil societies, supporting the growth of democratic institutions, and responding to demands for greater local autonomy. Local administrations have been empowered in terms of authority, responsibility, and resources such as personnel and budget.

Here, two interrelated questions are examined: (1) *What is the extent of the state’s attempt to promote participatory planning in locality?* And (2) *Is this fundamnt sufficient to genuinely contribute to participatory planning?* These questions are investigated through the capacity of municipality and relevant laws and regulations concerning local planning.

Role of the Business Sector

Unlike the conventional ideal of local government, Thai municipalities are dominated by local business elites. Most members of the municipal executive board and municipal council have business backgrounds. It is obvious that their political involvement primarily aims to favor their personal interests, as their business backgrounds are relevant to municipal responsibilities – for example, construction firms and tourist businesses. Many corruption cases involving municipal contracts have been uncovered, such as bid manipulation or municipal projects that increase benefits to politicians. Accordingly, it is assumed that the municipal authority is in effect, an instrument of local politicians to develop their businesses.

Local politicians tend to control citizen participation in municipal processes, as genuine participatory planning tends to reduce personal benefits normally derived from such processes. Essentially, only forms of citizen participation that favor local politicians are permitted, which highlights the importance of this role for achieving participatory planning. Here, the key question examined is *'How do business oriented politicians manage citizen participation in public decisions to meet their needs?'* To answer this, different forms of citizen participation in municipal management are explored.

Thai Civil Society

To civil society, local associations are key to local development processes. Citizens who have similar interests form groups or associations to advance their interests in public. Essentially, local development planning should comprise a political sphere of local associations involved in local development processes. Participatory planning can only be realized with involvement of various local groups of interests.

For decades, Thai civil society has been restrained due to centralized state policies. Only particular associations that focused on social assistance or philanthropy have been promoted; those with alternative development practices or who worked against the government's policies were usually undermined. This extraordinary evolution of

civil society makes the role of local associations a notable factor in the development of municipal participatory planning in Thailand. Here, the author asks: *How do various groups advance their interests in municipal public decisions in the local context?* In answering, the contributions of local associations in local development processes are explored, along with the different types of citizen participation employed by each interest group to access decision makers, and finally the effectiveness of these participatory activities.

Eventually, the research reveals the extent to which local development planning provides a political sphere for civil society to be involved in public decisions; and how the three issues, i.e. the weakness and incapability of municipality, attitudes of municipal leaders, and the weakness of civil society, shape participatory planning in Thai municipalities.

1.2 Research Methodology

Target groups

Target groups of this research vary depending on respective issues. For the issue of weakness of the municipality, government officials and scholars relevant to the issue were contacted. They include officials of the Department of Local Administration (DOLA), the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (DPT), the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), the Provincial Office and selected municipalities.

For the issues concerning attitudes of municipal leaders and weaknesses of local civil society, data has been gathered from the following groups and organizations: (1) municipal executives, (2) municipal officials, (3) journalists, (4) activists, (5) scholars, (6) businessmen, (7) the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, (8) the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI) and (9) other relevant associations.

Literature Review

The literature review aims to promote an understanding of theories related to participatory planning and the evolution and background of decentralization in Thailand, as well as the municipality planning system, the background of municipal executives, and Thai local associations. Theories selected focus on ‘Civil Society’ and ‘Participatory Planning’. Literature sources were accessed through libraries and Internet.

Selection of Research Areas

The three Thai cities of Khon Kaen, Phitsanulok and Phuket were selected for case studies according to the following criteria: (1) high urbanization, (2) locations in different regions, (3) reputation for administrative effectiveness and (4) data accessibility.

An objective of selecting cities in different regional locations (north, northeast and south) is to represent a general case of Thailand rather than concentrating in particular regional areas. These three regions differ in history, culture and environment. The selected cities have high rates of urbanization where population, economy and diversity of interests play important roles. All are in the largest size category of Thai municipalities. The municipalities of the focus cities have been recognized for their high level of performance, as evidenced by their various awards won for good governance and effectiveness.

Additionally, as the research required in-depth interviewing, personal contacts and reliable sources of information were significant. As such, cities were also chosen based on the author’s relative familiarity with them and ability to acquire detailed data.

Data Collection via Fieldwork

The author acquired much data via fieldwork through interviews with selected individuals. In the first phase, interviews were conducted regarding opinions and experiences. Information obtained here was useful to recompose initial questions and thereby promote greater authenticity and accuracy in the research. A subsequent round of interviews was conducted with the same interviewees to capture additional data. Additional interviews were conducted with other key individuals.

Data Analysis and Formulating Conclusions

Data collected from the literature review and fieldwork is analyzed, followed by an answer to the questions: (1) *Does local development planning provide effective political space for various interest groups to participate in public decisions?* (2) *What are the hindrances to participatory planning in Thai municipalities?*

1.3 Background to Case Study Cities

Thailand

Thailand is located in centre of Southeast Asian peninsula, covering an area of 513,115 sq km. Its shape and geography can be divided into 4 natural regions: 1) mountains and forests of the North; 2) vast rice fields of the Central Plains; 3) semi-arid farmlands of the Northeast plateau; and 4) tropical islands and long coastline of the peninsula South. The country comprises 76 provinces. Bangkok is the capital city and centre of political, commercial, industrial and cultural activities.

The politics of Thailand currently take place in a framework of a constitutional monarchy, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government and a hereditary monarch is head of state. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislative branches.

As of July 2007, the total population of Thailand is estimated at 65 million, 25 percent of which is under 15 years old. The population growth rate is at 0.68 percent. About 6 million people reside in Bangkok. In 2008, the number of unemployed persons was 1.18 percent of the total labor force. Population below poverty line was approximately 10.4 percent. The majority of the population is Thai (80%). The population of Chinese origin comprises 10-15 percent of the total population. The Thai Government has successfully encouraged the assimilation of the Chinese, and the younger generations are Thai citizens and speak Thai. Buddhism is the main religion (90% of the people are Buddhists).

Data of Thailand

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Area: | 513,115 sq km |
| Total Population: | 65 millions (2007) |
| Capital City: | Bangkok |
| Official language: | Thai |
| Main religion: | Buddhism |
| Urban population: | 31.09% (2001) |
| Poverty Rate: | 10.4% (2007) |
| Human Development Rate: | 0.778 (2008) |
| Adult literacy: | 93.9% (2006) |
| GDP annual growth: | 4.0% (2008) |
| GDP Per Capita: | 34,841 millions of baht (2008) |
| Unemployment: | 1.18% of the total labor force (2008) |
| GDP Per Capita: | 34,841 millions of baht (2008) |

Source: United Nations Thailand, UNESCAP, Bank of Thailand, NESDB, and Ministry of Commerce

The economy of Thailand is an emerging economy, which is heavily export-dependent (exports accounting for more than two thirds of GDP). The notable progress has not, however, benefited everyone equally. Benefits have accrued faster to those more closely linked to the international economy. Those who remained in the domestic economy, such as small-scale farmers, generally received fewer benefits, proportionately. Thailand's cities have grown faster than its countryside.

Thailand has seen remarkable progress in human development in the last twenty years. It will achieve most if not all of the global Millennium Development Goals well in advance of 2015.



Figure 1: Locations of selected cities

Khon Kaen City

Khon Kaen is located in the northeast of Thailand (see Figure 1). It is a major town in Khon Kaen province. Among the three case study cities, Khon Kaen is the largest in size and population. In 2005, the city comprised a territory of 46km² with 122,370 inhabitants and 82 neighborhood communities. However, the population density is relatively low with about 2,660 inhabitants/km². In fiscal status, revenue and expenditure per capita of Khon Kaen sits at second rank, which is similar to Phitsanulok in third rank. This indicates the moderate economy of the two cities.

In development, Khon Kaen is relatively young. Historically there have been no permanent settlements in this area since times of war between Khmer, Siam, and Lan Xang. The first settlement was officially mentioned in 1793, when the Thai Kingdom legally recognized its establishment. At this time, approximately 340 residents occupied the town, yet Khon Kaen was significant in the region and within the largest size category (Mettariganon & Thesaswat, 1995).

Railway construction connecting Khon Kaen with Bangkok in 1933 generated city growth. The city later boomed during the national policy against communism in the late 1950s. This policy prompted the construction of Mithraphap (or Friendship) Highway, which was a strategic road for the U.S. army. It opened new lands mostly for agriculture and provided the city with convenient access to Bangkok. Additionally, Ubonrat Dam was constructed in 1960 providing power and irrigation to the region and in 1962, Khon Kaen University was established.

In the first half of 1970s, the government chose Khon Kaen to

Data of the year 2005

Area: 46 sq km

Inhabitants: 122,370

Population Density:
2,660 (inhabitants/sq
km)

Neighborhoods: 82

Revenue (baht):
977,783,802.62

Revenue per capita:
7,990.39

Expenditure (baht):
763,472,917.99

Expenditure per capita
(baht): 6,239.05

Local politics: Stable

Source: Three-year
development plan of Khon
Kaen city municipality

be one of the principal regional cities, as part of a policy that aimed to develop selected regional cities to absorb growth and immigrants from Bangkok. Urban utilities were built, including a water supply system, roads, hospitals, schools and an airport. It was expected that such infrastructure would attract industry to the city. Currently, Khon Kaen is a regional centre of education, finance, public administration, commerce and services and transportation.

Local politics in Khon Kaen remain stable. While the two focus cities have at least two local political camps, there is only a single strong political party in Khon Kaen city. This party, the so-called ‘Rak Pattana Nakhon Khon Kaen’ or ‘Love for the Develop of Khon Kaen City’, was formerly two political groups that united in 1993.

Mr. Peerapon Pathanaperadej has been mayor of Khon Kaen since 2000. Under his leadership, the municipality is renowned for citizen participation. The city is the only Thai municipality that has held the Civic Forum – a collective public meeting arranged occasionally when public opinions are needed. Numerous awards attest the mayor’s excellence in management – for example, the ‘Excellence of Transparency and People Participation Award’ in 2001, 2003 and 2006; the ‘Effective Administration Award’ of the northeast of Thailand in 2003; and the ‘Livable and Sustainable Municipality Award’ in 2004.

Figure 2: GPP of Khon Kaen Province in 2007

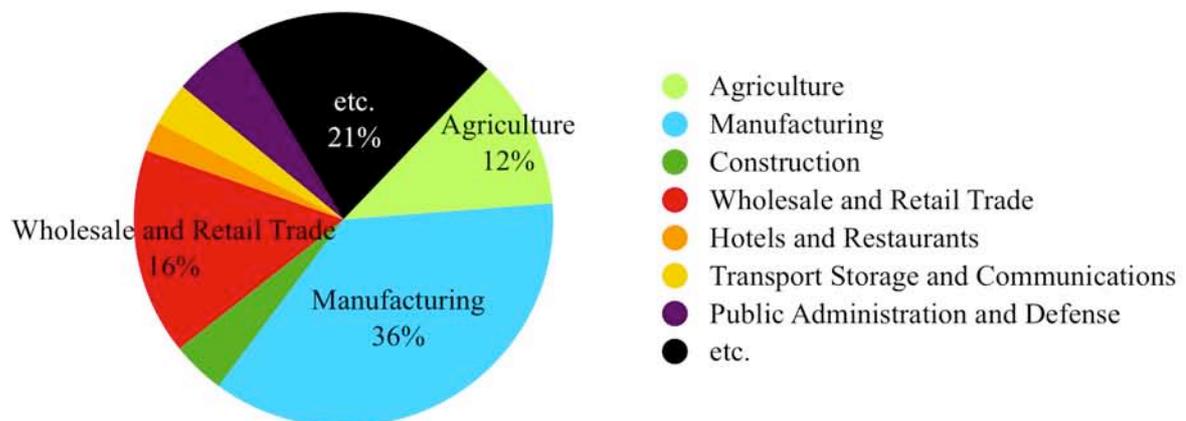
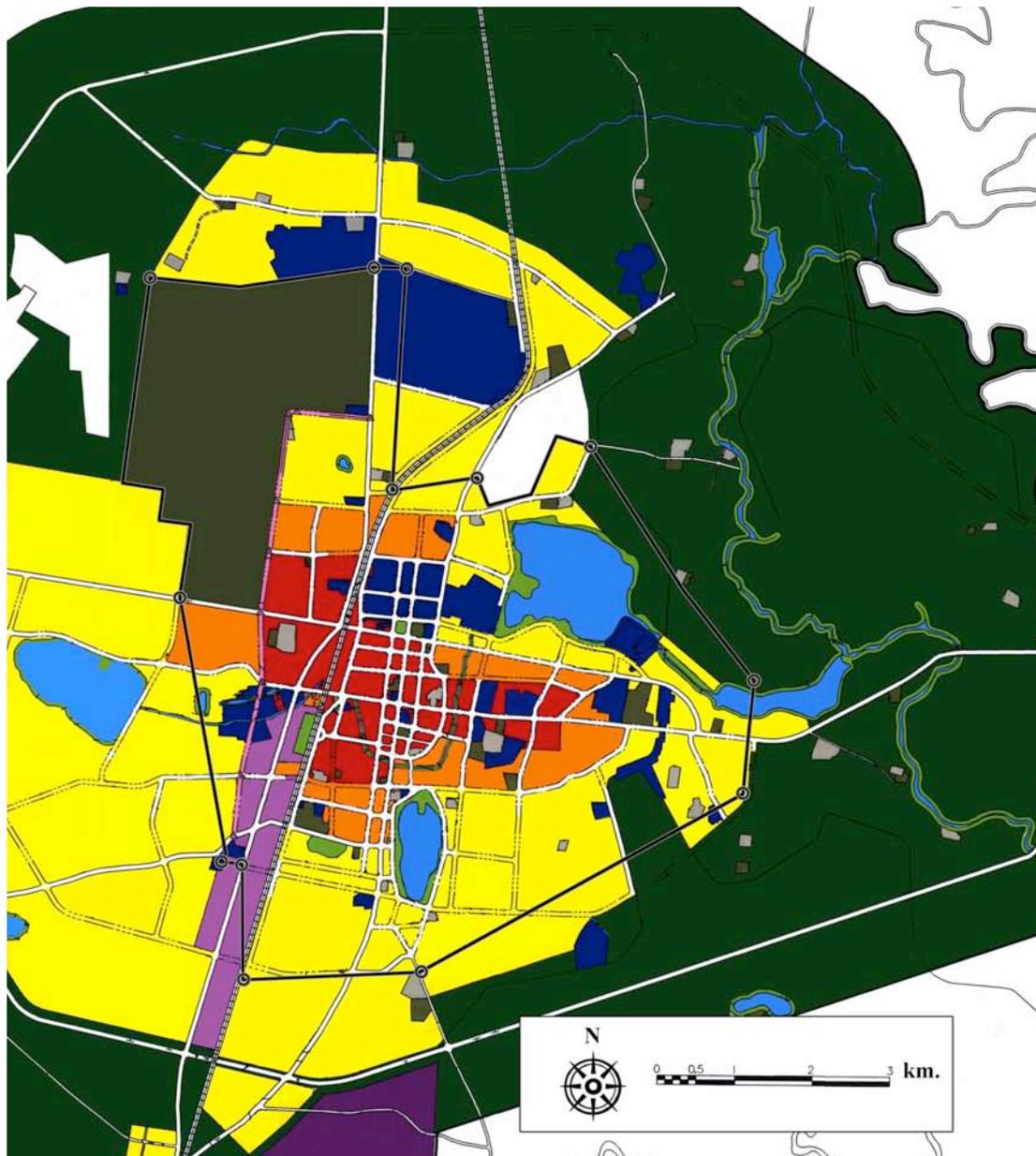
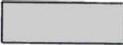
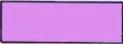
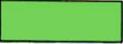


Figure 3: Khon Kaen city map



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  | Low-density residential area |  | Preserved forest area |
|  | High-density residential area |  | Educational institution area |
|  | High-density residential and commercial area |  | Religious institution area |
|  | Industrial and warehouse area |  | Governmental institution and public utility area |
|  | Specific industrial area |  | Proposed traffic project area |
|  | Rural and agricultural area |  | Municipal boundary |
|  | Public opened area | | |

Phitsanulok City

Phitsanulok is a main town in Phitsanulok province, located in the north of Thailand (see Figure 1). In the past, the city was named ‘Song Khwae (two rivers) city’ referring to its location between two rivers. The municipality covers a territory of 18.26km², with 80,254 inhabitants and a population density of 4,396 inhabitants/km² in 2005. The economic condition of Phitasnulok is moderate and similar to Khon Kaen as indicated by its revenue per capita.

Phitsanulok is one of the oldest towns in Thai history. It was officially established in the 1350s and became an important town in terms of politics, defense, economy, religion and culture. It was once chosen to be the capital of Ayutthaya Empire (the second era of Thai kingdom) in 1463. Later it was downgraded to be a strategic military town, buffering Ayutthaya with neighboring kingdoms: Burma and Lanna (or Chiang Mai).

Forest goods, agriculture products and pottery were formerly the main products of the area. Nan River, a major watercourse through the city, was the chief channel used by traders for transporting products to markets in the central region. In 1921, the government extended a railway route from Bangkok to Chiang Mai passing through Phitsanulok, which helped promote the local economy. Local products, mostly forest goods and timbers, gained access to Bangkok and the world market. Similar to Khon Kaen, the ‘Mittraphap (or Friendship) Highway’ connected to Phitsanulok during the communist insurgency period. Eventually, the local economy made a significant leap owing to greater convenience in transportation.

Data of the year 2005

Area: 18.26 sq km

Inhabitants: 80,254

Population Density:
4,396 (inhabitants/sq
km)

Neighborhoods: 51

Revenue (baht):
557,186,777.97

Revenue per capita:
6,942.79

Expenditure (baht):
528,300,796.77

Expenditure per capita
(baht):
6,582.86

Local politics:
Competitive

Source: Three-year
development plan of
Phitsanulok city
municipality

In the late 1970s, the government chose Phitsanulok to be one of regional principle cities (5 years after Khon Kaen city was chosen). Public utilities were provided – for example, the highways connecting Phitsanulok with central and northern regions; and Naresuan Dam for irrigation and flood prevention purposes. Currently, Phitsanulok is a centre of trade, service and administration of the sub-region. It is home to Naresuan University, Rajabhat Pibulsongkram University, regional governmental offices, an airport, a railway station and a major base of the Royal Thai Army.

Unlike Khon Kaen, local politics of Phitsanulok are competitive. There are two political parties: ‘Luk-Naresuan’ (or Naresuan’s descendants) and ‘Lak-Muang’ (or ‘city pillar’). The first party administrates the city’s municipality, while the later occupies the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). Premruedee Charmpunot is the current mayor of the Phitsanulok city municipality. Her most recognized success has been in garbage disposal management. This project received cooperation from the German bilateral organization ‘Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit’ (GTZ) which provided partial technical expertise. The project aims to reduce garbage by creating an effective garbage recycling system. Additionally, the municipality has gained many awards – for example the ‘Effective Administration Award’ of the north of Thailand in 2004-2007; the ‘Excellence of Transparency and People Participation Award’ in 2004-2006; and the ‘Livable and Sustainable Municipality Award’ in 2005.

Figure 4: GPP of Phitsanulok Province in 2007

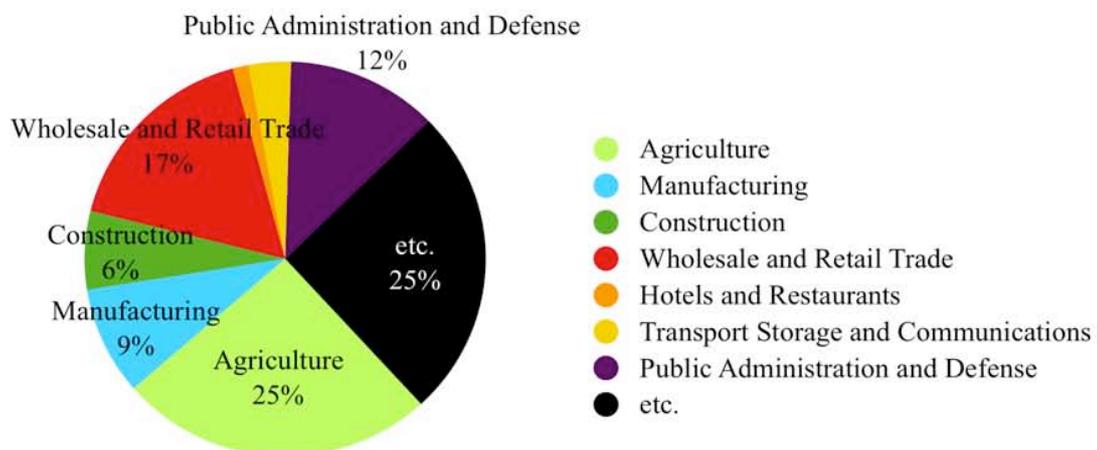
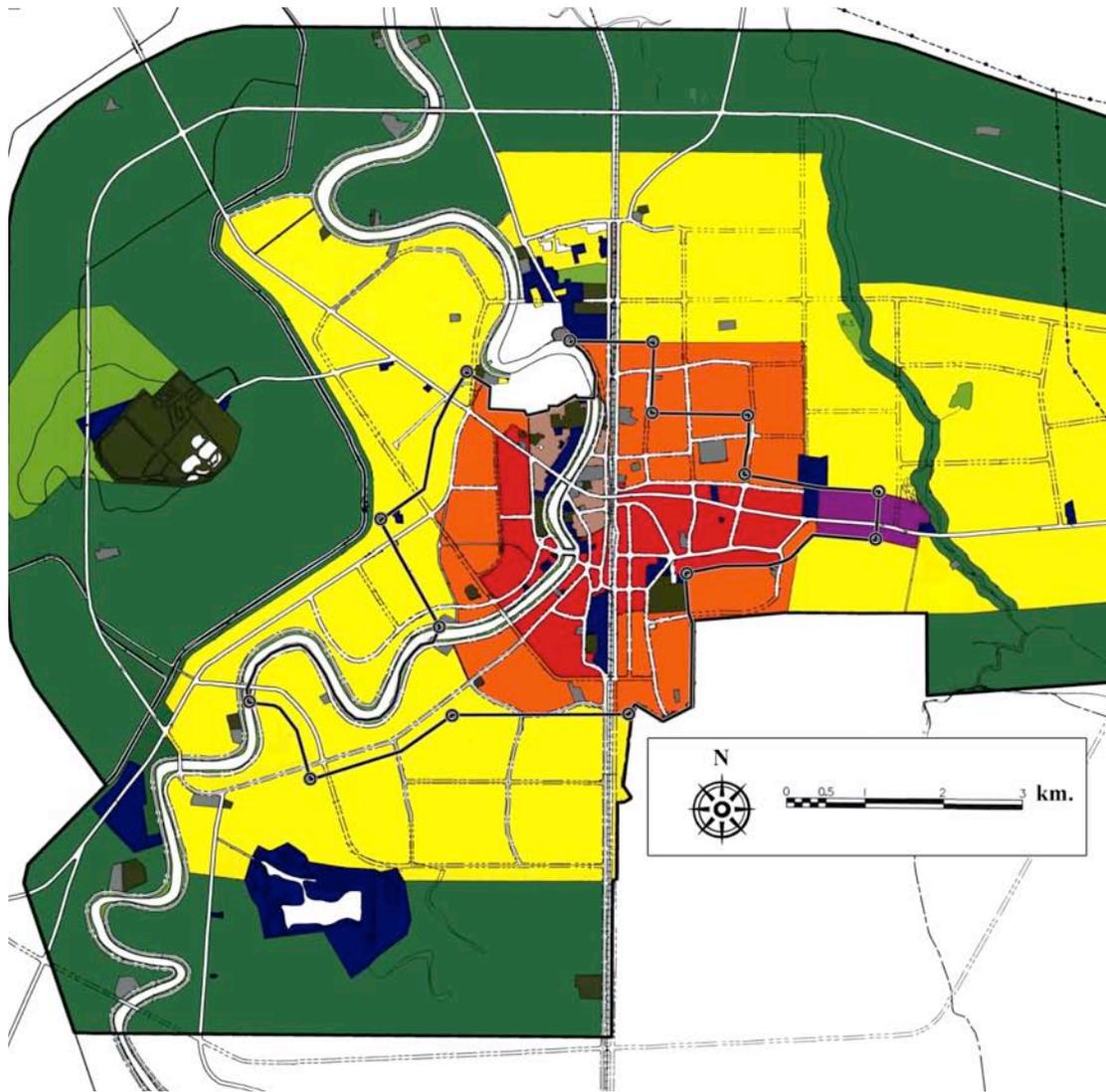
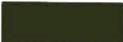
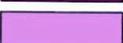


Figure 5: Phitsanulok city map



Legend

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  | Low-density residential area |  | Preserved forest area |
|  | High-density residential area |  | Educational institution area |
|  | High-density residential and commercial area |  | Religious institution area |
|  | Industrial and warehouse area |  | Governmental institution and public utility area |
|  | Specific industrial area |  | Proposed traffic project area |
|  | Rural and agricultural area |  | Municipal boundary |
|  | Public opened area | | |

Phuket City

Phuket City is the capital of Phuket province, located on a southern Thai island (see figure 1). The city is relatively small, covering an area of 12 km². However, its population density is the highest among the three cities. In 2005, there were 74,208 inhabitants, or approximately 6,184 inhabitants/km². Economically, the city is rich compared to Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok. It is well known for tourism and commodities, such as tin. In 2005, Phuket's revenue per capita was about 24% higher than Phitsanulok.

Formerly, Phuket Island was renowned for its wealth in tin resources. It was mentioned in chronicles of a French trader that tin was the most significant product of Phuket (Phumphuthavorn, 2007). Foreign traders, including Portuguese, Dutch and French participated in Phuket's erstwhile tin business. A riverside tin mining location gradually became a key city of the island. Governmental offices were constructed; followed by markets, shop-houses and banks.

In 1977, Phuket Island faced a scarcity of tin. As tin also had a low price in the world market inland tin mining was no longer profitable and the province was forced to search for a new economic sector to substitute the tin industry. Given its attractive beaches and coral reef, tourism was promoted. This, coupled with falling air-flight prices, increased Phuket's economic potential. Beach and island resorts were created for holidaymakers from the temperate north. Meanwhile, the province was selected to be a principal city, together with Phitsanulok. Facilities to support tourism were constructed including an airport. In 1992, inland tin mining was officially prohibited on the island. The Ministry of Science and

Data of the year 2005

Area: 12 sq km

Inhabitants: 74,208

Population Density:
6,184 (inhabitants/sq
km)

Neighborhoods: 17

Revenue (baht):
679,932,976.98

Revenue per capita:
9,162.53

Expenditure (baht):
651,278,390.91

Expenditure per capita
(baht):
8,776.39

Local politics:
Competitive

Source: Three-year
development plan of
Phuket city municipality

Environment announced Phuket Island to be an environmental protection area. This helped generate a tourism boom on the island and tourism is now a major industry. According to GDP in 2007, the main production of the province came from a hotel and restaurant sector, followed by transport and communication sector. However, tourist businesses are located outside Phuket city, which retains administrative, trading, industrial and residential functions.

Similar to Phitsanulok, local politics of Phuket city are competitive. There are two key political parties: ‘Konnum (or Youngman) party’ and ‘Chaobansangsan (a Creative folk) party’. Somjai Suwansupana of the Konnum party has been mayor since 2004. Phuket city municipality has won many awards, such as the ‘Excellence of Transparency and People Participation Award’ in 2002; the ‘Good Governance Administration Award’ in 2003; and the ‘Livable and Sustainable Municipality Award’ in 2002 and 2004.

Figure 6: GPP of Phuket Province in 2007

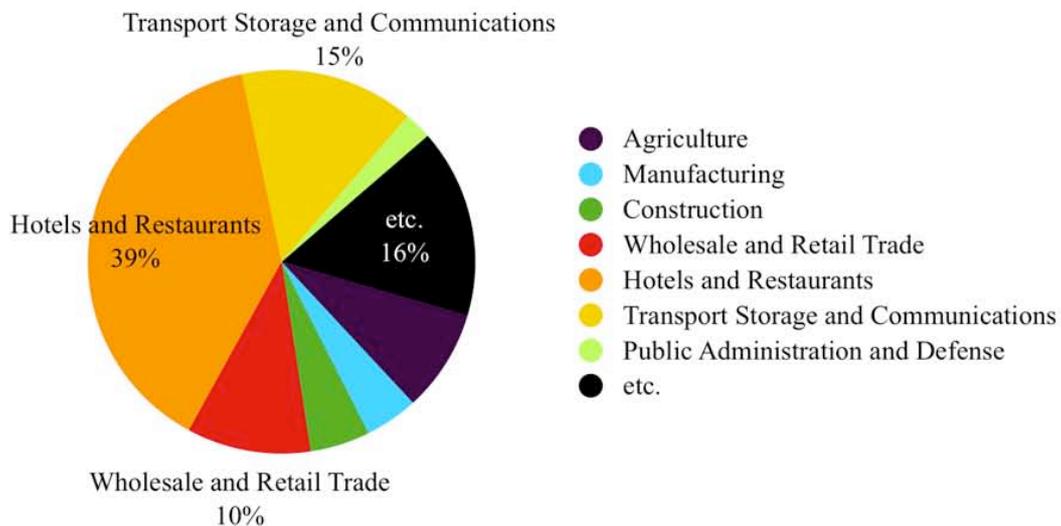
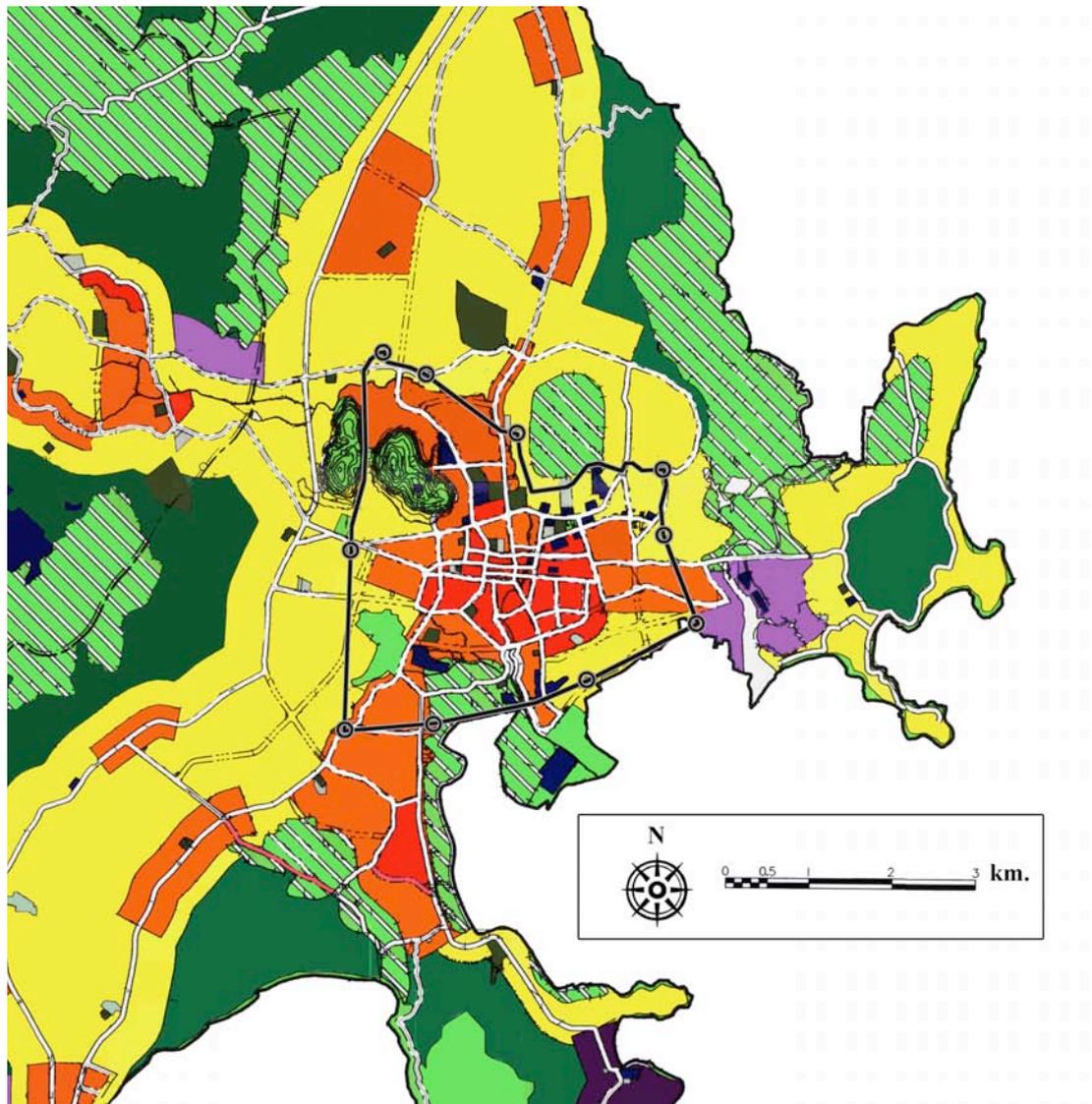


Figure 7: Phuket city map



Legend

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  | Low-density residential area |  | Preserved forest area |
|  | High-density residential area |  | Educational institution area |
|  | High-density residential and commercial area |  | Religious institution area |
|  | Industrial and warehouse area |  | Governmental institution and public utility area |
|  | Specific industrial area |  | Proposed traffic project area |
|  | Rural and agricultural area |  | Municipal boundary |
|  | Public opened area | | |

Format

The chapters of this research are organized thusly: Chapter Two explores theory of participatory planning. Here, the emergence of participatory planning in the western world is discussed. It is revealed that the traditional planning system, oriented in promoting the 'common good', was no longer compatible with the socioeconomic context and, consequently, an alternative planning ideology emerged. Degrees of citizen participation in planning were defined: from the lowest rank (non-participation) to full citizen control (the highest level of participation). The success of participatory planning has correlated with the civil society concept as a political ideal. It refers to a political sphere comprised of citizen's associations, positioning between state and individuals. To this end, the strength of civil society is an essential requirement of participatory planning.

Chapter Three demonstrates the dynamics of Thai civil society and its involvement in development process. It reveals that civil society is not an alien institution in Thai society as it has existed for at least as long as Buddhist temples have been a community centre. However, Thai civil society later expanded to other interests and with increasing power of the state, it became suppressed and only particular associations were integrated in the development process. The business community was an initial group to gain access to development planning and currently remain a dominant group that controls significant public decisions.

In Chapter Four, the author investigates in the capacity of Thai municipality in local development planning. As the municipality is a form of local government, its strength concerning local development planning is a basic requirement in civil society ideals. The chapter shows that Thai municipalities have insufficient capacity to perform their planning and the central government highly influences local development processes. However, the condition is improving with the decentralization of power to local governments, which is being practiced.

Chapter Five examines the possibilities of citizens to participate in municipal development planning. Although there are many channels provided by law, extents of

citizen participation are still low. Important decisions are preserved exclusively for local politicians who are mostly business elites and central governmental officials.

In Chapter Six, the author explores the dominance of business interests in local development planning. The chapter shows that local politicians are able to manipulate citizen participation and use it to favor their own personal benefits.

The author investigates the role of various local groups of interests in the local development process in Chapter Seven. The chapter shows an emergence of active local associations with various interests. Those who are able to compromise their interests to allow benefits for local politicians are able to cooperate with municipalities, while those who act against local politicians' interests are unable to participate in municipal processes. Additionally, forms of citizen participation in local development planning offer little assistance in supporting their development contribution.

Conclusions are drawn in Chapter Eight. Here, the contribution of planning as a political sphere and the hindrance of participatory planning are discussed. The chapter further examines the emerging question of the coexistence between social work and corruption within business community.

Chapter 2

Theory of participatory planning

Overview

Participatory planning has received considerable attention by planners since the 1960s (Healey, 1997). The notion of participatory planning derives from the incompatibility of traditional planning and the existing development context; and has transformed according to economic, political and social changes. Moreover, the mergence of different fields of knowledge has reshaped the concepts within those fields. For planning, knowledge of sociology, particularly civil society, is the central force turning traditional planning toward participatory planning.

This chapter explores the concept of participatory planning. As participatory planning comprises the traditional roots of planning combined with elements of sociology, (particularly the idea of ‘civil society’), it is necessary to investigate them first, including their respective paths of emergence, transformation and conceptual frameworks. The comprehensive concept of ‘participatory planning’ can then be drawn. The contents of this chapter include: (1) the emergence and concept of participatory planning, (2) civil society and (3) conclusion.

2.1 Participatory Planning - Emergence and Conceptual Context

The power of human reasoning came to the fore during the “Age of Enlightenment” in the 18th century, when knowledge began to develop concurrently in science, philosophy and economics – here the value of scientific knowledge and empirical inquiry were boldly highlighted. During this period, ideology began to oppose religious dogma and monarchical attitudes, which had historically preoccupied peoples’ inner lives. Enlightenment thinkers argued for the importance of individuals as knowing subjects with rights and responsibilities, as against power through the ‘divine right’ of kings and barons. They stressed the value of an open environment for business and commerce, as opposed to the political management of the empires

and city-states of Europe at the time (Healey, 1997). Contemporary western conceptions of democracy, which are based on individual franchise, the rights of individuals to pursue their lives and livelihoods, and the primacy of profit-seeking, self-interested economic organization, were significantly shaped in this period (Hall & Gieben, 1992). Individual freedom and advancement of scientific knowledge, also flourishing during this time, engendered the groundswell of invention and expansion known as the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution brought large-scale population growth and considerable population movement. Conditions for the average family were cramped, damp and unsanitary. Along with inadequate diet, these conditions resulted in high mortality rates and a high incidence of ill health among the working-class population. Furthermore, they produced a general public health risk through inadequate water and sewerage systems for the dense urban population. Modern planning was a necessity and duly established (Rydin, 2003).

The following explores the transformation of the planning system, from the Age of Industrialization to the more recent trends in Participatory Planning. The study focuses on three central streams of the planning system accordingly to Patsy Healey. The first is that of economic planning, which aims to manage the productive forces of nations and regions. The second stream focuses on the management of physical development of towns that aims to promote health, economics, convenience and aesthetics in urban settings. The third is geared toward the management of public administration and policy analysis, which aim to achieve both effectiveness and efficiency in meeting explicit goals set for public agencies. These three streams are interconnected; hence change in one induces change in the others.

Age of Industrialization

The Industrial Revolution encouraged city growth. High demand for labor in factories stimulated rural migration to urban areas. The growing urban population triggered a host of critical problems for cities, particularly sanitation. Since the issue of public health and urban physical appearance were the main concerns of that time,

planning activities focused on physical aspects of urban design (Rydin, 2003). Thus, engineering and architecture professions played a dominant role in planning. This approach treated planning as a technical process of design and drawing, separated in its operation from economic and political processes. It was a strongly normative approach – based on the view that planning is inherently a ‘good thing’, setting out in detail what planning should achieve and the ideal model (Rydin, 2003).

Although there was a dominance of engineering and architecture fields in planning, a new integrative approach was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) presented his famous planning concept ‘Garden Cities of Tomorrow’, which involved considerable attention to the financial viability and management of the project and to the vision of a co-operative society in terms of planning activities. The housing and public health concerns of 19th century legislation and comprehensive management of new urban areas implied by the Garden City Movement both influenced the first piece of legislation to bear the word ‘planning’ (Rydin, 2003). Howard’s ‘Garden City’ was essentially a social invention.

Welfare State (1950s – 1960s)

Following the interwar period, Europe encountered an economic upheaval. To impede this, the concept of John Maynard Keynes was adopted in most of European countries during 1950s and 1960s. Keynes’s central concept focused on demand management. He argued that economies slumped because of a crisis in consumer demand. If people did not have the resources to buy goods and/or they did not have the confidence in their longer-term future to be prepared to invest in purchase, then production would sag. A key element in his solution to stimulate demand was the maintenance of ‘full employment’. Such policies were buttressed by social welfare policies to assist people to acquire education, to maintain health and to access housing. A mixed-economy consensus thus prevailed during the 1950s and 1960s.

In terms of the planning system, the ‘ideal city’ was a key objective. Its most influential thinkers came from a tradition that harked back to pre-Enlightenment days where the analysis of physical development processes was avoided (Hall, 1995).

Instead, the idea of modernity entered their discourse through ways of thinking about the shape and form of cities and the qualities of neighborhood organization. Cities were seen as an amalgam of economic, cultural and household activities. The challenge was to find a way of organizing activities that was functionally efficient, convenient to all those involved and aesthetically pleasing as well. The objective was to promote and accommodate modern life, as both a project in economic progress and an opportunity to provide good living conditions for urban populations (Healey & Shaw, 1994). By the late 1960s, the physical development tradition came to be heavily criticized, in part for the arrogant confidence of the planners who promoted it (Boyer, 1983; Davies, 1972; Ravetz, 1980), but also for the lack of any social scientific understanding of the dynamics of urban region change which the planning ideas set out to manage (Hall, 1995; McLoughlin, 1992).

In policy analysis, the rational comprehensive model was developed during the 1960s. Its principles drew on Herbert Simon's ideas of management by objectives, rather than by setting legal rules for administrators to follow. This approach offered flexibility to address the particularity of decision circumstances while constraining corruption by clear accountability of actions to policy criteria (Healey, 1997). The planner as a policy analyst was a specialist in helping clients articulating their goals and translating these into alternative strategies to maximize, or at least 'satisfy', the achievement of these goals, through careful analysis and systematic evaluation. The chosen policy was then implemented and feedback or monitoring ensured decision-making could only improve over time (Rydin, 2003). The model itself was challenged by those who argued that it was idealistic, with unrealistic expectations of the political willingness to stick to rational planning processes, and of the conceptual and empirical knowledge capacity to understand situations sufficiently to be able to identify and evaluate all possible alternatives (Healey, 1997).

Neoliberal Period

As an increasingly interrelated global economy undermined Western economic stability, the postwar economic concept of Keynes together with welfare state social policies was no longer able to deal with the current situation. Problems of

keynesianism grew from the process of globalization, which enabled countries with cheaper labor costs to undercut high wage economies. Consumer demand and its accompanying demand for state spending was growing energetically, creating conditions of rising inflation. At the same time, new technology was reducing the demand for, and therefore power of, labor. Meanwhile, as companies sought to cut costs to be more competitive, questions were raised about the scale of tax demands needed to support the various demand-stimulation strategies, and about the various regulations on working conditions which had built up over the years to protect labor (Healey, 1997). Hence, neoliberalism, which suggests the return of the market as the key organizing principle of economic life, was introduced.

Two world leaders – Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan – implemented neoliberal principles in their respective states. Articulated by the neoliberal political movement, new economic strategies focused on the supply side of the economy, and the reduction of constraints on adaptation and innovation (Gamble, 1988). By this time, state intervention itself was seen as the problem. Planning, along with many other state activities, was characterized as potentially too much ‘red tape’ and an extravagant use of public funds. Planners were essentially viewed as state bureaucrats who, following the iron law of bureaucracies, sought to create and expand their empires. Their central concerns with ‘equality’, ‘social justice’ and ‘the public interest’ were mocked as meaningless. It was therefore essential for the economic well-being of society to cut back on such areas of state activity and minimize its effect on the private sector (Rydin, 2003).

In policy analysis, the neoliberal solution is to translate popular concerns with the impacts of projects into performance criteria by which a project can be judged. Such an approach is, in theory, both transparent and efficient. It assumes that the criteria, and how they should be measured, are easy to define and to be agreed upon. Yet, in practice, indicators and measurements are all potentially contestable (Latour, 1987; Innes, 1990; Vanderplatt, 1995). There are many disadvantages of this approach. First, it does not necessarily reduce the quantum of conflict. Second, it teaches people to treat issues in terms of rule-adherence rather than identifying the actual impacts of a project on people and environments. Third, it deliberately avoids a coordinative role with respect to public policy, leaving any necessary co-ordination to voluntaristic

action through the dynamics of market processes and community self-help. These ideas provide a foil against the communicative approach (Healey, 1997).

The Third Planning Approach

The third approach to planning, known as participatory planning, has greatly developed since its emergence in the late 1960s. Thinkers and advocates of this approach acknowledge the significance of people's involvement in the planning system. Principally, the concepts behind the approach could evolve when the traditional planning system, orientated on promoting the 'common good', was no longer viewed to be compatible with the socioeconomic context. Apparently the system of welfare state policies had failed to eradicate poverty in the city and they were not sensitive to the increasingly evident social diversity of urban life (Healey, 1997). Moreover, during the time of neoliberal implementation, the increasing instability of many local economies created problems for the process of land and property development, particularly where increasing reliance was put on private initiatives, as governments began to cut back public expenditure programs in response to their macroeconomic difficulties.

When the new, alternative planning system was introduced, thinkers realized the benefits of citizen participation, as knowledge and value were actively constituted through social interactive process rather than scientific inquiry (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Latour, 1987; Shotter, 1993). Public policy and planning are thus social processes through which ways of thinking, ways of valuing, and ways of acting are actively constructed by participants. By the 1980s, the physical development planning tradition was moving away from its utopian and aesthetic roots towards a form of policy analysis focused on the practical management of the dynamics of social, economic and environmental change in urban regions (Healey, 1997).

Moreover, environmental awareness has encouraged participatory planning. In the 1990s, planners had been responding to both the increasing popular concern over environmental quality and the protection of nature. At the Rio Summit in 1992, a manifesto for sustainable development was adopted. Known as Agenda 21, this

included specific reference to the role of local authorities and many of the measures discussed elsewhere in the document require local level action. This has given rise to a Local Agenda 21 process (LA21) seeking to implement sustainable development at the scale of the locality. LA21 has several dimensions. It is partly about securing improvements in local environmental quality through a range of policies; partly about achieving a holistic approach by integrating policy approaches in different sectors; and partly about securing greater public involvement in and identification with the goal of sustainable development (Rydin, 1999).

By the end of the 1960s, some planners were interested in integrating political awareness and encouraged people's participation in the planning system. Paul Davidoff (1930-1984) argued in his famous paper 'Advocacy and pluralism in planning' that it was impossible for the planner to be entirely value-free, since planners as people had values (Davidoff, 1965). Implicitly, he acknowledged that these values divided people. He sought a way of planning which opened up the value diversity among the plurality of interests within a political community. He argued that the planner should become value-conscious, declare their values and make themselves available to clients who wished to pursue such values. For him, planners should not be merely technicians but instead be facilitators who consider social and political values in their works. Advocacy planning therefore risks offering a view of a socially balkanized society in which different groups are perpetually fighting one another.

Around the same time, the sociologist-planner Herbert Gans (1927 - present) was arguing that planners had a moral responsibility to argue in favor of improving conditions for the disadvantaged. His study, *The Urban Villagers* focused on Boston's diverse West End neighborhood, which was demolished for the construction of high-rise apartments. Gans contrasted the diverse, lively community of immigrants and their children with the impersonal life in the modernist towers that replaced them. He argued that planners needed to be aware of a double client, and employer, or 'customer' for the planner's services, and, more broadly, the citizens affected by the 'direct' client's proposals (Gans, 1969). The objective of Davidoff and Gans was to shift the approach to fit the pluralistic context better. They offered an idea of city

planning as a vehicle for social reform, which citizens could use in extracting more democratic pluralist polity from the clutches of dominant elites.

In Britain, citizen participation in planning was recognized in 1969. The Skeffington committee released the report *'People and Plans'*, which aimed to search for the best methods of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans. The report was based on the principle that it 'matters to us all that we should know that we can influence the shape of our community'. The Skeffington model emphasized the importance of all members of the public joining in planning decisions; participation was 'the act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals'. However, while the public were to be more involved in the preparation of plans, the actual completion of those plans remained with the planners: 'the completion of plans – the setting into statutory form of the proposals and decisions – is a task demanding the highest standards of professional skill and must be undertaken by the professional staff of the local planning authority' (Rydin, 1999).

In the same year, Sherry R. Arnstein defined "citizen participation", in her widely known article *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, as a categorical term for citizen power. To Arnstein, citizen participation is the redistribution of power that enables the 'have-not' citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the 'have-nots' join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, citizen participation is the means by which citizens can induce significant social reform, which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (Arnstein, 1969).

In order to define the degree of people's participation for particular situations, Arnstein arranged eight types of participation in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizen's power in determining the end-product. Arnstein's (1969, p. 216-24) own definition of her participation ladder (below) provides important insight into the inner dynamics and power arrangements of development processes: "The bottom rungs of the ladder – (1) Manipulation and (2)

Therapy – describe levels of ‘non-participation’ that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power-holders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ the participants. Rung 3 and 4 progress to levels of ‘tokenism’ that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by power-holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under the conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no ‘muscle’, hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Rung (5) Placation, is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power-holders the continued right to decide. Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power-holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power.”

In 1987, John Friedmann introduced ‘transformative planning or radical planning’ which perceived planning as social mobilization. It draws on utopianism, anarchism, historical materialism and other radical thought and looks to the structural transformation of society from below. To Friedmann, civil society is local and especially disadvantaged communities might still be able to develop from within themselves in a time of neoliberalism and globalization. The organizational counterpart to this epistemological commitment is a structure for radical practice that consists of a large number of autonomous (or quasi-autonomous) centers of decision and action whose coordination remains loose and informal. Such a structure encourages a better fit with local environments, a great deal of local experimentation, maximum social mobilization, a self-reliant practice and a non-dogmatic view of the problem. It is the very opposite of planning by the state, with its single-track vision, its remoteness from people’s everyday concerns, its tendency to gloss over differences in local conditions and its hierarchical ladders.

Knowledge in radical planning appears as something distinct from what it is in the sciences, especially the natural sciences. The relevant knowledge in radical planning is always and necessarily contextual: it points to action, considers strategy, endeavors to reach a critical understanding of the present and near future, and is formed by specific social values. This contextualizing of knowledge is a profoundly social process in which those who stand in the front line of the action – households, local communities and social movements – make a decisive contribution. It is these users of knowledge-in-practice who are the final arbiters of knowledge-in-theory. They must critically appropriate theory and adapt it to their needs. It is the activists engaged in daily social struggle who must take part in dialogue with planners and so become immersed in mediated processes of social learning (Friedmann, 1987).

Radical planning, based on people's self-organized actions, stands in necessary opposition to the established powers and, more particular, the state. It would be wrong to ignore the state's existence or to treat it as an adversary only. Its presence is pervasive, and social advances achieved through a radical planning bypasses the state will quickly reach material limits. To go beyond these limits, appropriate actions by the state are essential. A permanent restructuring of the state will be required. But this can only be achieved through a step-by-step process of radical reforms and social learning in all of the domains of public action (*ibid*). Three kinds of politics are relevant in the state restructuring: politics of empowerment, politics of redistribution and politics of place. The politics of empowerment and politics of redistribution illustrate the intimate association that exists between successful micro-actions on the one hand and a national politics on the other. The politics of place emphasizes on the role of family and community that support and sustain the self-production of life.

In 1997, Patsy Healey introduced the term 'collaborative planning'. Healey views local governmental planning as 'providing a locale within which people act in constrained situations' but where people are potentially able to transform those situations. She emphasizes the web of social relations, the networks linking actors and organizations, and the institutional capacity of a place, that is, the quality of the collection of relational network in a place (Rydin, 2003). Her collaborative planning is defined in terms of power-sharing, and five tasks are assigned to it: identifying and

bringing together stakeholders; designing and using arenas for communication and collaboration; trying and using different routines and styles of communication; making the discourses of policy; and maintaining consensus. This last task of building and maintaining the consensus is central to collaborative planning: 'If the culture-building process of strategy-making has been rich enough and inclusive enough, the strategy should have become widely shared and owned by the participants and the stakeholders to which they are linked. It will express a robust consensus.'

The potential of collaborative discussion of shared concerns about local environmental changes is that people can come to learn about potential impacts and possible ways of valuing and addressing them. Through such discursive practices, people learn about each other, about different points of view and come to reflect on their own point of view. In this way, a store of mutual understanding is built up, which is a 'social and intellectual capital' that can be drawn upon when dealing with subsequent issues (Healey, 1997).

Marcelo Lopes De Souza (2000, p. 187-201) makes an important comparison between conventional planning and participatory planning whereby "the most distinctive characteristic of conventional planning is its technocratic character. Conventional urban planners see participation of ordinary people in the planning process as undesirable. Planning is understood as a purely technical matter which has to be carried out on the basis of rationality; ordinary people who are not appropriately trained have to submit themselves to specialized knowledge. Alternative planners stress the importance of popular participation, viewing planning as a political-technical process, not just as a technical product (the master plan) or even as a technical process. During the participatory process, the aim of the planner is not to build harmony through technical rationality, conceiving disharmony as a fully avoidable and pathological thing, but to make explicit the conflicts and to try regulating them with the help of political transparency and the political participation of the affected citizens. While conventional urban planning deals with problems of an ideal city, in the context of which the illegal and informal parts of the actual urban space are usually ignored, alternative urban planning deals with the real city, and its priority is not to project ideal end-states through blueprint plans, but to conceive tools for tackling the existing urban problems in a democratic way."

From preceding thinkers who developed various forms of people involvement in the planning system, the key characteristics of participatory planning can be concluded as follows: (1) it relies on the knowledge from people's interaction in a social context, rather than entirely believes in scientific or empirical knowledge, as all forms of knowledge are socially constructed; the knowledge of science and the techniques of experts are as important as the practical reason; (2) it changes the way of decision-making from competitive interest bargaining towards collaborative consensus-building; through this approach it can endure the plan; (3) it recognizes that spatial planning is a space where the individual can execute their rights; and (4) it acknowledges that a strong civil society is crucial for the participatory planning process.

The different means through which individuals can participate in the planning system are examined below. The concept of 'civil society' gains focus as it is widely accepted that civil society is an institution mediating individual interests within the public arena, and is a channel for the individual to participate in the public decision-making, including spatial planning.

2.2 Emergence and Concept of Civil Society

Definition

Civil society refers to a political sphere comprised of citizen's associations, which are positioned between the state and individuals. People with similar interests liberally form associations in which members are free to leave upon their own volition. Such organized groups are outside the state structure and attempt to function on a non-profit basis. They are broadly defined amongst thinkers: some focus on cultural association such as churches, communities, neighborhoods; others extend to an economic sphere such as commercial association, industrial association and trade union; there are also those who have a geographical scope in a manageable area, such as local community.

Transformation of the civil society concept

Civil society is grounded in early modern Western political thought. Its theoretical interest appears to have emerged periodically as a result of convulsions in the public order. During the Age of Enlightenment, the emerging bourgeoisie had begun to assert its independence from the (monarchical or feudal) state (Calabrese, 2004). Thinkers saw that community life, characterized by a feudal and aristocratic order, was dying in the emergent modern world – the world of Enlightenment, capitalism and democracy. Their task was “to help society respond to this new social reality: either by embracing it and finding new and more appropriate forms of civic virtue, or by finding ways to preserve the best elements of the older forms of social order” (Eberly, 2000, pp. 23-24). For these thinkers, civil society had a similar meaning with what today we call ‘the private sector,’ a realm of personal autonomy in which people could be free to develop their own methods of moral accounting. It was clear to these thinkers that, “according to the degree in which capitalism encouraged pure selfishness, it ran the risk of destroying this very moral potential” (Wolfe, 2000, p. 63).

In 1690, **John Locke’s** (1632-1704), *Second Treatise on Civil Government* offered the explanation of why members of civil society unite to form a government; the chief reason being the protection of property interest, “to which in the state of Nature there are many things wanting” (Locke, 1960, p. 124). That reasoning was developed further during the 18th century’s Scottish Enlightenment, specifically in the writings of Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith.

Adam Smith (1723-1790), a leader of the free trade concept, argued that rational self-interest and competition, operating in a social framework that ultimately depends on adherence to moral obligations, can lead to economic well-being and prosperity. While human motives are often selfishness and greed, competition in the free market would tend to benefit society as a whole by keeping prices low, while still building in an incentive for a wide variety of goods and services. Hence, Smith believed that individuals should base their decisions and behavior not on reason about the good of society but on the pursuit of advantages. He stated: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard

to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages” (Smith 1993 [1776], p. 22). In Smith’s world, individuals treat one another as means to their private ends, and a just moral order is the by-product of that selfish pursuit (Calabrese, 2004).

For the role of the state, Smith attacked most forms of government interference in the economic process, including tariffs, arguing that this creates inefficiency and high prices in the long run. Nevertheless, he advocated a Government that was active in sectors other than economy such as education, judiciary and military. For civil society, Smith revealed the foundation of his conception of civil society as one of ‘economic man’ actively pursuing ‘the necessities, conveniences and amusements of human life’ (Smith, 1993). According to Smith, civil society is mediated by a social order constituted by private property, contracts and ‘free’ exchanges of labor, and it is the state’s duty to protect that order. His primary preoccupation was with the well-being of the bourgeois, or economic man, not the citizens (Calabrese, 2004).

Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) welcomed the advent of critical and analytical philosophy as an ally against superstitious credulity and confused obscurantism, yet was afraid that it might also dissolve the certainty of useful knowledge and virtuous judgment into incomprehensible technical complexity and ethnocentric relativism. Ferguson accepted that commerce created unprecedented social well-being; however, might also destroy the warm personal bonds of fellow-feeling which weld together a genuinely human community. For political institutions, though they created security and ordered liberty, Ferguson deeply regretted that they failed to perform the vital pedagogical function of instilling a disinterested and active virtue (Kettler, 1965). Hence, civil society became an ideal for him. He agreed that society lies in human nature. He described that, man as a member of a community, when considered in this capacity, no longer acted for himself. In his view, “society was a precious creation; it is here that a man is made to forget his weakness, his cares of safety and his subsistence, and to act from those passions which make him discover his force” (Wolfe, 2000, p. 62).

Ferguson maintained that man’s reasoning and judging capacities depend on society for their development. He argued that, although nature gives man his capabilities,

only society could provide the moral and physical strength to sustain a virtuous life. In loving society, then, a virtuous man at once expresses and strengthens his virtue. In fostering virtue, society at once justifies and maintains its existence. The virtuous man manifests and furthers virtue when he acts to strengthen the social ties among men because a society of men bound together by close ties is an all-important aid to the emergence of virtue in men. Virtue, after all, is the perfection of human nature, and human nature is inconceivable without society (Kettler, 1965).

In contrast to the materialism of Smith, **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804) believed that the selfish quest to satisfy needs and desires was an inadequate basis upon which to construct a moral order. The moral foundation of Kant's civil society requires that the ends sought by one should not be won at the expense of the well-being of another. In his groundwork of the metaphysics of morals, Kant argues the moral maxims that provoke action should be universal and that everyone should know and follow them. The finest way to guarantee the ends human beings pursue should be in line with the moral precepts of a universal maxim. The ends have to be based not exclusively on moral dogma but to public reason. Individuals and relationships must be treated as ends in themselves, and not simply means to other ends (Kant, 1991).

Civil society, for Kant, was a higher form of social life because it transformed what each had only by force into theirs by right. In this phase of its life, civil society was synonymous with the existence of a state. Kant's civil society rests securely on three principles: first, the freedom of the individual as a human being; second, the equality of each subject in an open, civil society; and third, the independence of each member of that society as a citizen.

Unlike Kant, **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831) developed a theory of politics that treated human needs not only as important but also as the defining feature of civil society. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1991), Hegel characterized civil society as a 'system of needs', the place in which individuals reconcile their particular private interests with social demands and expectations. In order to prevent the competition among different interests without consideration of the common good, Hegel devised the notion of the Corporation as the meeting place of both the will of the individual and the universal will of society, such will uniting practical and ethical

elements into a single form of reasoning. The Corporation allows for communal life, through mutual recognition of its members' needs and contributions, and it mediates between the particular interests of its members and the universal interests of the state (O'Brien, 1999).

Hegel made a clear distinction between state and the society. For him, the term civil society referred to the sphere of life between the family and state, which brought individuals into relationships of cooperation with others on the basis of their own inclinations to work and live. It is an autonomous self-governing sphere, which can transform individual strivings for particular advantage into the public good. Civil society, as he argued, was ultimately mediated by the universal state. The state gives order to the system of needs by ensuring the stability of private property, social class, and the division of labor (Corbett, On civil society, 2005).

For Hegel, it is not the state but civil society that is best suited to balancing the diverse range of human needs and interests. Yet he was also conscious that civil society must suffer from the same problems as the market itself that moral content was always compromised because its root in competitive private acquisitiveness threatened to dissolve into universal chaos. Unable to overcome the pull of particularism or solve its chronic pauperism, civil society required the ethical moment of the state. Since modernity is restless, self-seeking and self-preserving, searching endlessly for gratification, civil society, for Hegel, has ultimately to be controlled, or in effect, tamed by the state.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a thinker who disagreed with the ideal of civil society. In his book '*On Liberty*', he states that governmental encroachment upon the freedom of individuals is almost never warranted. Moreover the current civil society was as inhibiting and coercive as the state is. Mill (1975) points out that social sanctions can be as much an infringement on liberty as legal sanctions. A genuinely civil society, he maintained, must always guarantee the civil liberty of its citizens – their protection against interference by an abusive authority. The tyranny of the majority is especially dangerous to individual liberty, Mill supposed, because the most commonly recommended remedy is to demand that the recalcitrant minority

either persuade the majority to change its views or learn to conform to socially accepted norms (Kemerling, 2002).

Considering first freedom of thought and discussion, Mill argued that because even a majority opinion is fallible, society should always permit the expression of minority views. There is a chance, after all, that the unconventional opinion will turn out, in the long run, to be correct, in which case the entire society would suffer if it were never allowed to come to light (Kemerling, 2002). Even if the unconventional opinion turns out to be incorrect, Mill contends there is still good reason to encourage its free expression. The truth can only be enlivened and strengthened by exposure to criticism and debate through which the majority view is shown not to be merely an inadequately grounded superstition.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) replaced the idea of civil society with the term ‘bourgeois society’. He viewed the state as the political consolidation of the bourgeois domination that existed in civil society. Commenting on political freedom in his early essay, *On the Jewish Question*, Marx found, "the so-called rights of man...are nothing but the rights of the member of civil society, i.e., egoistic man, man separated from other men and the community" (Marx, 1990, p. 162). In Marx’s view, the formal guarantee of liberal citizenship is premised on the conditions of economic inequality that are inherent in being a member of the bourgeoisie and expropriating the labor of others, rather than the right to which one is entitled simply because of one’s humanity. For Marx, we are degraded by having our humanity so thoroughly identified with being bourgeois, and not with being a citizen. In his words, ‘citizenship, the political community’ is reduced ‘to a mere means for preserving these so-called rights of man’ (Marx, 1978). The state, in this sense, is not a means for the fulfillment of equal citizenship but rather it is a means through which the bourgeois is able to pursue his self-interest (Calabrese, 2004).

Marx desires political society to squeeze out civil society. When people are truly free, he says, they will see themselves as citizens of the whole political community, not decomposed into different, non-universal roles as a trader, a laborer, a Jew, a Protestant. Each person will be ‘a communal being’ united with all other citizens, and the state will no longer be seen as an instrument to protect rights so that individuals

can pursue their selfish ends but as the entity through which everyone would achieve 'the human essence [which] is the true collectivity of man' (Marx, 1990).

While other thinkers focused on the central state, **Alexis de Tocqueville** (1805-1859) paid attention to ideas of voluntarism and localism (Wolfe, 2000, p. 64). He was fascinated by the American's civil society, and described, "Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types - religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. Americans combine to give fetes, found seminaries, build churches, distribute books and send missionaries to the antipodes. Hospital, prisons and schools take shape in that way. Finally, if they want to proclaim the truth or propagate some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form an association (de Tocqueville, 1969).

Alexis de Tocqueville described civil society as civic association: It consisted of legions of charities, lodges, fraternal orders, civic leagues and religious associations. These associations are voluntary and serve larger social purposes. While many voluntary associations are formed to meet the private needs of individuals, they too serve important social purposes, even if unconsciously. The civic networks that fascinated de Tocqueville arose spontaneously from the aspirations and desires of free people. They take form as the people themselves desire to join together voluntarily, work toward common purposes, and in the process, learn the essential habits of collaboration and trust (Eberly, 2000).

According to de Tocqueville, the term civil society frequently connotes the idea of localism, both in reference to community and small-scale local associations. Freedom for the individual is accompanied by attachment to the interests of others as mediated through local associations. De Tocqueville did not wish self-interest away. Self-interest exists and can be harnessed to develop continents and to supply the energy for industrial and technological innovation. But the need to rise above the narrow pursuit of private interest is equally important to preserve a well-ordered society in which the fruits of one's labors are enjoyed.

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), influenced by Marx, provided a concept of state as comprising: (1) political institutions and legal constitutional control, and (2) civil society. His concept of civil society is premised on the idea that it is a site of struggle for the legitimate use of state power. He argued that the success of a war of movement – violent revolutions to seize control of the state – will not last if it is not preceded or followed by a successful war of position – political struggle within civil society (Gramsci, 1971). Furthermore, according to Gramsci, the oppositional activities of ‘subaltern social groups’ towards the hegemony of the ruling groups are ‘necessarily fragmented and episodic’, due to their lack of coherent class consciousness, and their aims can be realized only by the effective seizure of state power. In Gramsci’s vocabulary, in order for the subaltern groups to gain control of the state, they must integrate to form a new ‘historical bloc’ of political, economic, and cultural structures and relations, based on its own counter-hegemony, as articulated and organized by its own organic intellectuals (Calabrese, 2004). He believes the proletariat's historical task is to create a 'regulated society' and defines the 'withering away of the state' as the full development of civil society's ability to regulate itself. According to Gramsci, the notion of civil society shifted from the needs of the bourgeoisie – apparently in the eighteenth and nineteenth century - to the proletariat.

Robert Putnam (1941 – present) affirmed the mutual significance of state and civil society. Based upon his study of regional governments in Italy, Putnam argues that civic institutions shape politics and are the origins of effective government. It is widely acknowledged that a healthy political system is more dependent upon a strong civil society than it is capable of creating it, or recovering it once it has eroded, for the simple reason that civil society is not a subsidiary of the state (Eberly, 2000). A crucial significance of civil society for Putnam is that it is a seedbed of virtue – “When civic institutions decline, civic virtue declines with them” (Putnam, 2000). Putnam described citizens who were connected to civic community as “helpful, respectful and trustful toward one another” (*ibid*). These democratic habits are derived, he said, from the thick layer of *horizontal relations* in which citizens are bound to relations that cultivate a spirit of reciprocity and cooperation, and not bound together by vertical relations of authority and dependency (Putnam, 1993). For him,

civil society cherishes reasoned (rather than value-laden) discourse, mutual tolerance, participatory skills and volunteerism (Etzioni, 2000).

Neo-conservatives **Peter Berger** (1929 – present) and **Richard John Neuhaus** (1936 – present) emphasize the traditional form of civil society. For them, civil society is a mediating structure that stands between the individual and the large mega-structures of both market and the state. Mediating structures such as families, churches, synagogues, voluntary associations, and neighborhoods are essential for a vital democratic society because they help otherwise isolated individuals navigate through a complex, competitive society. In a sense, individuals who are imbedded in associations find protection and representation to the outside world they would otherwise not have (Eberly, 2000).

The 1960s saw the emergence of the ‘**New Social Movement**’ (NSM), which played an enormous role in the development of a healthy civic consciousness and a pluralistic civil society. By the wake of student revolt, the NSM had established itself in West Germany. The student movement of the early 1960s quickly gave way to critical protests against the goals of Western society and the functioning of the democratic political process. Although the student movement began to dissipate within a few years, it marked the beginning of a broader wave of social change that has affected virtually all advanced industrial democracies (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990). The major factor to set free a wave of NSMs was an increasing feeling that modernity’s two greatest social instruments, the market and the state, had become more problematic. Moreover, the neo-corporatist system in West Germany in the late sixties and early seventies tended to exclude democratic grassroots movements from the political game. Their demand was to open the political process to a more diverse and citizen-oriented set of interests (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990). They were vehicles for groups that lacked access to political power through other political channels.

The NSM has many distinctions from the classic movement – i.e. the socialist movement in the mid-19th century (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990). In terms of ideology, the defining characteristic of new social movements is their advocacy of a new social paradigm, which contrasts with the dominant goal structure of Western industrial societies. NSMs generally advocate greater opportunities to participate in the

decisions affecting one's life, whether through methods of direct democracy or increased reliance on self-help groups and cooperative styles of social organization. The alternative social goals of these movements often place them in direct competition with the labor movement. The populist and participatory values of new social movements also stand in sharp contrast to the bureaucratized, hierarchical and neo-corporatist tendencies existing in most established European interest groups.

Forming the base of support, the new social movements derived from a combination of economic interests and distinct social networks, while the classic movement represented a clearly defined group such as the labor class. The environmental and peace movements garner their support from socially diffuse groups of individuals who share their goal – not from a distinct class, ethnic, or other social stratum. In respect to the motivation to participate, it is claimed that participants in NSMs are motivated by ideological goals and pursuit of collective goods; although the goals of the old movements were instrumental, aimed at benefiting the interests of members of a collective, even if society or other social groups must pay the cost.

In organizational structure, while the organizational pattern of old social movements is often identified with a centralized, hierarchical structure, the NSMs prefer a decentralized, open and democratic structure that is more in tune with the participatory tendencies of their supporters. The small size of these groups and their neighborhood locale make an extensive organizational structure unnecessary and undesirable.

For the political style, the new social movement approach claims that many NSMs intentionally remain outside the institutionalized framework of government. Many environmental groups openly reject participation in government commissions and regulatory groups because they feel they may be forced to compromise on their goals. NSMs seemingly prefer to influence policy through political pressure and the weight of public opinion, rather than becoming directly involved in conventional politics.

Most critically, the NSM formed thousands of citizens' initiatives that mushroomed across the republic during the early 1970s. They introduced the republic to grassroots activism, anti-authoritarianism in praxis, participatory democracy and the complexity

of gender relations, which are a major fundament of civil society development in the following period.

Summary

Although the concept of civil society in each period has emphasized different issues, general significances of civil society are three-fold, they: mediate between the individual and the large mega-structures of the market and state tempering the negative social tendencies associated with each; create important social capital; and impart democratic values and habits (Eberly, 2000). As a mediating structure, civil society is not only an institution preventing an excessive dominance of the state and market over individuals, but also provides individuals the opportunity for effective public action. It generates a social equilibrium balancing the power between the state or market and individuals.

According to Robert Nisbet, the weaker our local horizontal ties are in civic community, the stronger our vertical relationship of democracy will be with the central state. The ability to balance the power with the state is conducted through the collective form, which empowers individuals to express their interests in public effectively. According to de Tocqueville, associations represent an independent source of political power of individuals and as such exercise a powerful check against either powerful private interests or tyranny by political majorities. Without associations, de Tocqueville believes there is "no other dyke to hold back tyranny of whatever sort, and a great nation might with impunity be oppressed by some tiny faction or by a single man" (de Tocqueville, 1969, p. 236).

The social capital created by civil society lies within the improvement of the human mind. To de Tocqueville, feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed (de Tocqueville, 1969). Many different qualities of the human mind can be generated from civil society, such as sacrifice, trustfulness, helpfulness and respectfulness. Adam Ferguson was especially inclined to treat civil society, not merely as an arena of civic association and free exchange, but as a moral sphere. Ferguson argues that for this vision of society to materialize, individuals must

yield a portion of their own happiness when it conflicts with ‘the good of society’ (Ferguson, 1819). De Tocqueville affirms it is through this bond of personal attachment and significance that the individual is rendered more willing to act on behalf of his fellows, to "sacrifice some of his private interests to save the rest" (de Tocqueville, 1969, p. 131).

Civil Society inculcates core democratic values. By developing positive sentiments toward others and ultimately the large society, local institutions of civil society are frequently portrayed as the seedbeds of civic virtue (Putnam, 1993). For de Tocqueville, associations become laboratories of democracy – what he called the “little school of citizenship” – in the process (de Tocqueville, 1969).

2.3 Conclusion

The planning system has transformed from its origins as a governmental tool for realizing a developmental process with utopian ideals, centralized decision-making and technical knowledge, to integrative decision-making involving various developmental actors and/or stakeholders in planning – in effect, participatory planning. This shift derives from market mechanisms of capitalism, which ruled the development process in the period of neo-liberalism when other interests were neglected. During this time, the role of state has been questioned in terms of its effectiveness and hindrance to economic growth. Thus, the third approach to planning has been developed in order to cope with the current pluralist society. The planning system is no longer perceived as merely technical work; rather it is a political process providing people a channel to participate in public decision-making.

Meanwhile, New Social Movements – representing a significant shift of civil society development – have shaped a new political paradigm. They have become institutions or mediating structures standing between state and individuals offering people possibilities to access the political sphere. Essentially, they are characterized by the demands they make for state decentralization and unconventional approaches for participation in the state decision-making arena.

The success of participatory planning correlates with the civil society concept as a political ideal. It refers to a political sphere comprised of citizen's associations, positioning between the state and individuals. The overall strength of civil society is an essential requirement of participatory planning.

Chapter 3

The Dynamics of Thai Civil Society and its Involvement in the Development Process

Overview

The previous chapter demonstrated that participatory planning originated from society's recognition of the development planning system as a political process, rather than mere technical work. Here, public decisions, including local development planning, must be undertaken collectively. Stakeholders and various interest groups must be included in the planning process, instead of it being solely decided by politicians and bureaucrats, or particular interest groups.

Civil society is crucial in this alternative system of planning as it generates effective participatory planning. This chapter provides a general overview of Thai civil society by exploring its dynamics. It initially demonstrates the role of non-governmental associations in development process and their evolution from origins to *status quo*. The rise of the business community – a group who currently dominates public decision in Thailand – is then investigated. Here, practices of the business community have captured the local political process throughout urban Thailand via 'political machines' that comprise networks of business people looking after their own interests and using the political process to these ends. The chapter proceeds to examine how the national development process more generally evolved and how this has led to the current dominance of business at the local level. Conclusions present findings about the distinctive characteristic of Thai civil society.

3.1 The Evolution of Thai Civil Society

Pre-administrative Reform

Community Buddhist temples were the initial form of civil society institutes in Thailand (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994). They provided philanthropy and

propelled a socialization processes conducive to merit making. Monks and their monasteries functioned as centers of intellectual, cultural, recreational and community life. Boys learned to read and write, men and women exhibited their artistic talents, performed their religious rituals and relaxed and enjoyed themselves when gathering at the temple. Temple grounds were seen as playgrounds in the eyes of children and theaters for performers during festivities. Travelers also took refuge at the temple hostels for food and lodging; the ill were treated there with traditional medicines, and they simultaneously operated as orphanages for homeless children. During wartime, monks were often involved in community combat against external enemies. Besides philanthropic roles, community temples essentially represented a community itself insomuch that communities were identified by the name of the community temple; wealth of communities could also be ascertained from the appearance of their temples. To these ends, the temple stood as a civil institution established by a community and provided essential social services to the community.

Other than Buddhist temples, foreigners who resettled in Thailand established their own associations. Christian churches were vital non-governmental organizations. Initially, catholic missionaries came to Thailand in 1567-8 from Portugal, followed by those from Spain and France. Protestant missionaries firstly appeared later in 1828. Their activities concentrated on preaching, building hospitals, schools, churches and leprosy centers, as well as working with other minority groups. At the outset, the work of missionaries was considerably difficult, as there were attempts of Thai kings to limit the influence westerners could have on Thai people. Missionaries grew more successful during the 19th century when Rama IV (1851-1868), who led Thailand into the modernization process, opened up the country and introduced a multitude of liberal policies. Christian churches were allowed to possess lands, and Catholic missionaries succeeded in propagating the Catholic faith throughout the entire country during this period (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994).

Chinese people comprised another notable foreign group who formed non-governmental associations in Thailand. Their associations, including ethnic, clan, speech, and regional associations, began in the late nineteenth century. In the past, the Chinese likely established underground and informal groups. Since the end of the First World War, these groups became inactive; others were reorganized as legitimate

mutual-aid associations, and there were also those whose members were primarily drawn from the same speech groups who put aside differences or merged, thus paving the way for the establishment of legal speech-group associations (Skinner, 1957).

One of the most notable developments in Chinese formal organization during the early 1900s was the rapid increase in the number and scope of mutual help and welfare associations. Since the Thai government was slow in extending public social welfare facilities, local Chinese society fostered intra-community self-help (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994). According to G. William Skinner (1957), speech-group and clan associations were founded to meet many needs. They protected the special occupational interests of members; helped new immigrants from the home districts or migrant areas to find jobs and establish themselves; built and maintained temples for the gods of the home district and cemeteries for the use of those who could not afford the shipment of their deceased to China for burial; provided the location and occasions for social gatherings of those from the same district or migrant area, and so on. Businesses of members were well protected in this circle. Therefore, local wealthy business elites were likely members of similar Chinese associations.

Administrative Reform

King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) undertook administrative reform in the late 19th century, intending to create a Thai nation. Centralization policy in Thai public administration was practiced. National systems - including the school, public administration, and health care systems - were established. The roles of the monasteries that previously covered these responsibilities were subsequently reduced. Hence, community temples began to lose their influence. This centralization policy that aimed to tighten local communities with the central government, eliminated sense of locality, local responsibility, and local wisdom.

While the traditional civic associations were undermined, modern philanthropy, which functioned differently from traditional religious and ethnic groups, emerged during the early 20th century. Royalty and aristocrats were the major supporters of non-government organizations (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001). According to Viti

Muntarbhorn (1991), King Rama V was aware of the need to modernize the country, and in his extensive travels to Europe, he realized that some of the European institutions could support the modernization process. In 1885, a group of women led by royalty set up the Sapa Unalom Daeng, which has since become the Thai Red Cross. It aimed to care for wounded soldiers and to provide medical and other supplies. Thus, the first formally recognized philanthropic organization was established. In 1890, a wife of King Chulalongkorn founded the Home for Orphans. In 1904, the Siam Society under Royal Patronage was founded by a handful of enthusiastic Thai and foreign scholars, and with the encouragement and support of the first royal patron, King Rama VI. Their aim was to promote knowledge of Thailand and its surrounding region through activities such as founding libraries, museums, and publications (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001).

Absolute Monarchy Abolition

In 1932, Thailand converted from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. According to this shift, Thai social structure transformed; power of the royalty was replaced by the military. Field Marshal Phibun – a former leader of Thailand (1938-1944 and 1948-1957) – encouraged the formation of new types of associations as part of efforts to consolidate his political power. Hence, many associations were established. According to Riggs, only after the 1932 Revolution did a greater spectrum of Thai associations emerge (Riggs, 1966). Many of them were alumni or sports associations formed by the Thai upper class (*Ibid*). The Women's Cultural Club was set up by the Prime Minister's First Lady in 1943. The objectives were to promote cultural and social activities among members and to provide welfare for those in need. In 1956, the Women's Cultural Club, which had branches in almost every province in the country, was reorganized, resulting in the establishment of the National Women's Council of Thailand (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994).

The activities of NGOs in this time primarily focused on providing welfare to poor people and people who were affected by wars. They collected goods such as dried foods, medicine, clothes, and blankets, raised funds from the upper class, and distributed them to target people. Later these activities were considered to have a

negative affect on communities since they instilled an attitude of dependence on assistance from the upper classes or state, instead of building local capacity to support a self-help community. This sustained the patron-client system and presented a major hindrance to development in Thailand (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001).

Chinese associations were suppressed during and after the Second World War. While Thailand was aligned with the allied powers, many Chinese were involved in anti-Japanese activities as their political activities related to their homeland. Chinese economic dominance was regarded by the Thai state as a threat; hence, the government highly controlled these associational activities. The government established the National Cultural Commission of the Ministry of Education to oversee the activities of nonprofit organizations. The National Cultural Act of 1942 was promulgated to regulate nonprofit organizations whose objectives were to propagate cultural heritage (Thai or Chinese) and to provide welfare and social services in the form of clan associations, as well as religious organizations. After the Phibun regime (1948-1957), Thai-Chinese relations gradually improved.

The Development Period and Anti-communism

In 1950s, the U.S. government became an important ally to Thailand, aimed to prevent the country from falling to the communist camp. The term ‘development’, which focused on economic growth through private capitalism, was introduced to Thailand. To promote ‘development’, the U.S. helped establish new bureaucratic infrastructure – i.e. a planning board, budget bureau, investment promotion machinery, and a restructured central plan. Thailand began to use the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) in 1961 as a government tool guide to reach its goal.

The NGOs with development orientation emerged in this period and were established by scholars, who were mostly university teachers or civil servants with a western education. As they taught in academic institutes, students absorbed their ideas and became pioneers in changing the direction of development. Many found summer camps an outlet for their politico-social propensities, which enabled the youth of the

upper and middle classes to familiarize with rural poverty and disparity (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994).

In 1966, a missionary and a medical doctor founded the Angle Centre Organization (Samakom Soonklang Tewa) in Bangkok. This organization deals with slum issues including education of children, money saving schemes, medication and community planning. It was the first organization using the idea of self-help and capacity building by integrating people in the solution finding process. In 1967, the disparity between rural and urban gained attention within the middle class. Dr. Puey Ungpakorn – an important technocrat – together with bureaucrats and businessmen founded the Thai Rural Development Foundation (Moonlaniti Burana Chonnabot Hang Prated Thai) with the motto ‘go to them, stay with them, assist them, and love them’ (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001). NGOs with a rural development orientation could expand their work to communities, previously problematic to access, via the extended transportation network built during the late 1950s. However, the main difficulties in their work stemmed from local attitudes, which were deeply rooted in the receiver mentality – i.e. gaining assistance from the state instead of self-help. In addition, the state was not open for public participation in decision-making (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001).

In the same period, Sulak Siwaluk – a significant Thai activist – founded the Social Review Group functioning as a forum to criticize Thai society. It was the first time that civic association began to question the state and criticize Thai society. Nevertheless, technocrats normally made public decisions. Obviously there was an absence of a cooperative action between the state and the private sectors stated in the first and second national development plans (1961-1971).

Democracy returned to Thailand following a student uprising in 1973, which resulted in the ousting of a military leader and the ushering in of successive civilian Prime Ministers. The relationship between the state and civilian improved, which greatly opened the stage for cooperation. Thai people became politically active and formed groups for discussing politics and disparities within Thai society. Consequently, many NGOs in this period focused on strengthening democracy, and anti-injustice (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001). In 1973, academics, students, and lawyers

founded the Human's Rights and Liberty Organization (Sahaphap Phur Sitti Sareephap Khong Prachacon). Its activities included research and publications on issues of human's rights and liberty.

However, in 1976, excessive student demonstrations invited militaries to form a coup. They regained power and declared martial law. Many young people fled into the jungle to join the Communist Party of Thailand. The military government enforced an anti-communist policy. Some activists, such as leaders of farmer, labor, and student organizations, were kidnapped or simply disappeared. For NGOs, this period marked a very "low" period for development activities. Many organizations, except those belonging to the upper class, were considered communist sympathizers and/or agents (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994).

In terms of business interests, the government recognized an urgent need to work cooperatively. This was a matter of high business competition in the world market and followed the U.S model of development. According to this political condition, the 3rd and the 4th NESDPs promoted a legal formation of business associations to be a mediator connecting private sectors with the state. Consequently, the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industries, and the Thai Banker's Association were established.

In the late 1970s, Thailand confronted an economic recession. This accelerated the cooperation between the state and the private sectors. A cooperative committee consisting of the state officials and public sectors was created. Later, in 1981 it was transformed to the 'Kor Ror Or' – or the Joint Public-Private Cooperative Committee (JPPCC). The committee was a legitimated board consisting of two main bodies (delegations of the state and a private sector) and was provided with a secretariat within the National Economic and Social Development Board (Hewison & Thongyou, 2000). This national cooperative form was duplicated at the provincial level afterwards. As a consequence, business interests now hold central ground in Thai politics; extra-bureaucratic forces such as chambers of commerce and business, trade, and employers' associations, have played a pre-eminent role in policy formation, creating what is called 'Liberal Corporatism' (Laothamatas, 1992). An achievement of private sectors in the policy making obviously exhibited in the 5th NESDP.

Particular unfavorable regulations concerning business sector were relaxed, including reducing regulatory procedure in product exportation, factory permission, and tax readjustment.

Open Politics

Cooperation between the government and non-governmental development organizations began in 1980, after the government believed that the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) had dissolved. The policy 66/2523 substantially granted amnesty to people who previously joined the CPT and wished to return. Subsequently, they became national developmental alliances. Many new organizations were established and international support was solicited with little interference from the government (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994).

The purpose of NGOs in this period derived from experiences of former members of CPT who had hid in the jungle and learnt and experienced the life of villagers. They argued that the top-down development policy adopted in the 1st NESDP failed to improve lives of Thai majority. Alternatively, it generated great social and emotional disruption. Top-down governmental policy demanded villagers to transform themselves to a more modern, scientific, and market-rational way of operation. By contrast, the activists argued that development should be rooted in villagers' own knowledge, strengthen local culture and preserve village-style social relationships as these were inherently more humane and more in line with Buddhist values than those of urban capitalist society. This approach was dubbed the 'community culture movement' and became a guiding principle for many NGOs (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004).

Additionally, an alternative agriculture was promoted that stood against the large cash crop plantations, which were using high concentrations of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and insecticides. Here, people participation was a development principle of NGOs in public decision-making (Nityaramphong & Mulada, 2001). Later, topics of NGOs expanded to several issues, including: traditional Thai medicines, wildlife and

forest protection, environmental law, consumer protection, democracy promotion, urban environmental protection, human rights, well-being of women and children.

In its national development policy, the Thai government began to involve the opinions NGOs and integrated various principles into the national plan. In the formation process of the 5th NESDP (1982-1986), the office of the NESD Board held a consultation meeting with a small number of private-sector organizations, including non-profit, voluntary, development-oriented organizations (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994). In 1984, the NGO Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) was established. Here, representatives of government agencies and of volunteer groups regularly met. Regional sub-committees were also designated and are now highly active in advocating environmental issues (*Ibid*).

The 6th NESDP (1987-1991) clearly expressed that the government is obliged to promote and support non-governmental organizations to have increased importance in development activities. The plan argued that the private sector should actively participate in rural development (NESDB, 1987). NGOs were allowed to complement the government in areas where it could not reach, either because of distance or the lack of qualified personnel (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1994). The 1991 interim government, consisting mostly of non-elected technocrats, announced a policy to loosen control over the non-profit sector. Measures were being taken to revise registration procedures and tax regulations in order to promote activities of the non-profit sector (*Ibid*).

In the 7th Plan (1992-1996), the NGO-CORD was invited to participate in national working groups and planning committees on various issues - including national forestry policy, social security, and AIDS. In addition, the government allocated funds to the National Cultural Commission Office to distribute to non-profit organizations with worthwhile development projects. Similarly, the National Environmental Quality Promotion and Protection Act of 1992 enforced the establishment of the Environmental Fund, which aimed to provide funds and loans to governmental agencies and non-governmental development organizations in projects concerning the environment.

It was apparent that the government had greatly attempted to promote NGOs in this period; however, their roles essentially concentrated on social welfare, promoting community self-help as well as a mediator function connecting the state with particular interest groups. The crucial shift of NGOs took place during economic recession.

In 1995, Prawase Wasi – a prominent activist - persuaded a former Prime Minister to allow a Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) preparing a new charter independently from the parliament. NGOs lobbied for clauses to change the balance of power between the state on one side, and the individual or community on the other. As a result, the draft included: an extensive catalogue of ‘rights and liberties of the Thai people’; formation of a National Human Rights Commission; removal of the electronic media from the grip of military and government; and democratic decentralization of power to local government.

Civil society was exclusively promoted in the 8th NESDP (1997-2001). The plan was developed via a long process of consultation with NGO leaders, development workers, academics, businessmen, community leaders, monks and bureaucrats. Unlike the former period, roles of civil society were expanded to cope with corruption issues in public administrations. The plans expected that civil society would increase transparency in public decision-making and stabilize power of private sectors that had dominated public policy determination since the early period of NESDPs.

The 8th Plan comprises the following six key policies for promoting civil society: (1) Decentralization to local government. Local governments were empowered in terms of authority and resources. Decisions relevant to locality must be made in those areas instead of by the central government. Along with this policy, the plans urged local administrations to integrate participatory process in their development planning. This creates an opportunity of civil society to involve in public decision-making; (2) Rights to acquire public information. Through this policy, people have access to public information – an important tool of civil society activities; (3) Freedom of public media; (4) Guaranteed rights to request public hearing from public administration; (5) Foundation of the administrative court. This court aimed to protect individual from violation emerged from the state agencies’ execution; (6)

Strengthened civic associations via tax inducement and training provision. Moreover, the plans increased numbers of civic delegations in significant development boards, for example, the provincial development committee.

For business people, open politics provided them an opportunity to enter the national parliament. Business elites have persistently gained more influence in Thai politics; by now, they dominate main political parties in Thailand. According to Hewison and Thongyou (2000), people with a business background are now ‘the most important group in the Thai electoral system, at both the national and local levels’. With parliamentary dominance, they are able to control public policy and budget allocations. Favorable policies have been made to advantage their business interests. The economic recession in 1997 erupted in anger towards the corruption of politicians, who mostly possessed business backgrounds. This led to the involvement of activists in Thai politics who aimed to promote transparency in public administration, as mentioned above.

State Consolidation of Power

The strong impact of the economic crisis together with the Constitution of 1997 promoted the emergence of ‘Thai Rak Thai’ (Thai Loving Thai) party, led by Thaksin Shinawatra, with his businesses in telecommunications, was one of the most successful entrepreneurs during the boom. Initially, he gained support of other business groups that survived the crisis. This cooperation of leading business firms had a need to control the state to manage globalization (Phongpaichit, 2005). The Constitution of 1997 highly empowered Thaksin – his party gained 300 out of 500 seats in the 2001 election.

Consolidation of state power was a key policy of Prime Minister Thaksin. He talked of himself as a ‘CEO premier’ and promised to replace old bureaucratic practices with more efficient business methods. Diplomats and provincial governors were called for ‘CEO style’ retraining, and ordered to focus on economic growth. Besides the bureaucrats, local influence, which had dominated the Thai national parliament, was eliminated. Thaksin began to construct a centralized party that took control of policy,

moving away from the bureaucracy and switched the sources of political goods from the local boss to the central party supported by business firms (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). He first targeted the methamphetamine drug trade in a campaign that took over 2,700 lives and served as powerful intimidation. He followed up on the electoral program with a host of other populist schemes, including cheap urban housing, redistribution of land to the landless, and providing universal health care under the '30 Baht scheme', which emphasized that the central government machine was a more powerful fount of patronage than the local boss. The power of the state was strengthened by giving more power to the provincial governors who were delegated from Bangkok by providing them a CEO style of management and particular budget. Essentially, Thaksin turned Thai politics to a politics dominated by parties appealing for mass support.

In 2003, the 'Ko Ro Or' or the Joint Public Private Consultative Committee (JPPCC), which was dominated by the business community, was transformed to the 'Ko Bo Jo' or the Provincial Integrative Executive Board. This Board consisted of multiple interest groups: delegations of provincial officials, local governments, business sectors, NGOs, citizens and local press (Surasak Prasatkrutra, a Policy and Plan Analyst, Phitsanulok Provincial Office, personal interview, 21st January 2008). In this collaborative committee, the governor – a delegation of business organizations empowered by the central government and had prominent influence in the 'Ko Ro Or' – disagreed with this new form. To businessmen, the 'Ko Bo Jo' hindered the economic growth of cities. According to Wiset Wachirasrisirikun, a president of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, 'Ko Ro Or' was more effective than the 'Ko Bo Jo' as the committee structure was more compact and had single aims in economic growth. In contrast, 'Ko Bo Jo' is relatively large, having too many members with diverse aims – for example, activists who do not focus on economic growth, while business organizations do. This creates difficulties for the business community in pursuing their projects. Additionally, the 'Ko Bo Jo' increases power of provincial governors; officials who disagree with the governor would be relocated (Wiset Wachirasrisirikun, a President of Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal interview, 21 January 2008).

Through the state's consolidation of power, civil society is undermined. Although people stand at the centre of Thaksin's rhetoric, their role is passive (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). Under Thaksin, NGOs were accused of protesting only in order to attract foreign funding. Local groups, which continued attempts to defend their local interests, were described as 'anarchists' and enemies of the nation. Thaksin shrank the space for other agendas – especially those emphasizing rights, participation, and rule of law – that might compete with rapid growth through expanding capitalism. The government tried to suppress protest politics through above-board law and legislation, and through the old covert methods of the security state. Public media, which was opened in the last decade, was controlled through rules, money, and intimidation (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). Newspapers were cajoled with favors, and threatened by the manipulation of advertising budgets. Thaksin's family bought a controlling stake in the single independent station (ITV), which was formed in 1992. Other channels were ordered to broadcast only 'positive' news. Public intellectuals who raised their voices were fiercely attacked. Hence, political space was effectively shut down.

Additionally, the dependency of the state and NGOs was tightened through the sources of fund. The state became the major fund provider of NGOs and dominated their work. According to Suriyasai Katasila - a well-known activist - NGOs have been undermined by the social welfare service of the state and business firms since 1997. Only those who registered with the state and did not arrange demonstrations received governmental grants (Katasila, 2007). Suriyasai Katasila showed evidence for this in the recent establishment of foundations, including royalty organizations, which focus on social welfare provision. Few of them are founded with genuine civil society concern, which is a consequence of Thaksin's policy to consolidate state power; many NGOs have been drawn to the state's projects from the source of funds – for example, the Community Fund and Thai Health Promotion Foundation (*Ibid*).

The Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) is a public organization founded in October 2007. Initially, the idea of establishment came from NGO activists who realized the need to found an organization as the international budget had declined, and channeling governmental funds to substitute this deposit was significant. CODI receives about 500 million Baht annually from the government

(Interview with Watchara Songma, a leader of the regional CODI, 14th January 2008). Although CODI has authority in decision-making for fund expenditure, must consider the NESDP, the Plan of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Delegations of the NESDP Board are involved in the project approval process (*Ibid*). Currently, CODI is one of the major funds of the NGO-CORD, another fund comes from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Decha Premrudeelert, a leader of the Northeast NGO-CORD, personal interview, 9 January 2008).

Not everyone agrees with Thaksin and TRT's rush for growth by mobilization of all available resources, management of a passive society, and return of the authoritarian state. Liberals believe the government's proper role is to clear away the oligopolies and other distortions that prevent a truly competitive capitalism working efficiently. They want a society in which rights, freedoms, and opportunities are guaranteed by the rule of law, and a political system with checks and balances on the use of power. The communitarian or localist lobby values the society's diversity and ability for peace above a fixation on growth. It prioritizes learning, self-reliance, and participation, as summarized in the king's concept of 'sufficiency economy'. This lobby criticizes Thaksin for undermining local communities' self-reliance through handouts, attacking civil society, and reinforcing the old pattern of a patrimonial government ruling over a passive people (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004).

The disagreement was an impetus for the formation of the People Alliance of Democracy (PAD) in February 2006, consisting of 23 associations, mostly with middle-class origins. It aimed to oust Thaksin Shinawatra from the Premiership (Ungpakorn, 2006). Later, PAD supporters expanded to civil servants, state enterprise labor unions, the urban middle-class, conservative Buddhist groups, Southerners and elites. Initially, PAD accused Thaksin of operating with a conflict of interest. The selling of Thaksin's family shares in Shin Corp to Temasek Holdings without paying tax to the government was announced. By focusing on these corruption issues, PAD gained support from urban middle-class. This led to a decline in his popularity among Bangkok's residents; however he was still popular among rural people who were benefiting from his populist campaign. In order to gain mass support, PAD began to attack Thaksin by accusing him of an attempt to overthrow the Thai monarchy institution. The 'Yellow Shirt' (the King's symbolic color) was used to represent the

PAD. As the Thai monarchy is embedded in Thai society, together with the recent monarchical campaign, PAD could expand its mass support to people who felt deeply moved by this accusation. Thaksin reacted on this movement by forming the 'Red Shirt' to consolidate his mass support, concentrating on rural areas. Since Thaksin retained his popularity among rural people – the majority of Thailand's population – he requested a general election as a solution to this conflict; while PAD – the minority – asked for a Prime Minister appointed by the King. The 'Red versus Yellow' indicates a conflict between two prominent elites. They manipulated mass and civil society in order to preserve their wealth and power. Additionally, this incident underlines the wide gap between the urban middle-class and the rural people existing in Thai society.

3.2 The Evolution of the Business Community in Thailand

Era of Economic Revitalization by Chinese immigrants

In the past, China was one of the most important trade partners of Thailand. Trading between both countries started in the Sukhothai period – the first dynasty of Thailand. King Ramkamhaeng sent the first tributary missions in 1296 to Peking functioning as a fee to access to Chinese market – the biggest source of demand for trade goods (Skinner, 1957; Phongpaichit, 2005). Since then, private Chinese traders came to do trade in Thailand.

The great flow of immigrants occurred in the late 18th century. King Taksin (1767-1782), who was possibly the son of a Teochiu Chinese migrant gambler or trader and his Thai wife, established the new capital, Thonburi, opposite an old Chinese trading settlement in Bangkok. By using his Chinese connections, he encouraged the Chinese to import rice to the devastated area, and then to revive trade to generate revenue (Phongpaichit, 2005). Chinese people were the most numerous and flourishing in their commerce and privileges. They were free to travel and settle anywhere in the kingdom without restrictions while most of Thai masses were under control. During this time, Thailand traded mainly with the East, but particularly with China – a status that continued until the next king.

The inflow of Chinese immigrants increased throughout the early 19th century. Many of these remained in Bangkok and became a majority of its population. In Bangkok, they worked as coolie labor in the port or elsewhere in the city, or opened shop houses. Some occupied land on the fringes of the delta to grow vegetables for supplying the city. Some filtered up the waterways to towns where they became: shopkeepers or traders moving local products to Bangkok; and owners of sugar factories, distilleries, brick kilns, boatyards, tobacco factories, sawmills, and metalwork's. Others headed inland to plant rubber, grow pepper and mine tin. These Chinese immigrants were pioneers who shifted Thailand to the market economy as they revived trade between Thailand and China, supplied labor and provided agriculture expertise (Phongpaichit, 2005).

From the early 19th century, Thailand began agriculture exportation, initially sugarcane grown in the Chaophraya delta region. Later, rice became the major crop and major export (Phongpaichit, 2005). Rice exports averaged around 100,000 tons a year in the 1860s, and five times that amount by the turn of the 20th century (*ibid*). The whole delta was covered under paddies of 10 million rai (1.6 million ha) in half a century. Rivers were the major means of goods transportation. Canals have been built as 'highways' across the delta since the 1820s.

By the early 19th century, a number of Chinese had gained considerable wealth and power. Typically they generated wealth via a system of tax farming, which was introduced to Thailand in the 1800s by King Nangklao (Rama III). Tax farming was a system whereby the court assigned the burden of tax collection to private individuals or groups. These individuals or groups paid the taxes for a certain area and for a certain period and then attempted to cover their outlay by collecting money or salable goods from the people within the area. The tax farmers were assigned mostly to Chinese citizens, bringing them prosperity and power.

Besides the central plain, economic growth occurred in particular regional towns where valuable resources were found, including Phuket – a rich tin mining city. Tin mining had been a major revenue generator of the city since the Ayutthaya era (1351-1767) (Phumphuthavorn, 2007). Chinese people were the first foreigners who operated in tin trading in Phuket. They were well established in South of Thailand

when the first Westerners (Portuguese, Dutch, and French) penetrated the area (Skinner, 1957). From 1839, the demand for tin increased in the world market. A more effective mining technique that required plentiful labour was introduced. The high demand for labour persuaded Chinese (mostly Hokkien) from Penang to migrate to Phuket. They settled down and became a dominant community in Phuket. The significance of the Chinese demonstrated in the Angyee rebellion in 1876. Phraya Wichitsonkram, a leader of Phuket city, urged Chinese traders to do trade and tin mining in the city. This generated revenue and prosperity of Phuket city much higher than any other west-coastal cities. However, conflicts among Chinese people emerged. They split into two groups, rivaling against each other for state concessions in tin mining and parts of a river for cleaning in mining process. Additionally, conflicts with the state occurred when one of these groups received a privilege from the state (e.g. better tax conditions), while others did not. The Chinese formed a self-help and self-defense society, which was called *angyi* by the authority (secret societies) – a term that betrayed their trepidation (Phongpaichit, 2005).

Conflicts peaked in 1876 when tin price was in recession and a Chinese labourer was charged with injuring a sailor and imprisoned. The sentence angered the Chinese, who had previously felt unfairly treated by the state. They protested, wounded other locals, and burnt state buildings (Phumphuthavorn, 2007). The unrest ended when they were defeated through a cooperative effort between local citizens and Bangkok officials (Phumphuthavorn, 2007). Chuang Bunnag, a dominant nobleman in the government, adopted a policy of nurturing the secret societies and entrusting them to keep the peace (Phongpaichit, 2005). Consequently, the significance of Chinese in Phuket was officially recognized; Chinese delegations were appointed for seats in the town committee.

Free Trade and an Era of Western Enterprises

The market economy widened in the mid 19th century when ‘free trade’ was initiated in Thailand. The last Thai tribute mission to China was sent in 1853. Two years later, King Mongkut (Rama IV) signed the ‘Bowring Treaty’ with Britain in 1855, opening economic space for Westerners that was formerly occupied by Chinese. Reformers

believed that more Western trade, freer labor, and access to new technologies would stimulate economic growth to the benefit of both government revenues and private fortunes. In essence, this treaty abolished the remnants of royal monopolies, equalized the dues on western and Chinese shipping, granted extraterritorial rights to British citizens, and allowed the British to import opium for sale through government monopoly. As a result, Western firms rushed to Thailand to substitute Chinese traders, as they possessed superior technology and expertise.

Following this treaty, slavery was abolished in beginning of 1874 and finished in 1905 (Skinner, 1957). This stimulated the Thai economy, as the newly freed slaves added labour and products to the market. Cultivation areas, which were initially concentrated in the central plain, expanded to the forests and unused land. Business in product exportation, including rice mills, saw mills and tin mining grew. Chinese traders were undermined by Westerners; however, Chinese still held an advantage in the Thai market with their intimate knowledge of the market and connections with Chinese retailers and distributors (Skinner, 1957).

For regional towns, western firms that had offices in Penang, Malaysia and Singapore expanded to Phuket. They brought advanced technology to the tin mining industry, which increased tin production. This technology affected the Chinese position in the industry. Around 1929, the production of Western firms surpassed that of small Chinese mines for the first time (Skinner, 1957). The rubber industry was extended from Malaysia to Phuket during the First World War. It became Thailand's third largest export (after rice and tin) by the end of the period. Unlike tin during the same period, rubber was a predominantly Chinese industry at all levels.

For other regions, economic growth expanded when the railways were built to Khorat in 1900, Chiang Mai in 1921 and Khon Kaen in 1933. These railways provided access of local products to Bangkok and the world market. Farming area increased (180,000 rai each year) as the railheads and rice mills were built close by. The growth of Thai peasants in the regional area made it worthwhile for Chinese retailers to settle in the smaller market towns and even villages throughout the interior. They bought paddies and other local produce, advanced credit and supplies, lent money, collected taxes, sold imported goods, and transported merchandise in both directions (Skinner, 1957).

The wealth of Chinese elites was interrupted when the Thai centralization policy began. King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) introduced a colonial-style public administration to Thailand in order to prevent colonialism. In essence, power and resources were drawn back to the state. Local leaders and influential people were eliminated from the regional environment and replaced by the delegation from the state. The tax-farming system, which generated wealth to some Chinese families, was abolished in 1906. This turn of events, together with the arrival of Western firms undermined wealthy Chinese families. However, while great Chinese households were ruined, a new business community developed over the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly among Chinese migrants who had arrived after the 1850s.

Another factor stimulating trading was an abolition of a hierarchical system known as Sakdina, which was used for controlling society by determining rights and duties of Thai citizens. ‘Sakdina,’ which means ‘power over fields’, was a numerical ranking attached to each official post. At that time, service aristocrats were named after their official posts, with its specific title, honorific and Sakdina (Phongpaichit, 2005). The Sakdina was discontinued when the absolute monarchy was abolished in 1932, and later was banned in 1941. Since then, people in the bureaucracy were now known by a name that recognized their individuality and their family, rather than their rank and position as granted by the king (Phongpaichit, 2005). Old elites of great households lost their roles and significance. The social barrier revocation provided better condition for trading.

During the Second World War, the Chinese experienced many difficulties in Thailand. The Thai government initiated the ‘Thai-ification policy’, which primarily affected the Chinese. Within a few weeks after the change of government, the Thai police targeted all illegal Chinese activities. Tax measures were adopted in 1939 in the form of an ‘alien-registration fee’. All non-Thai nationals paid the first annual four-baht fee or risked arrest. As Thailand drew closer to Japan during 1941, the number of Chinese arrests and deportations on grounds of anti-Japanese activity increased (Skinner, 1957). In 1941, Japanese troops landed in Thailand. Chinese people were forced to be suppliers for the Japanese troops or take jobs with Japanese commercial firms, which were expanding their operations at this time. By royal

decree issued in June 1942, the Thai government reserved the pursuit of twenty-seven different occupations and professions for Thai nationals only.

In the postwar period, Thailand's major exports remained rice, rubber, tin and timber, which together accounted for 86.5% of the country's total exports. Ethnic Chinese owned most of these businesses; however, there were changes in those businesses such as an increase in non-Chinese labor – i.e. machine tenders, engineers, carpenters and ironworkers. Although Chinese laborers were generally considered more industrious and efficient in management, they were replaced upcountry by local peoples due to sharp wage differentials (Skinner, 1957). Nevertheless, business ownership and trading roles in major Thai export products remained ethnic Chinese.

Era of Development and Economic Boom

In the 1960s, the 'development strategy', introduced by the U.S.A encouraged economic growth in Thailand. This strategy aimed to intensify the use of natural resources in order to deliver growth: dams were built for power and irrigation; mines and agribusinesses were granted government promotion subsidies; restrictions on logging were removed to supply match, paper, construction and other industries (Phongpaichit, 2005). The private sector was encouraged to be a single significant mechanism for economic growth. The government promised it would restrain from establishing its own enterprises to compete with private enterprises. Approved projects enjoyed numerous privileges and benefits including exemption from import duties on raw materials, protection from import competition and exemption from export duties (Laothamatas, 1992). In the initial national development plan of the 1960s, the U.S. firms were allowed 100 percent ownership, while other foreign investors were limited to a minority share. However, the volume of the U.S. firms' investment was modest (Phongpaichit, 2005). The main beneficiaries of this capital-friendly development strategy were the Thai-Chinese entrepreneurial groups in Bangkok. Some accumulated their wealth during the Second World War by supplying metal to the Japanese military; others benefited from the withdrawal of European firms, including banking. Restrictions on ethnic Chinese, practiced during the Second

World War, disappeared. The government allowed them to play a full economic role (Laothamatas, 1992).

During this time, business families befriended generals who came to power, and hence gained protection and also access to profitable business opportunities. By the 1960s, the government aimed to replace imports with domestic manufacturing; therefore, new ranges of manufactures were created including car assembly and consumer goods plants. Consequently, demand for the services sector followed – e.g. drivers, house servants, shop and restaurant workers, sex workers and construction laborers). By the end of 1965, there were 38,393 factories, more than double the preceding five years.

Economic growth extended from Bangkok to upland plains in the postwar period. However business and politics were essentially carried out in Bangkok, with the provinces being relatively unimportant until the early 1960s (Hewison and Thongyou, 2000). Due to access to better food, the cessation of hostilities and warfare and partial control of epidemic diseases (e.g. malaria), population growth rose to 3% per year by the 1950s. A new major road became the modern means of communication, which opened possibilities for economic activities in previously isolated parts of the country. The Mittraphap (Friendship) Highway (sponsored by the U.S.) was built in 1955-1957 as a strategic road during the cold war. This highway connects Bangkok to Khon Kaen and Khon Kaen to Phitsanulok, providing convenient access for local product distribution to the world market. New agricultural land also opened and the city extended along the highway. Together with agricultural farming, agrarian entrepreneurs, such as truck hirers, moneylenders and crop traders, emerged. They were likely to be of Chinese origin with connections to businesses of the local towns and beyond – for example export agents, sugar mills, tobacco-curing yard, oil pressers, rubble packers, feedmills and canneries (Phongpaichit, 2005); however, the local police chief, army commander and district officer who wielded the government's power and dispensed the government's patronage were also included here. By pooling their commercial and office power, they could further profits from illegal businesses and official chicanery (Phongpaichit, 2005).

In governmental policy, the third national development plan (1972-1976) chose regional cities including Khon Kaen, Phitsanulok and Phuket as potential development cities for absorbing immigrants from Bangkok. Infrastructure for economic growth including roads, a water supply system, a telephone network and an electricity system, were intensively built in these cities. Hospitals and universities were also built. The government promoted agriculture in the rural area while industry, commerce and service were emphasized in cities.

In Phuket, tin mining continued up until the late 1970s. The inland tin mine that had been excavated intensively for decades was almost depleted, and its price in the world market sank. These issues brought investment in tin mining close to operational margins. Eventually, inland tin mining was prohibited on Phuket Island according to the Environmental Protection Area Act in 1992. Tourism was a new economic sector of this transition. Phuket, with its attractive beaches, coral reef and warm weather, became a prime tourist destination, helped by the falling flight costs of the time. Beach and island resorts were created for holiday-makers, particularly from the temperate north. Facilities to support tourism improved including the existing airport. Foreign and local capital had flown back to Phuket again.

The 1974 oil crisis had serious consequences for the Thai economy. Together with the decline of American aid and military withdrawal in 1970s, Thailand faced serious recession (Dixon, 1999). The economic structure of Thailand began to change. The manufacturing sector gained a sharp increase in its share of GDP in the second half of 1970s. The main growth areas remained agro-processing, textiles and a range of assembly areas aimed at the domestic consumer market. The centers of expansion were firms established during the 1960s under the early phase of industrial promotion and protection (Dixon, 1999).

Apart from manufacturing protection, the government moved to promote exports. The Bank of Thailand's policy of providing credit to exporters was extended; tax and import duty refunds were introduced. During this time, Japan came to replace the U.S. as the largest source of foreign investment in the Thai economy. The manufacturing sector expanded to diversification of products and markets, including chemical, pharmaceutical, petroleum, natural gas, fertilizer, cement and engineering sectors.

Due to the rise in oil price and the fall in the returns on Thailand's principal exports, the terms of trade declined by 22% during 1979-1980.

The depth of economic problems prompted requests to the World Bank and IMF for funding. This required a five-year program of structural adjustment. These recommendations were aimed at stabilizing the economy, opening it more fully to international capital and substantially reducing the state's developmental role to matters of policy (Dixon, 1999). In the early 1990s a series of other adjustment-related measures were introduced, notably the deregulation of the financial markets, the floating of oil prices and the revamping of the tax structure. Moreover, the government devaluation of the baht during 1984 improved the competitiveness of Thai exports.

Together with the Japanese yen rise against the dollar in the mid 1980s, Japanese firms moved their plants to many Southeast Asian countries particularly Thailand. The main attraction of Thailand for Japanese investment were: (1) the lowest levels of industrial labor costs in ASEAN, (2) the relative political stability, (3) the marginal exporter of manufactured goods, and (4) long history of Japanese investment (Dixon, 1990). Thai economy reached the highest growth during this period. Business was in a form of joint venture between Japanese and Thai firms. Through growth in the export-oriented economy, business people particularly in Bangkok became richer.

For regional cities, the fifth national development plan (1982-6) emphasized local resource-orientated activities and small enterprises, which provided services for agriculture. Urban Industrial regions were promoted starting from the Eastern Seaboard, followed by the Upper South Region and the Upper Central Region. However, the result was unsatisfactory – the industrial sector was still heavily concentrated in the Bangkok Metropolis Region. This was due to expensive infrastructure investment in regional cities and ineffectiveness of centralized Thai planning (Dixon, 1990).

The main economic sectors of the regional area remained agro-business and service sectors. During the 1980s, provincial business people drew their income from four main areas. First, from the cash crop expansion in which local merchants played a

critical and profitable role linking the agribusiness company and the cultivator. Second, from investing in trading and service businesses propped up by local demand (these included highly profitable local monopolies such as distribution for local whisky, agencies for the sale of pickups and motorcycles, and later, hotels, large retail developments and speculation in land). Third, from government contracting for construction work and the supply of materials (budgets for building roads, water works, dams and public buildings in the provinces increased steeply from 1960). Fourth, from an array of semi-legal and illegal businesses including logging, smuggling, gambling, gun-running and drug-trading (Phongpaichit, 2005).

In the late 1980s, factories operating outside Bangkok increased generating rapid economic growth spreading from Bangkok to other parts of Thailand. However, the regional industry was overwhelmingly dependent on local markets, with very limited exporting to other provinces. However, Thailand had a policy of turning the battlefield to the market, during the premiership of Chatichai Choonhavan (1988-1991). Thailand's trade with Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam increased substantially. The Thai government aimed to place Thailand as a hub of the sub-region by promoting the east-west corridor and the north-south corridor connecting neighbor countries – Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. This was facilitated by the improvement of transportation links, including the completion of the Mekong River Bridge in 1994. It was clear, even casual observers, that major regional centers like Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok, saw considerable growth in the early and mid 1990s, with new hotels being constructed in each of these cities, and shopping centers being built and expanded.

In politics, business elites entered national parliaments in the late 1970s. The ruling generals, who dominated the parliament during the American era, stepped back to their bases due to a movement against military authoritarians and the reduction of American backup. Elections and parliament were restored again in Thailand. Such open politics provided political space for business conglomerates particularly from Bangkok. Since then, Thai politics had transformed from the 'bureaucratic polity' to the 'liberal corporatism'. The 'bureaucratic polity', a term that Fred Riggs employed for the Thai political regime in 1960s, refers to the situation where bureaucracy was dominant in politics and policy-making (Riggs, 1966). Later in 1992, Laothamatas

argued that the ‘bureaucratic policy’ was no longer a case of Thai politics; rather, Thai politics transferred to ‘liberal corporatism’, whereby the business community has a substantial share in political power (Laothamatas, 1992).

The role of the business community in driving the Thai economy was obviously expected when the ‘Ko Ro Or’ committee (or the Joint Public Private Consultative Committee (JPPCC)) was formed in 1981. Business leaders used this route to reduce red tape and reduce the opportunities for bureaucratic restriction and gate keeping. Business began reaching for political influence commensurate with its rising wealth.

In the late 1980s, provincial businessmen gained more influence through the national parliament, which was previously dominated by Bangkok business elites. According to Riggs (1966) business and politics were essentially carried out in Bangkok, with the provinces being relatively unimportant. Currently, the provincial business elites dominate main political parties. Their influence over parliament increased persistently until in 1988 the provincial representative Chatichai Choonhawan formed a coalition consisting of mostly provincially influential people and became the Thai Prime Minister. Even later, all elected prime ministers had provincial origins. These cabinets were able to control national policies and budget allocations. As a result, many governmental investments were diverted to the regions and particularly their own towns.

Globalization Era and Economic Crisis

Following the establishment of the liberal market economy by the U.S.A and the Asian-wide boom led by Japan and the East Asian countries, the Thai economy has grown strikingly in many sectors including: trade, finance and industry. This has integrated Thailand more firmly within the global economy. In 1997, Thailand was hit by economic crisis, which began in late 1996 when foreign capital leaked and international speculators attacked the baht. The government was obliged to seek the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In return, Thailand was asked to: allow the currency to float; impose an austerity program of increased taxes and high interest rates; demanded the closure of weak financial institutions; and began reforms

to further liberalize the Thai economy and facilitate access for foreign capital (Phongpaichit, 2005). Consequently, the baht plummeted to less than half its value (against the dollar), before recovery to around two-thirds. Firms that had taken foreign loans were rendered illiquid as well as technically bankrupt. Banks that had intermediated the loans, were wrecked. Creditors stopped paying their bankers and consumer spending halted. Over two million people lost their jobs. The government tentatively began a Keynesian economic stimulus. Restrictions on foreign holding in banks, property and other sectors were eased.

This crisis greatly affected business people, particularly in Bangkok. Business ownership of notable business sectors in Thailand changed. Some middle-sized banks were sold to foreign interest; and various major banks lost shares to foreign firms. Major large-scale modern retails were also sold to their foreign partners (Phongpaichit, 2005).

Although the devaluation of baht had little direct impact to local business elites as their businesses generally served the domestic market and had little connection to baht currency, the flow of foreign capital to Thailand was perceived as a major threat to particular local business groups, especially in the hotel and retail sectors. The case study cities Khon Kaen, Phitsanulok and Phuket confronted a strong attack in the retail and wholesale trade. Bangkok based firms that had shares in foreign capital extended their branches to principal regional cities. Initially external firms allowed local business people to have a share in the investment as local businessmen owned land and access to politicians; later the external firms raised their share and dominance of the entire business. In Phuket, one of the largest economies of Thailand, local business people confront the strong intrusion of foreign capital in tourist industry and real estate. Some firms sold their shares to international investors including Singapore, Korean and Taiwan. Owing to this, external investors undermined the wealth of local business elites.

3.3 Conclusion

Civil society in Thailand has a protracted history. Internal and external circumstances have transformed civil society from traditional associations, such as community Buddhist temples, churches and clan associations, to modern forms, such as NGOs. Their purposes have expanded to broad issues and targets, from public service provision, self-help promotion, to public administrative transparency.

The major threat of civil society has been the centralization process during public administration reforms of the late 1890s, nationalism in the 1940s, anti-communism in 1960s and the Thaksin era in the 2000s.

The business community comprised an early civil society group involved in public policy determination. They have since expanded their power in national parliament and now control national policy and budget allocation. As business elites have occupied the state authority, civil society has been weakened and manipulated for business interests.

Following chapters explore the progress of decentralization, the dominance of business interests in Thai politics and the space left for other civil associations.

Chapter 4

The Capability of Thai Municipalities in Local Development Planning

Overview

Local government is a general term that encompasses counties, cities, municipal corporations and other legal bodies that govern defined boundaries smaller than the state. Citizens of the defined areas elect their local leaders and have autonomy over their administrative and financial discretion. The authority of these governing bodies is limited to their territorial boundaries, while local government authority is limited to subjects of local concern.

In political science, it is widely recognised that local government is a foundation of democracy as it generates greater people participation in politics, teaches people to become responsible citizens for their society, and gives rise to the concept of civil society. It is also often linked with pluralistic politics and representative government as well as with the empowerment of voiceless groups, such as the poor and women. Strong local government is supposed to encourage democratization as well as reinforce governance by giving all citizens more influence in policymaking.

To John Stuart Mill, local self-government was important. He held that political decisions should not be imposed from above, rather developed and accepted from below. Compared to central government, local government provides more people with a first-hand experience of public affairs and, according to Mill, it is “the chief instrument for educating people of their duties as citizens” (Newton & Van Deth, 2005, p. 94). Therefore, decisions with local concern must be made locally via a local participatory process. This eliminates the dominance of a hierarchical governmental structure in local development planning; on the other hand, diverse opinions and interests from horizontal connections are counted into the local public decision-making.

This chapter investigates the *status quo* of the capability of Thai municipalities in local development planning. The sufficient ability in local development planning is a

precondition of effective participatory planning. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one focuses on the current structure of public administration in Thailand in order to understand the Thai bureaucratic system. Part two explores the dynamics of public administration in Thailand. The process of decentralization to local government, which began in 1997, is intensively investigated. The third part investigates current capacity of local government concerning local development planning.

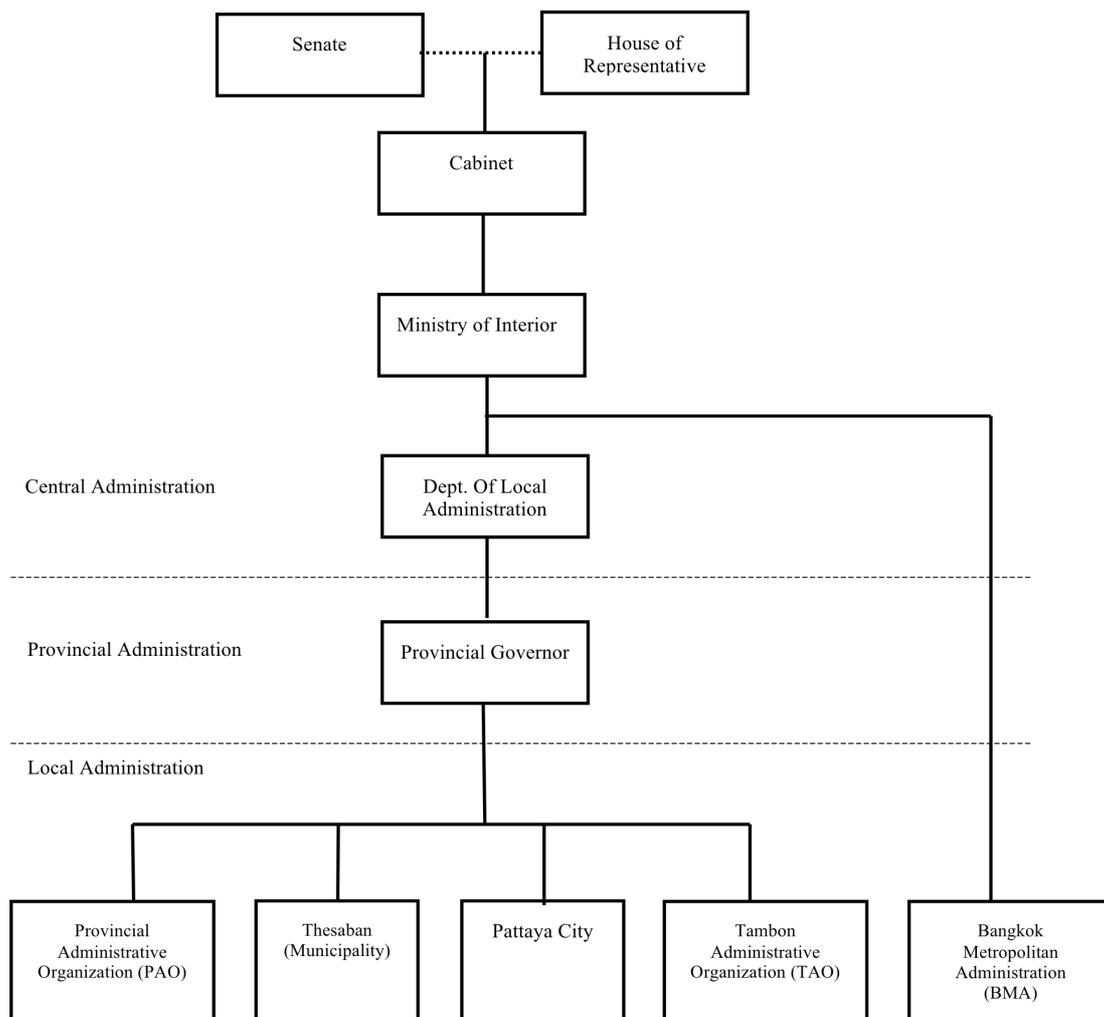
4.1 Structure of Thai Public Administration

The National Public Administration Act of 1991 defined three basic levels of public administration in Thailand: central, provincial and local administration (See figure 8). Central administration falls under the basic concept of *centralization* and consists of twenty ministries. Various departments, offices, bureaus, divisions and subdivisions have been established in each ministry. Provincial administration refers to *deconcentration*, which means central agencies delegate some authority to officials who work in provinces and districts. These officials are sent to provincial administrations from various ministries and departments and carry out their work according to laws and regulations assigned by the central government. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) delegates officials to be a chief executive in every provincial administration level: a province is headed by a provincial governor, Amphor (district) is headed by Nai Amphor, Tambon (sub-district) is headed by Kamnan, and Muban (village) headed by Phuyaibaan. Various provincial offices representing central agencies work under the supervision of the provincial governor. Local administration is based upon the concept of *decentralization*, which allows local people to participate in local affairs under related laws and regulations.

Thai local governments are classified into two main categories - general and specific. In the general form, there are three types of local authorities located throughout all seventy-five provinces, except Bangkok. There are (1) Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO, 75 units), (2) Thesaban or Municipality (1,276 units), and (3) Sub-district or Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO, 6,500 units) (The Department of Local Administration, 2007). Two special units of local government

govern specific areas; namely, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya City. The three general forms of local governments are divided into two tiers. The lower-tier governments, Thesaban or municipality and TAO, function as a single autonomous operating unit, which is very close to local residents, providing local public services within their defined territory. While Thesabans are located in urbanized areas, TAOs are mostly established in less-developed rural communities. By contrast, PAO is the upper-tier local government, which covers an entire province and is responsible for administering local public services at the provincial level, as well as for development projects that need collaboration among several municipalities or TAOs within the provincial territory.

Figure 8: Government Structure of Thailand



Thesabans are classified into three groups – Thesaban Nakorn (city municipality), Thesaban Muang (town municipality) and Thesaban Tambon (sub-district municipality) – on the basis of geographic size, population size and density (see Table 1). The three case study cities: Khon Kaen City, Phuket City and the Phitsanulok City, are in the Thesaban Nakorn category, which is the largest municipality group.

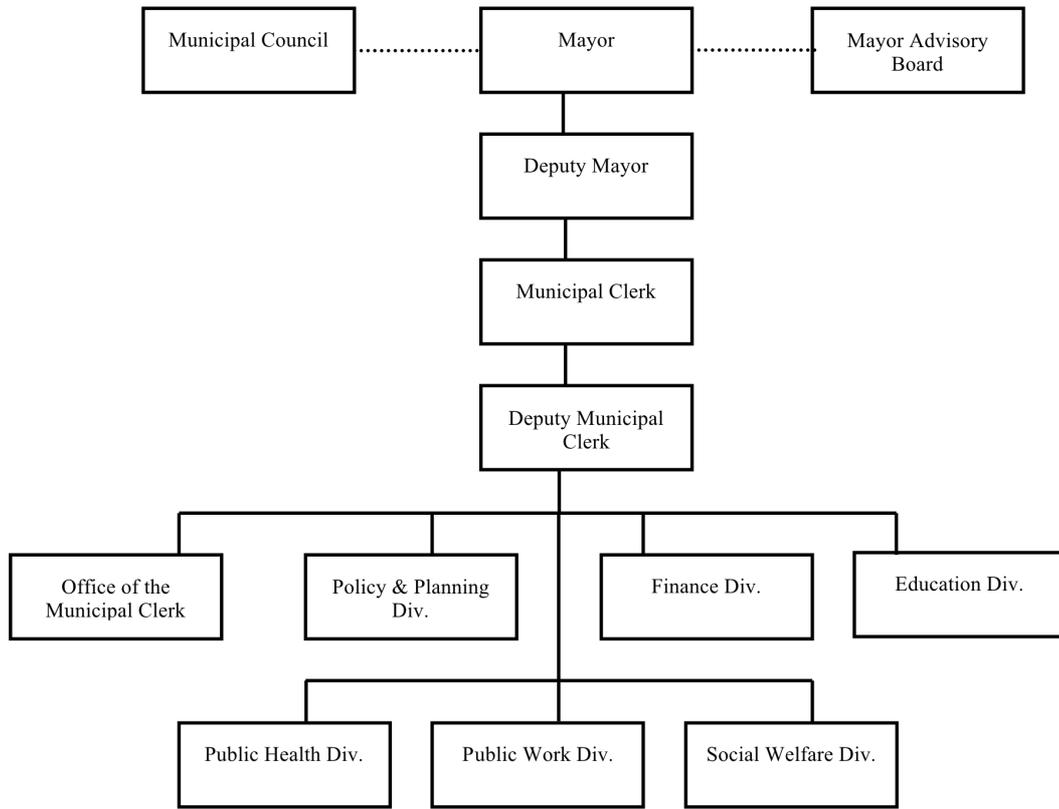
Table 1: Thesaban Division of Thailand

| Level | Number | Size & Population | Chief Executive | Legislative |
|--|---------------|--|--|---|
| Thesaban Nakorn (city municipality) | 23 | Population > 50,000 Revenue – compatible with responsibility | Mayor is elected by local citizens; mayor appoints 4 deputy mayors | 24-member of council, elected for 4-year term |
| Thesaban Muang (town municipality) | 129 | Local administration with the Provincial Office located within its territory or Population > 10,000 Revenue – compatible with responsibility | Mayor is elected by local citizens; mayor appoints 2-3 deputy mayors | 18-member of council, elected for 4-year term |
| Thesaban Tambon (sub-district municipality) | 1124 | Local administrations upgraded toward Thesaban Tambon by law Revenue – compatible with responsibility | Mayor is elected by local citizens; mayor appoints 2 deputy mayors | 12-member of council, elected for 4-year term |

(Source: The Thesaban Act of 2003)

In their administrative structures, all Thesabans (Municipalities) consist of at least six different divisions – offices of the Municipal Clerk, Planning, Finance, Public Health, Public Works and Education Divisions. More urbanized municipalities can split the Public Work Division and create separate Divisions of Sanitary and Environmental Services (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Thesaban (Municipal) Structure



4.2 Dynamics of Thai Local Government

Prior to the administrative reform of 1897, Thailand was governed by a dual system consisting of centralized and decentralized forms. Cities located near Bangkok were governed by the absolute power of the king; the more distant cities were governed by delegations from Bangkok who were members of the royal family. The furthestmost circle cities, which had their own languages and cultures, were governed by local lords called tributary system (Raksasataya, 1996). The social structure was based on bonds of personal subordination – rice peasant to the ruler of the local town, slave to master, commoner to conscription chief, junior noble to patron, senior noble and tributary lord to king, and king to the emperor of China (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2005). In each of these relationships, the subordinate surrendered product (of his fields or laboring skills) in return for some measure of protection.

When political power shifted from Sukhothai to Ayuttaya (14th-17th century), Thailand adopted the Sakdina system under which the ruler owned all land and granted access to it to members of the royal family and nobility. Bureaucrats ran the state's affairs while peasants (eighteen to sixty years old) were obliged to register to provide tax labor to the crown or local lords (Mahakanjana, 2004). Such a local governing system could not be called democracy, as all rulers were appointed from above and not elected from below (Charoenmuang, 1997).

Sakdina society consisted of three main castes: aristocrats, subjects and slaves, while free people and the middle class did not exist. Aristocrats resided in towns and sent their followers to control subjects and slaves who lived in surrounding villages. Villages became the main sites of production of the country; agricultural products, forest items and tributes were sent to the cities. This economic system, called a 'self-sufficient economy', refers to an absence of authentic merchants. Subjects and slaves would send their products directly to lords. The lords would then sell the items to foreign merchants.

In the 19th century, King Mongkut (Rama IV) initiated reforms and established several social and economic institutions along Western lines. Further key reforms were implemented by King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), who began to reform Thai administration in 1892. Such an enormous change came from the urgent need for protection against an external threat – that of colonialism. Thailand lost approximately 40% of its territory to France and the United Kingdom and the two countries colonized all of Siam's neighbors. The loosely defined boundary became a disadvantage that western countries could use to conquer those areas; local lords who were ruling regional towns were unreliable; hence, centralization policy was introduced. An authority of the Interior Ministry was expanded in 1892 (Mahakanjana, 2004). The powers of local lords were gradually eliminated and replaced by delegation officials sent from Bangkok. Local administrative officials were placed on salaries and subjected to a rotation system in an attempt to eliminate their personal influence to locality. The King's creation of the nation and nation-state were hand-in-hand with an increase in royal power and a re-conceptualization of the monarchy's ideological foundations.

Nevertheless, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) realized that it was impossible for the state to oversee locality on every affair; therefore, the first form of local government, called “Sukaphiban” (sanitary district), was initiated in the Tachalom sub-district in 1905. This first form of Thai local government was duplicated from the neighbor countries, which were colonies of England. The primary duty of Sukaphiban was to deal with refuse disposal, local road maintenance and street lighting. Not long after the first sanitary district establishment, another 35 sanitary districts were founded (Raksasat, 1995, pp. 6-7). In management, the Sukaphiban executive committees were not elected by local residents, rather they were appointed from Bangkok. Therefore, the sanitary district strengthened the state power over locality, instead of promoting democratic foundation (Charoenmuang, 1997).

Thai local government moved no further until 1927 when King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) commissioned Richard D. Craig to produce a study and a draft of local government law. However, this was not realized as a coup called “Khana ratsadon” (People’s party) seized power and turned Thailand from the absolute monarchy to the constitutional democracy on the 24th June 1932. The People’s Party, whose members had studied in western countries, had a strong desire to expand progress and prosperity to localities. He passed the National Administrative Organization Act of 1933, establishing the three layers of Thai public administration – central, provincial and local – that still exist today (Mahakanjana, 2004).

The Thesaban (municipality) was also introduced. The Municipality Act of 1933 was adopted, substituting all sanitary districts with municipalities. The Act was amended in 1938, 1943 and 1953. According to the law, Thesabans were responsible for sanitation, primary education, public utilities, infrastructure and economy promotion. Although the Municipal Act of 1933 was initiated with genuine goodwill, various mistakes within it led to persistent weaknesses in local authorities (Raksasat, 1995). These include: (1) local government initiation began from the top, instead of from the authentic will of people at the bottom; (2) the form of an administrative structure was limited to only one pattern – that of the council-mayor form – which was unlikely to be appropriate for all local circumstances; (3) functions of local authorities, according to this Act, were determined from above and standardized, this did not correspond to the local will of different areas; and (4), the central government had a highly

dominant role over the local governments.

The second transition of local government occurred during the Field Marshall Pibun regime (1952-1956). In his period, the nation-state was revived; the need for a strong dictatorial state was justified to overcome external threats such as communism, as well as internal threats (from the Chinese) so that Thailand could achieve progress and development and survive in a world of competing nations and ideologies (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2005). In terms of local governments, Pibun recognized the restriction of local government in Thailand; it covered only urban territories, while communities outside urban areas had no kind of local government. In order to strengthen local government, the Sukaphiban (or sanitary district, which was dismissed according to the Municipality Act of 1933) was revived in 1952. The idea was to use the Sukaphiban as an initiative form of local administration, and later upgraded it towards Thesaban when needed conditions were reached.

Following the Sukaphiban Act (Sanitary District Act), the government enacted the Provincial Administrative Organization Act of 1955. The Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO) was established as a form of local government covering village areas – outside Thesaban and Sukaphiban areas. At the Tambon (sub-district) level, Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) and Tambon Councils were established in 1956. Although much effort was made toward decentralization, all chief executives of the new local government forms were central government officials; it was only the municipality form where local citizens elected the administrative executives. This transition indicated insincerity of the state in its decentralization policy.

Thai locality developed greatly between 1961-1992. The government focused on economic growth, whereby foreign investment was highly promoted. The first national economic and social development plan was adopted. During this time, Sarit Thanarat, a state-leader, sought to centralize power through reassertion of traditional patterns of authority rather than strengthen local authority. He relied on bureaucracy to carry out his orders and implement his development plan.

Moreover, the insurgency of communism after the Second World War curtailed the confidence of the central government in their involvement with local governments. In many areas, particularly in the north and the northeast border, the Communist Party highly influenced local villages. This created continued state domination over local governments; therefore, the local authority remained weak. While local administrations were greatly suppressed during this period, provincial towns outside Bangkok developed significantly in terms of infrastructure and public utilities. Infrastructure such as road, irrigation system, power network, agriculture technology, education, and disease eradication improved and economic growth improved in many local towns. Through such enormous improvement, middle class people and business groups emerged. This in turn led to the demand for administrative reformation in the 1990s.

Since 1992, the issue of local governance has gained much attention from various politicians, mass media and academics. Economic growth has generated a middle class and business community who gained much confidence from their education and wealth. These groups opposed the centralization concept, which had brought about corruption, ineffectiveness and hindered their businesses. In the preceding decade, demonstrations took place that opposed military governments.

In 1992, Thai democracy was restored by the Thai general election, after a long period of political instability with coups and military regimes. During this election, four political parties promoted a policy of decentralization where local people elected provincial governors. The Democrat Party gained majority in the parliament and became the leader in forming the coalition government. However, their policy regarding local government was not achieved. The policy was highly criticized by highly-positioned bureaucrats of the Ministry of Interior (MOI), arguing that the provincial governor was originally a delegation of the central government who was sent to work at a provincial administration level. His key duty was to lead central governmental agencies, having provincial offices located within the province. Hence, the provincial governor was not supposed to be elected by local citizens. The rejection of decentralization displeased many. To reduce this conflict, the MOI appointed women to be governors for the first time, as well as vice-governors, heads of districts and the clerks of districts.

In 1997, Thailand was confronted with the economic crisis. This heightened demands on people involved in administrative reformation. The Thai Constitution of 1997 – so called the People’s Constitution – was adopted after it had previously confronted much resistance from politicians. Two major groups collaborating in the national constitution drafting process were conservative and liberal groups. The conservatives believed that the powerful state-leader – with governmental transparency and enterprising character within the existing system – would be suitable for the Thai political system. Conversely, the liberals acknowledged the decentralization and participatory process. Although these two groups had different principles, they shared common ideas in: creating political transparency; reducing powers of provincial politicians and influential persons (local mafias) who had dominated the parliament; strengthening the cabinet stability, the party system and juridical bodies; reducing bureaucratic power; adopting decentralization to local government; and official information disclosure.

In terms of the decentralization to local government, the Constitution of 1997 held that the state must provide local governments with: (1) authority for the purpose of their self-reliance and ability to make a decision according to the will of the people in the locality; and (2) autonomy for the purpose of their freedom in their policy determination, administration, executive management, personnel management and finance & treasury by still preserving the unitary and the unity of Thai state. The central administration must alter its authority and duties to supporting knowledge, auditing and evaluating, promoting effectiveness and efficiency of local government administrations; and supervising only the necessities according to the framework of the people participation promotion law, by following the main principles of decentralization to locality (Office of the Prime Minister, 2002).

Following the Constitution, the Decentralization Plan and Procedure Act of 1999 was promulgated and became the central law in the decentralization process. In accordance with this Act, the Decentralization to Local Government Organization Committee (DLOC) was established together with its office. This committee acts as a key organization responsible for creating the Decentralization Plan and its execution. It consists of three main bodies with equal number of members (12 persons): (1) committeemen from the central government including the Prime Minister, the

Minister of Interior, the Minister of Finance and so forth, (2) committeemen from local government organizations, (3) senior committeemen including academics.

The first Decentralization Plan and Procedure was announced in 2000. The main contents were: (1) tasks according to the law must be transferred to the qualified municipalities within four years and to the unqualified municipalities within ten years; (2) local government's revenue must be increased to be not less than 20% of the state revenue in 2001 and 35% in 2006, and the state must provide local governments grants as per their requirements and necessities; (3) a personnel transferring plan must be set up; (4) particular legislation and regulations relating to decentralization must be altered (The Decentralization Plan and Procedure of 2008, 2008).

In 2000, the Thesaban Act of 1953 was amended. The position of mayor, which had previously been chosen by the municipal councils, was changed to be directly elected by local citizens. These administrative forms – called strong-mayor forms – provide more authority and stability, and tighten a connection between local citizen and the executive body. It was expected that this form could empower the municipal executive boards to push their policy until the implementation without falling apart during the process as had happened repeatedly in the previous administrative form. This shift strengthened the significance of the local development planning.

Similarly, in 2003 parliament passed a law concerning the chief executive of Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). In the past, a provincial governor took two positions: a head of Provincial Office and a head of PAO which made the central government's delegation very powerful in the city. According to the new law, local citizens must elect the head of PAO. This shift eliminated the roles of governors, particularly provincial budgeting. The major subsequent role of governors remained only to supervise and oversee local governments.

Nevertheless, the decentralization process has been uneven. Thaksin Shinawatra, the leader of 'Thai Rak Thai Party readopted the centralized system. "The need for a strong, authoritarian state was justified to overcome external threats (globalization) and internal threats (democratization) so that Thailand could leapfrog into the ranks of first-world countries" (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2005, p. 264). In order to strengthen

the state, the new form of governor called ‘CEO-governor’ was introduced in 2003. The CEO-governor stands for the chief executive official-governor. Historically, the provincial governors who were appointed from the MOI played a role of ceremonial supervisors of ministry officials working in provinces. With the business style integration, the governors must be active managers of government policy. CEO-governors were put in charge of planning and coordinating provincial development and became accountable for overall provincial affairs.

For local politicians, this form of provincial governor represents a reversion of power from local governments back to the MOI. Moreover, the idea of Thai Rak Thai to dissolve PAOs became known; however, it has not been implemented until now. The unsupportive attitudes of the Thaksin’s government towards decentralization appeared in many facets, including: strong opinion of the Interior Minister, Purachai Piemsomboon, opposing local politicians – as some of them were local mafias dominating local governments; and the reduction in budget allocation to local government instead of following the resource transfer to local governments according to the Decentralization Plan and Procedure of 2000.

4.3 Capability of Thai municipalities for local development planning

Local administration has gained significance regarding authority and duties since the late 20th century. Originally, authority and duties in public services of municipality concentrated on six issues: (1) public security, (2) public works, (3) public health, (4) education, (5) local art, custom, and culture, and (6) tourism. Concerning public works, municipality must provide and maintain infrastructure and public utilities, including electricity, water supply, refuse disposal, wastewater drainage, streets, ports, slaughterhouse, public toilets and pawnshop. City planning and building control were duties of municipality as well. The significance of municipality has increased since the Decentralization Plan and Procedure Act of 1999 was promulgated.

According to this legislation, particular authority and duties of the municipality were added. First, the municipal development execution must be a goal-pursuing process, instead of routine bureaucratic work, which had been practiced in the past. Due to

this, the municipal development plan making was an obligation for the municipality. Second, the municipal authority and duties regarding promoting local economy was underlined including commerce and investment promotion; while, in the past, only tourism promotion was stated as the municipal duty regarding economy. Third, municipal duties regarding urban environment were emphasized. The additional duties regarding to this point were the wastewater disposal, traffic and transportation. Fourth, the municipality was the democratic foundation – the municipality must promote democracy, equality, rights and liberty of people, and people participation in development.

The following explores critical weaknesses of the municipality concerning capability in local development planning.

Fragments of authority and duties of municipalities in planning

Although authority and duties have been transferred to municipalities, particular urban utilities are still under governmental agencies – for example, the water work authority and the electricity authority. These governmental agencies have their own development plans. Therefore, municipalities are unable to control particular urban utilities; strong cooperation between municipalities and relevant governmental agencies is required. Conventionally, these governmental agencies strictly follow policies and plans of their main executive boards in Bangkok. A case of conflict between a governmental agency and a municipality occurred when the Khon Kaen City Municipality notified the Provincial Waterworks Authority of damages of municipal properties after the authority reconstructed a water-piping system without informing the municipality. As a result there are now more complications in the development planning process.

Nevertheless, there has been a great leap of duty transfer according to the decentralization to local government plan: the duty of making the ‘Comprehensive City Plan’ has been transferred to the municipality. This was previously done by the Department of Town and City Planning (DPT), under the Minister of Interior, except in Bangkok. The ‘Comprehensive City Plan’ provides vision and policy *vis-à-vis* land

usages and transportation network. Topics including transportation, public utilities, open spaces, and zoning are main contents of the Comprehensive City Plan.

This legitimated plan requires approval from the National City Planning Committee in Bangkok for ministry promulgation. In the past, municipalities had little involvement in making the plan – essentially DPT dominated the process. After promulgation, the Comprehensive City Plan would be handed to municipalities who were responsible for plan enforcement. Since little participation of the municipality took place in plan making, Comprehensive City Plans were rarely implemented; accordingly, they had little influence in city development. This shift of duty in the Comprehensive City Plan making is a crucial transition. It implies the increase of significance of the municipality in local development planning.

Inadequate municipal boundaries

In Thailand, the boundaries of actual urban areas are only partially covered by the boundaries used by public administration – essentially there is a lack of co-ordination. A Comprehensive City Plan consists of an area of responsibility of many public administrations. In the case study cities, the Comprehensive City Plan of Khon Kaen City consists of 11 sub-districts, Phuket Island consists of 17 sub-districts, and Phisanulok City consists of 16 sub-districts. Therefore, the plan making process of the Comprehensive City Plan requires cooperation among municipalities located within the urban boundary. One of the implications of this phenomenon is that Thai municipalities are unable of managing the complete confines of the urban regions surrounding them as one functional entity. Thus, it is also impossible to plan and manage their expansion, develop the towns themselves, nor achieve potential economies of scale in their administrations and service delivery.

Deficiencies of municipalities in local development planning

Advancement of local development planning requires skilled staff, equipment and financial resources. Much research has demonstrated that the duty of making the

Comprehensive City Planning exceeds abilities of local administrations. The report of Boonyanupong 2004, revealed that most local government organizations (approximately 95%) had insufficient capacity – personnel, tools and technology – to produce their own Comprehensive City Plan; only city municipalities (the largest category) were able to achieve this (Boonyanupong, Bourklay, & Borananon, 2004).

Similarly, a report of the ONEP stated that Comprehensive City Planning exceeds the local authority's ability, thus, collaboration in terms of personnel, equipment and know-how with the DPT is necessary. In the report of The Natural Resource and Environment Policy and Plan Bureau, funds and staff of local administration were unmatched to their responsibilities (The Natural Resource and Environment Policy and Plan Bureau, 2006). The following shows two weaknesses: staff, equipment and financial resource, of municipalities in the planning process.

Staff and Equipment

In researching 'Local Government Capacity in City Planning', it was concluded that most local administrations were not adequately prepared for city planning in terms of skilled staff. Less than 20% of staff, particularly in small municipalities, had passed training in city planning. For city municipalities with greater capabilities, their staff were able to cope with former duties such as population data collection and traffic data collection; yet they were unable to perform key procedures in physical data analysis, land use planning, ordinance determination (Boonyanupong, Bourklay, & Borananon, 2004).

Tools and equipment are needed in the local development planning process. According to Borananon, most of municipalities were not prepared in terms of tools and equipment in city planning for duties such as surveying and data collecting in traffic systems and land use (Boonyanupong, Bourklay, & Borananon, 2004).

For the three case studies, Phitsanulok and Khon Kaen city municipalities are in the process of producing their own Comprehensive City Plans. For Khon Kaen city municipality, a civic forum was in the process of being arranged in order to collect

opinions from local people, while the plan of Phisaunlok city municipality had already been submitted to the DPT in Bangkok for ministerial promulgation. Unlike these two case studies, the Comprehensive City Plan produced by the Phuket local authority is not in operation, as the current city plan of the DPT has yet to expire. The successes in the first two cases imply the inherent abilities of municipalities in producing their city plans, and demonstrates that inadequately skilled staff and equipment are not necessarily issues for the largest municipalities in local development planning.

Financial Resources

Revenue is one of the most significant resources in plan implementation. The main revenue of local governments derives from four main sources: (1) local own-source revenue (taxes, fees, charges, permits, fines, etc.); (2) Local revenue collected by national agencies (value added tax, excises, vehicle fees, land registration, liquor fee, etc.); (3) Shared taxes; and (4) Grants. In addition, local governments were allowed to generate revenues from other sources, such as returns on local properties and investments, bond issuances and so forth.

Shared tax is a new form of revenue whereby local governments acquire a share with the central government. The current rate using in the fiscal year 2008 is 20.50% of VAT. This revenue strengthens local government autonomy since it is a fixed rate for every local government, without requiring lobbies to obtain it, contrary to grants.

Grants are another form of local revenue provided by central government agencies. There are two kinds of grant - a General Grant and a Specific Grant. The general grant aims to secure and equalize a basic public service distribution of local governments, while the specific grant responds to particular governmental policies such as the rural water supply system, the waste disposal project, or the environmental quality management project. Calculating criteria for the General Grant are: (1) the equalization principle: local governments whose collected revenues are under the basic public service cost estimation tend to receive a high amount of this grant in order to secure their basic public service provision, while local governments whose

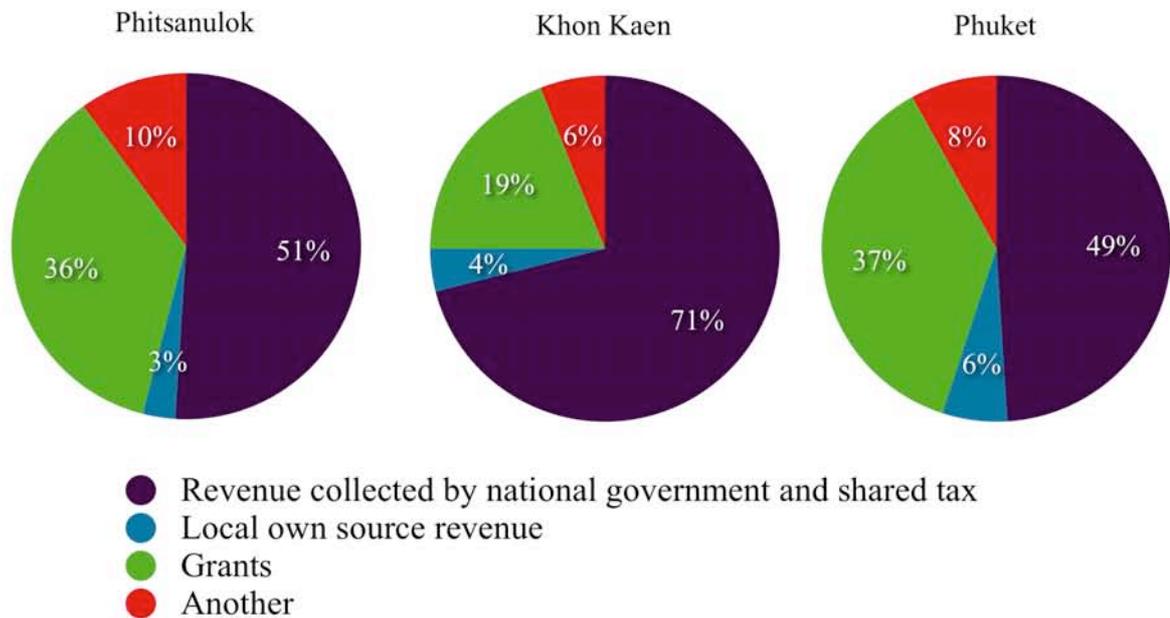
collected revenues are higher than the basic public service cost estimation receive a similar amount to the last fiscal year in order to insure their expenditure of the following year; (2) for the block grant principle, the cost is calculated per capita in a particular case – for example, in a school milk project the cost per student was used.

In Specific Grants, over than 90% arrives through the Department of Local Administration (DOLA); the remainder comes from other governmental bodies including the ministries of interior, agriculture and cooperatives, transportation and communications, public health, education, industry, labor and social welfare. The criteria to obtain the Specific Grant vary by project and are dependent on the governmental policies and responsible agencies (Witul Eim-opart, an official of the Office of Decentralization to Local Government Board, telephone interview, 25 July 2008). Therefore, the procurement of a Specific Grant is not guaranteed – in some cases lobbying is used in order to obtain them.

In the three case study cities, local revenue collected by national agencies, shared tax and grants (which include earmarks) are the main local revenue streams, while self-collected revenue (which can be used in open purposes) is relative low (see Figure 10). This implies a fiscal inability of municipalities in their local development planning.

Moreover, the authority of a provincial governor in local budget plan approval is an important element used by central government to dominate the local development process. For the Local Fiscal Plan, it is widely known that the provincial governor is likely to approve the local fiscal plan as it has been created through the process of people participation – the provincial governor's rejection of the Local Fiscal Plan translates to denial of the genuine will of locality (Nopadol Sinpaisansomboon, a Phitsanolok city municipal official, personal interview, 18 January 2008).

Figure 10: Revenue year 2005 of the three cities



Source: Municipal Development Plans

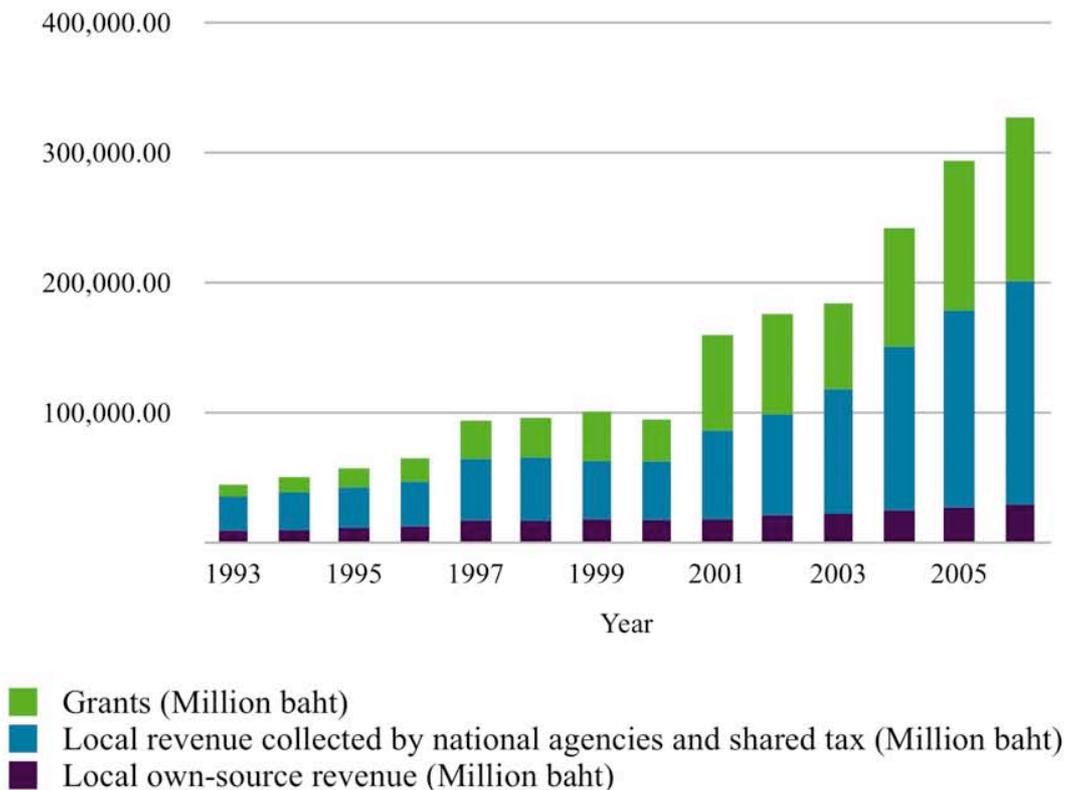
However, a case in Phuket has contradicted this. In 2006, the Phuket Provincial Governor delayed a plan of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization to takeover the Phayathai Hospital. According to this plan, approximately 300 million baht (6 million euro) would pay for the existing building and 800 million baht (16 million euro) would be spent on management costs. The purpose of this plan was to provide a hospital for local people in a mid-low market (Chaichana Kiewkaw, a local journalist of Phuket, personal interview, 28 January 2008). According to the local media correspondent, this disagreement stemmed from the Chief Executive of PAO (an influential member of the Democratic Party and the parliamentary opposition) while the provincial governor was appointed by Thai Rak Thai Party (the governmental party) (Tanya Mannkan, a local journalist of Phuket, personal interview, 28 January 2008). Eventually, the plan to takeover the hospital was approved after the military coup of 2006 and the new provincial governor was appointed. In effect, this incident demonstrates the strong dominance and influence of the central government over local governments regarding fiscal autonomy.

Overall, this phenomenon implies a lack of fiscal autonomy of Thai municipalities whereby central government still dominates local development. Any possibility to gain grants relies on the ability of the mayor, and their connections with national politicians. To this end, the municipality rarely manages development planning, which demonstrates the need for a prominent mayor with personal connection to national politicians in order to promote local development planning.

However, this situation has improved since promulgation of the Decentralization Plan and Procedure Act of 1999, whereby the financial conditions of local administrations have strengthened. This is demonstrable in the increase of revenue ratio in the national fiscal year. The Decentralization Plan 2000 held that annual revenue of local autonomous bodies must increase to a minimum of 20% of the national revenue for the year 2001, which includes both central and local governments; and to minimum of 35% of the budget for the fiscal year 2006. Local government revenue has been rising via implementation of the decentralization plan (see Figure 11). It almost doubled in fiscal year 2001 – rising from 13.31% in the fiscal year 2000 to 20.68 in the fiscal year 2001, and has steadily increased to 25.20% in the fiscal year 2008 (The Decentralization Plan and Procedure 2008). In 2006, the Decentralization Plan and Procedure Act of 1999 was amended and the previous local revenue ratio was modified so that it would increase every year starting from 25% of the national revenue in 2007. The goal to reach 35% of the national revenue remains in this Act, however without a fixed fiscal year specification.

The decision of grant provision was improved by the Decentralization Plan and Procedure Act of 1999. Previously, decisions on which local government obtained the grants were made through discussion between officials in charge of the Division of Local Finance and of the Bureau of Budget (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2001, p. 62). Currently, the Decentralization to Local Government Organization Committee (DLOC) is responsible for grant allocation. Since members of the DLOC are delegations of three groups (central government, local governments and academics), locality has gained the authority to make a decision concerning their local revenue.

Figure 11: The proportion of local government revenue to the national revenue



Source: The Bureau of Economy and Fiscal, September 2007

4.4 Conclusion

Thailand has been governed through a centralized state system for centuries – even now the central government retains dominance in local development. Uneven incentives of government in the past brought little improvement to local governments. The current ability of Thai municipalities to facilitate local development planning is relatively poor. Significant local public affairs are not well covered by their authority and duties; their boundaries do not correspond to the actual urban area; and they have insufficient resources for effective planning – including staff, equipment and fiscal autonomy. Obviously, in order to facilitate effective participatory planning such preconditions must improve.

Fortunately, a high level of optimism exists for overcoming such hindrances in the

near future. Through enactment of the Decentralization Plan and Procedure 1999, greater attempts can be made to transfer authority, duty, staff and budget to local governments. The achievement of the production of the first Comprehensive City Plan of Khon Kaen City and Phitsanulok City signifies an inherent ability for improvement, which in effect, reveals that Thai municipalities are beginning to experience a crucial positive transition in their capabilities for local development planning.

Chapter 5

The Legal Framework of Civic Participation in Municipal Planning Systems

Overview

Civil society requires a supportive legal framework that enables them to participate effectively in public decision-making. Appropriate laws concerning participatory planning must involve citizens in the plan-making process, and empower them to be able to negotiate their interests with local administration. This chapter investigates the extent of people participation in local development planning supported by the legal framework. The chapter is divided in two. Part one discusses relevant laws that indirectly influence local development planning. Such laws strengthen participatory planning and empower civil society in public decision-making. This group of laws makes partial reference to local development planning and civic participation; it consists of: the Decentralization Procedure and Plan Act 2006; the Municipal Act 2003; Bill for the Local Ordinance Proposition 1999; the Bill for the Public Information Disclosure 1997; Office of the Prime Minister Regulation of the Public Hearing 2005; and the City Planning Act 1975.

The second part investigates the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005, which directly influences local development planning.

5.1 Laws and regulations concerning people participation in a municipality

The Decentralization Procedure and Plan Act 2006

The Decentralization Procedure and Plan Act was drawn accordingly to the People's Constitution of 1997, which emphasizes decentralization to local government. It was initiated in 1999, and amended in 2006. The act describes the committee responsible for the decentralization process, the authority and duties of local administration, tax and revenue allocated to local administrations and the decentralization plan – i.e. program of decentralization and specific period of achievement.

The Act provides a strong statement in regards to participatory planning for local government authorities. Article 16 holds that “local governments are obliged to promote democracy, equality and liberty of citizens; and civil participation in local development” (The Decentralization Procedure and Plan Act 2006, p. 7). The extent of civil participation is specified in the Municipal Act 2003.

The Municipal Act 2003

The first Municipal Act of Thailand was announced in 1933, a year after Thailand shifted from a system of absolute monarchy to a system of constitutional democracy. Currently, the Municipal Act of 2003, now in its twelfth issue, is in operation. This act describes the establishment of municipality, the characteristic of municipal organization, municipal authority and duties, municipal ordinances, municipal treasury and procession, and the state’s authority in controlling municipalities.

For participatory planning, the Municipal Act identifies the local government duties requiring civil participation in Article 38. It states “municipalities must concern people participation in the municipal development plan-making, the budget planning, the procurement, the assessment, the evaluation and the public information disclosure” (The Municipal Act 2003 issue 12, p. 11).

Coupled with direct civic involvement in local planning, the Municipal Act of 2003 attempts to empower civil society in following ways. Firstly, the law provides a possibility that public opinions influence a municipal decision. Article 32 bis states “more than half of members of municipal council and a mayor might propose to the head of the municipal council in making referendum in issues impacting the municipality and local citizen” (ibid, p. 6-7). However, according to this law, only the municipality can initiate a referendum.

Secondly, the law provides a possibility that civil society initiates municipal ordinances. Article 61 bis of the Municipal Act of 1953 states that “local citizens might propose a draft of municipal ordinance to the municipal council” (The

Municipal Act 2003 issue 11, p. 11). In 1999, the Bill for the Local Ordinance Proposition was released, which is discussed below.

Thirdly, the law provides a possibility that people control their representatives. Article 18 bis states “more than two thirds of electors could demote a member of municipal council and a mayor” (The Municipal Act 2003 issue 12, p. 4). This article indicates the authority of the people following an election.

Fourthly, the law empowers civil society in terms of public information disclosure. Article 48 decem states “the municipal policy and the evaluation report of municipal execution must be announced publicly at the municipal office” (ibid, p. 9). Additionally, the Public Information Disclosure Act of 1997 provides rights to people concerning public information acquirement, which is discussed in the following.

Office of the Prime Minister Regulation of the Public Hearing 2005

The first Public Hearing Regulation was promulgated in 1996. Later it was amended in 2005. Unlike the referendum, a public hearing aims to provide information concerning the state’s project to the public and prevent unforeseeable negative impacts on people. According to this regulation, a governmental agency responsible for the project must announce the project in public and arrange a public hearing. In Article 4, the relevant project refers to the governmental project which impacts on broad environmental quality, public health, way of life and a local community (Office of the Prime Minister Regulation of the Public Hearing 2005, p. 1).

Important information must be declared within a public announcement – for example, possible impacts to people and measures to prevent or remedy those impacts. For public opinion, particular methodologies of public opinion collection must be arranged. This is flexible, according to Article 9: it can be the one stated in the regulation, or another appropriate way not stated in the regulation; it can be only one method of public opinion collection, or more than a single means for one project (ibid, p. 3). The decision in choosing the method is performed by a responsible governmental agency involved in the project. Following the public opinion collection

procedure, the results must be announced to the public as well as the resolution of additional impacts to people gained from the process (ibid, p. 4).

Bill for the Local Ordinance Proposition 1999

The Bill for the Local Ordinance Proposition was released in 1999. Article 4 states that “more than half of local electors are required in proposing a draft of local ordinance to the president of the municipal council” (Bill for the Local Ordinance Proposition 1999, p.2). After all proposals are certified, the president of the municipal council must put the proposal for local ordinance to the municipal council for consideration. Moreover, the law attempts to prevent the failure of the request by penalizing a person who hinders the signature collection process, stated in Article 7.

The Public Information Disclosure Act 1997

The Public Information Disclosure Act of 1997, released accordingly to the People Constitution of 1997, provides rights to citizens in acquiring particular public information. In Article 9, such information includes: (1) decision of governmental agencies concerning individuals; (2) plan, project and budget of governmental agencies; (3) manual or mandate relevant to public execution; (4) concession and contract of public service; (5) decision of a committee and relevant reports, research, or facts that influence the decision. Persons who gain or lost benefits with the governmental agencies or not in both cases have rights to acquire public information. Moreover, the public information board is established. One of its authorities is to investigate governmental agencies when the board receives a complaint concerning public information disclosure from a petitioner. The law includes imprisonment or fines for violations.

The City Planning Act 1975

Litchfield Whiting Browne and Association was commissioned to produce the 'Greater Bangkok Plan 1990' to develop Bangkok according to the national plan. This project was sponsored by the United States Operations Mission (USOM). The plan was released in 1960. In line with this plan, the company advised the Thai Government to enact a city planning law in order to authorize the plan. About 14 years later, the first City Planning Act was promulgated. The Act legitimates two kinds of plans: the Comprehensive City Plan and the Specific Plan. The Comprehensive City Plan provides vision and policy *vis-à-vis* land usages. Topics including transportation, public utilities, open spaces and zoning are the main contents of the Comprehensive City Plan. As this plan requires ministry promulgation, the National City Planning Committee in Bangkok must approve these plans for all cities in Thailand.

Apart from the Comprehensive Plan, the City Planning Act legitimates the Specific City Plan, which contains greater detail of particular areas, such as industrial districts, historical areas, or housing projects. The plan focuses on conceptual design, built form, transportation and public utility. Land expropriation is required for plan implementation. Hence, parliamentary approval is needed for enacting the plan. For thirty years after the promulgation of City Planning Act of 1975, no Specific City Plan was implemented. This was due to excessive delays caused by time consuming parliamentary approval processes as well as political instability. Consequently, plans became outdated and unrealizable.

For people participation, the law provides three forms of citizen engagement in the Comprehensive City Plan making: delegations of non-governmental organizations in responsible boards, a public meeting and a petition collection.

Two boards are provided for delegations: the City Planning Board and the Comprehensive City Plan Consultant Board. In Article 6 of the City Planning Act of 1975, the 'City Planning Board' consists of relevant governmental officials, scholars concerning city planning, delegations of independent organizations and other relevant persons appointed by the cabinet. This board has authority in Comprehensive City

Plan approval. Under Article 21, the Comprehensive City Plan Consultant Board consists of delegations of local administrations, delegations of the Department of Town and Country Planning (DPT), delegations of governmental agencies and another appropriated persons. It holds authority in providing advice and opinions concerning the Comprehensive City Plan. A provincial governor appoints the delegations.

The involvement of delegations of non-governmental organizations in these boards implies a possibility that people can negotiate their interests with the state in this board through their delegations. However, the relative small number of delegations (i.e. seven delegations of non-governmental organizations out of the twenty members of the City Planning Board), and the means to appoint them (through the cabinet) makes this form of people participation ineffective. It is controversial whether these delegations represent the broad interests of civil society.

The second form of people participation is public meeting. Article 19 (The City Planning Act 1975, p. 8) states “in the Comprehensive City Plan making, the Department of Town and Country Planning (DPT) or local administrations must arrange minimally a public meeting in order to collect local opinions”. Similarly, this process is required in plan prolongation: the plan can be prolonged when there is no opposition in a public meeting stated in Article 26. The public meeting aims to collect public opinions; it is a one-way communication with little negotiation.

The third form of people participation is petition collection. Article 23 (ibid, p. 9-10) states “the DPT or local administrations must announce the Comprehensive City Plan in public minimally ninety days after the approval of the City Planning Board; and petitions of local people regarding the draft plan are collected and submitted to the City Planning Board; the board must consider local petitions and declare their decisions and reasons to petitioners”. Similar to the public meeting, the petition collection intends to prevent negative impacts on local people, rather than provide political sphere to civil society.

5.2 Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005

The Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 is a law used by local administrations in their local development planning. It describes characteristics of the local development plan, responsible committees, formulation procedures, amendment, augmentation, implementation and assessment of local development plan.

Contents of the Local Development Plan

According to the regulation, the Local Development Plan consists of two types of plan: (1) the Strategic Plan and (2) Three-Year Development Plan. The Strategic Plan is a long-term plan determining development strategies and means to reach goals. Local development goals must be accordant with the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP), the National Public Administration Plan, provincial and district development strategies, and the Community Plan.

The Three-year Development Plan is a middle-term plan providing details, projects and program clarification on the Strategic Plan. It is a rolling plan, requiring yearly revision and extension covering the coming three years (Development Planning of Local Government Organization, 2005). This plan provides a basis for the Local Annual Fiscal Plan and the Local Action Plan (See Figure 12).

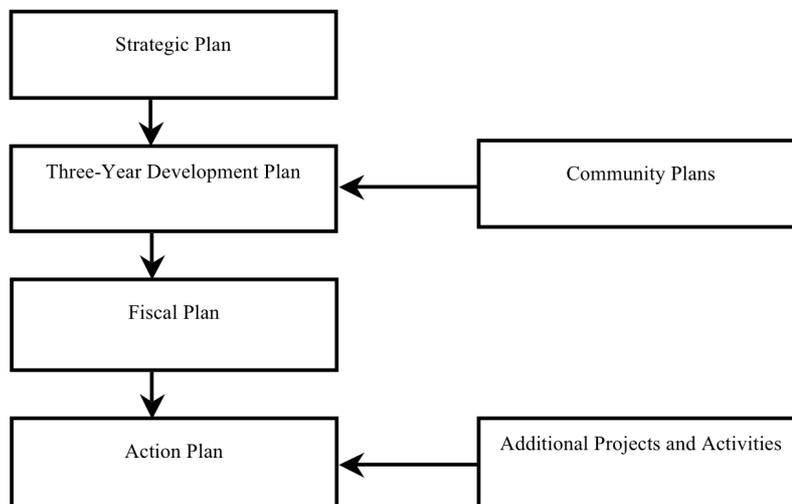
Committees involved

Regulations authorize two committees to make the local development plan. The first committee involved in the Municipal Development Plan is the Local Development Committee (LDC). Essentially, the LCD is charge of providing local development orientation to the second committee (LDPSC), as well as the making decisions for the Local Development Plan. It consists of five bodies: (1) elected officials including mayor, deputy mayors and delegations of local council; (2) selected senior members, who are essentially business people or academics; (3) delegations of central

government officials; (4) delegations of local citizens; and (5) local government officials.

The second committee involved in the Municipal Development Plan is the Local Development Planning Supportive Committee (LDPSC), which is responsible for making the plan by transforming the LDC's policy into a draft plan. Its members include two bodies: (1) local government officials and (2) delegations of local citizens.

Figure 12: Municipal Plan Structure



Planning processes

Regulations determine four main steps for making the Strategic Plan. First, the LDC arranges a public meeting in order to announce local development orientation to the people and collect local opinions, problems, needs and technical assistance. Opinions and information collected must be considered in the Strategic Plan. Participants of the meeting include civic organizations, governmental agencies and state enterprises. In the second step, the LDPSC produces a draft of the Strategic Plan with consideration of information acquired in the first step, and then submits it to the LDC. After receiving it, the LDC considers the draft version in the third step. Finally, the draft is submitted to the municipal executive board for consideration of approval, which is subsequently announced to the public.

The plan making process for the Three-year Development Plan is similar to the Strategic Plan; only the first step of data collection differs. While governmental agencies state enterprises and civic organizations must be included in a meeting for the Strategic Plan, only civic organizations need be involved in the Three-year Development Plan. The Three-year Development Plan must be completed by the end of June, before consideration of annual budgeting. Following the municipal executive's approval, the plans must be implemented, handed in to relevant governmental agencies and announced to the public.

The Three-year Development Plan is a fundamental element required for devising municipal expenditure. However, there is no statement concerning the production of municipal expenditure in the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005. The responsibility in controlling and considering the municipal expenditure is handed to the municipal council and the provincial governor: their approvals are required for legislation concerning municipal expenditure.

The National Annual Budget is announced in October; subsequently, the local authority places their projects and programs receiving budget from the central government and projects of other agencies taking place in the municipal territory, into the Local Action Plan. According to the Local Development Planning of 2005, this plan must be prepared by the end of December and requires municipal executive approval. Later it must be announced in public.

An evaluation committee appointed by the mayor is in charge of the plan evaluation procedure. The committee consists of: (1) a delegation from the municipal council; (2) a delegation of local people; (3) a delegation of municipal officials; and (4) scholars. This committee must determine an evaluation model and methodology. For evaluation procedure, the act provides two possibilities: the committee makes the assessment process by itself or chooses to outsource this duty to an outside organization. The evaluation report is presented to the local executive board, the municipal council and advertised to local people.

Extent of civic participation in local development planning provided by law

The Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 provides civil society many opportunities to be involved in local development planning. However, some aspects hinder effective participatory planning. Table 2 below, defines the process, participants and means of people participation in local development planning according to the law.

Table 2: People participation in local development planning

| Step | Participants | Activities | Means of Participation |
|------|--|---|--|
| 1.1 | Local residents | Making a Community Plan | Direct Participation in their own Community Plan |
| 2.1 | Municipal Executives | Appointing the Local Development Committee (LDC) and the Local Development Planning Supportive Committee (LDPSC) | Representatives |
| 2.2 | LDC | Determining a local development orientations | Delegations in the LDC |
| 2.3 | LDC Civic Organizations Governmental Agencies State Enterprises | Arranging a public meeting to announce a local development orientation to public Collecting public opinions, problems, needs and technical assistances | Delegation in the LDC and Civic Organizations |
| 2.4 | LDPSC | Making a draft of Strategic Plan | Delegation in the LDPSC |
| 2.5 | LDC | Considering the draft of Strategic Plan | Delegations in the LDC |
| 2.6 | Municipal Executives | Approving the Strategic Plan | Representatives |
| 2.7 | Public | Announcing the Strategic Plan to public | Direct Participation |
| 3.1 | LDC Civic Organizations | Determining local development principles | Delegation in LDC and civic organizations |

| Step | Participants | Activities | Means of Participation |
|-------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| 3.2 | LDPSC | Making a draft of Three-year Development Plan | Delegation in the LDPSC |
| 3.3 | LDC | Considering the draft of Three-year Development Plan | Delegations in the LDC |
| 3.4 | Municipal Executives | Approving the Three-year Development Plan | Representatives |
| 3.5 | Local residents | A municipality announcing the Three-year Development Plan to public | Direct Participation |
| 4.1 | Municipality | Using the Three-year Development Plan as a development framework of the Local budget | No statement in this regulation |
| 5.1 | LDPSC | Making a Local Action Plan | Delegations in the LDSPC |
| 5.2 | LDC | Considering the draft of Local Action Plan | Delegations in the LDC |
| 5.3 | Municipal Executives | Approving the Local Action Plan | Representatives |
| 5.4 | Local residents | A municipality announcing the Local Action Plan to public | Direct Participation |
| 6.1 | Municipal Executives | Forming the Evolution Committee | Representatives |
| 6.2 | The Evolution Committee | Determining an evaluation model and methodology, conducting the evolution process, and handing in the report to the municipal executives | Delegations in the Evolution Committee |
| 6.3 | Municipal Executives | Presenting the report to the municipal council | Representatives |
| 6.4 | Local residents | A municipality announcing the report to public | Direct participation |

According to Table 2, the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 emphasizes authority of a representative body (municipal executives) in municipal development planning. The municipal executives are obliged to appoint

notable planning committees and make decisions concerning local development plan approval.

The regulation provides four points for people participation: (1) the integration of Community Plan, which is undertaken collectively by community residents, in the Local Development Plan; (2) the municipal announcement; (3) the delegation of civic organizations in public meetings; and (4) the delegations in local development planning committees.

Integration of the Community Plan into the Local Development Plan

The Community Plan is a development plan produced solely by a community. According to the regulation, a municipality must consider the Community Plan in the Local Development Plan making process, as well as the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Since it is a bottom-up policy, the community plan is expected to be more responsive to local needs.

In the plan making process, community residents first arrange a meeting to make a plan independently. Generally, meetings are held after regular work hours and at a place within the communities. Municipal officials involved in the meeting provide assistance. At meetings, participants discuss problems and possible solutions and create their own development plan. Lists of projects and programs from every community plan are gathered at the Division of Policy and Planning. This data is perceived as a basis for the Local Developmental Plan.

An upshot of the Community Plan is the strengthening of community capacity; they learn how to list problems, find solutions, produce plans and implement the plan themselves, instead of receiving assistance from governmental authorities. Additionally, they familiarize with public administration through experiences acquired in the community planning process.

Although people can directly participate in the Community Plan, the plan will be only considered in making the Local Development Plan. There is uncertainty that their

plan, created at the grassroots, will appear in the municipal development plan. Moreover, the community plan is relatively narrow. Its limits are kept within neighboring issues, while the Municipal Development Plan covers broader aspects. Therefore, the community plan can only partially supplement the municipal plan. It is a one-way flow of information without genuine discussion or negotiation between local government and communities concerning public policy.

The delegation of civic organizations in public meetings

According to the regulation, public opinion collection is required in local development plan making. A meeting of delegations of civic associations and committees are relevant to local development plan-making. Through this meeting, people from different interests have an opportunity to transfer their opinions, needs and problems to a municipality. However, communication within the meeting is one-way; it aims to collect opinions and prevent unexpected negative impacts according to the plan. An opportunity to negotiate with a municipality is unlikely to take place in the meeting.

The Municipal Announcement

According to the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005, municipalities must announce the Strategic Plan, the Three-year Development Plan, the Municipal Expenditure, the Local Action Plan and the Evaluation Report in public. This is a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens – with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. However, the announcements are necessary for the civil society as it makes public information, including data of local planning, available for all different groups of interests.

Delegations of civic associations in local development planning committees

The Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 provides three forms of delegation: delegations of civic organizations in (1) the LDC, (2) the LDPSC and (3) the Evaluation Committee. All these three committees play a significant role in local development planning. Unlike the preceding methods of people participation, integrating delegations of civic organizations in the committees indicates a two-way communication between the local administration and people; the civic organizations have opportunities to negotiate their interests with the local administrations.

However, the effectiveness of the delegations is questionable from two perspectives. Firstly, number of civil society delegations in the committee is relative small. Among 23 members of the LDC, there are only 6 delegations representing civil society interests; and 3 delegations of civil society among 13 members have seats in the LDPSC. According to Sherry R Arnstein, if the traditional power elites hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed (Arnstein, 1969). Secondly, the methodology for selecting delegations of local civic organization lacks clarity and definition – it mentions only “the delegations of civic associations are chosen by civic organizations themselves”. Such an open statement raises the question as to whether the delegations of civic organizations genuinely represent various interests of civil society in the context of Thailand. Firstly, this is because the municipality establishes notable civic organizations in the municipal development process, including communities and professional clubs; and secondly because patron-client relationship play a dominant role in Thai society.

It is common for Thai politicians to maintain bilateral relationships with community leaders (Boonyabancha, 2005). These are essential gateways connecting the mayor with local people. Since community leaders are influential people in communities, they canvass for mayors during local elections. Politicians retain this patron-client relationship by visiting ceremonies of community leaders and provide assistance when community leaders require it. The ubiquitous patron-client networks in Thailand enable the ruling elites to dictate their policies, programs and projects, usually unopposed (Vichitt-Vadakan, 2003). This implies that civic organizations that work

cooperatively with a municipality are not truly free from local politicians involvement. In contrast, they have mutual benefits in their relationship. Accordingly, the loose statement of the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 concerning delegations of civic associations for the plan making committee is inappropriate for the situation in Thailand, where the patron-client relationship is strong and the civic association system is relative weak.

On Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 intends to reach the fifth level (of eight levels), so called 'placation'. At this level, citizens begin to have some degree of influence, though tokenism is still apparent (Arnstein, 1969). If local decision makers are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elites hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed (*ibid*). Municipal executives allow citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retain for power holders the right to judge the legitimacy of feasibility of the advice (*ibid*). This implies that the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 is unable to provide power to citizens via local development planning processes; as such, the form of people participation offered by this regulation can be regarded as tokenism.

5.3 Conclusion

The extent of citizen participation in local development planning provided by law is weak; furthermore, there is no indication of equal authority in public decision-making processes. The Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005 places importance on the municipal executives who have authority in making important decisions, including committee appointment and approval of the local development plan. Also, there is little reference in the regulation as to the process of creating the Local Budgeting, which is a crucial process for local development. The Local Budgeting is solely decided by a representative body (the municipal executive board and the municipal council) and a provincial governor who represents the central government.

In Thai regulations, citizen participation in the local plan aims to collect information, rather than promote two-way communication – as evidenced in the Interior Ministerial Regulation of the Local Development Planning 2005, the Public Hearing Regulation of 2005 and the City Planning Act of 1975. They present citizen participation as a means to collect information from local people in order to prevent unexpected negative impacts on them. The different delegations of civic organizations in the local development planning committee aim to placate local people by engaging them in the committee, rather than becoming partners in local development plan making.

Nevertheless, particular laws attempt to promote people participation in local development, for example, the Public Information Disclosure Act of 1997, the Bill for the Local Ordinances Proposition of 1999 and the Municipal Act of 2003. This legislation provides citizens with access to public information and an opportunity to create local ordinances via civil society.

Chapter 6

Attitudes of municipal leaders towards participatory planning

Overview

According to the preceding chapter, local politics in Thailand is highly dependent on the disposition of the mayor coupled with the team they put in place as the key decision-makers. This chapter recalls that local democracy – the election of mayors and city councils – was introduced in 1933 on the basis of the so-called ‘weak mayor’ arrangement, whereby the city council elected the mayor. From 2000, however, the ‘strong mayor’ arrangement was introduced where the mayor is elected directly. In the former arrangement, the mayor was dependent on satisfying the wishes of the council if they wished to stay in power. Now, it would seem they are directly answerable to the people to encourage participation by the people in a situation where they should be able to influence decision-making more directly.

The combination of business interests and local administrative responsibility creates a distinct character of prejudice. Under these circumstances, participatory planning that can respond to a group’s diversity of interests would not genuinely occur. Hence, the main objective of this chapter is to gain a full understanding of the attitudes of local administrative leaders towards participatory planning, together with their foundations. Initially, the author investigates the local business community – a dominant actor in the municipalities, in regards to their backgrounds and aims of political participation. Their attitudes towards participatory planning are then analyzed through the contribution and benefits they attain. A summary of their attitudes towards participatory planning – preference and avoidance – concludes the chapter.

6.1 Local politicians and their business backgrounds

Presently in Thai local politics, municipalities are occupied by local business elites. Most political officials who are municipal decision makers (mayors, deputy mayors, mayor’s consultants and members of council) have direct and indirect business

backgrounds. They strongly relate to local business associations including the Provincial Chamber of Commerce or particular trade associations. The dominant business sectors in municipalities are construction, material suppliers and service sectors – particularly hotels and shopping malls. The following case studies demonstrate their dominance in municipalities.

Khon Kaen City Municipality

In Khon Kaen, Peerapon Pathanaperadej has been mayor since 2000. His family owns a shopping mall, while his spouse's family runs a hotel, agro-machinery business and automobile distributor. Of the current executive board, one deputy mayor owns a business school; another owns a hotel; and one has a strong connection to construction contractors. In the legislative body, the head of the council owns a printing house, textile shop and gift shop; others operate in the hotel business and construction. They are all members of the Mayor's political group – Rak Pattana Nakhon Khon Kaen.

At the organizational level, Khon Kaen City Municipality works cooperatively with the local business community, which is closely linked to the Khon Kaen Chamber of Commerce and is an organization that maintains a good reputation among local entrepreneurs and local business groups in specific businesses. For example, the Petro-station Businessmen Club, the Real Estate Businessmen Club, the Dormitory Owner Club, the Construction Contractor Club, the Tourism and Hotel Businessmen Club and the Northeast Hotel Business Club. Most municipal politicians are members of this business association. Moreover, the Mayor has very close connection with the Chamber of Commerce, as he held the position of secretary in 1990; currently, his sister is an executive there.

Additionally, the municipality is a member of the Banjamitra Group, which is an informal group consisting of five local powerful organizations: the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Industries, the Khon Kaen Municipality, the Khon Kaen Administrative Organization and the Khon Kaen Lawyer Council. The group focuses

on business issues, especially, local business protection, which will be discussed in detail in the proceeding chapter.

Phitsanulok City Municipality

Premruedee Charmpunot – a leader of the political team ‘Luk Naresuan’ – has been mayor of Phitsanulok since 1995. She is strongly supported by her spouse – Suchon Charmpunot – a wealthy Chinese businessman who owns hotels and a business school, and is a prominent national politician. In the national parliament, Suchon was a deputy minister of finance in 1988. In her political team, the most prominent members have business backgrounds, which collectively include a hotel, a shopping mall, a car dealer, a hospital and construction business.

The municipality has a close connection with the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce. Here, a deputy mayor was previously president, while the current president is a consultant to the mayor. The most obvious cooperation between them appears to be in form of event arrangement, such as the “Grand Sale”. The Chamber of Commerce is responsible for selecting entrepreneurs to trade in the events while the municipality is responsible for location arrangement (Wiset Wachirasrisirikun, a president of Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal interview, 21 January 2008).

Phuket City Municipality

Somjai Suwansupana has been mayor of Phuket City Municipality since 2004. She is a member of the ‘Kon Num group’ (the young men group), led by Phumisak Hongyok, who is one of the wealthiest citizens of Phuket. Hongyok Family gained wealth in the tin mining and rubber trade. After the Phuket economy changed, his family diversified their business sectors covering real estate, car distribution, construction, hotels and golf clubs. After being mayor for 16 years, Phumisak entered the national parliamentary senate, where he supported Somjai to be mayor against very strong political opposition. In comparison, Somjai’s business success is quite moderate - she owns a hotel, a pawnshop and shares in hotels.

Somjai's municipal executive team maintains a strong connection with the business community. Their business substantially links with municipal expenditure particularly in the construction sector. Ostensibly, two from four deputy mayors have a business in distribution of construction materials. People in the tourist business also hold seats on her executive board – i.e. the deputy mayor runs a tourist agency; a consultant runs a marine transport firm.

6.2 What kinds of advantages do business elites gain via political participation?

Essentially, local business elites enter municipal politics in an attempt to acquire municipal authority. Such authority enables local business elites to influence municipal decisions for their own purposes. The following work explores various incentives of municipal authority that persuades local businesses to enter the municipality, with a primary focus on economic advantages. Other advantages gained by business elites from participating in local politics, for example fame or access to national parliament, are not explored, as they do not counter participatory planning. Data used in the analysis has been acquired through interviews with local journalists, officials, scholars, and news articles from local and national media. Incentives are categorized in three groups: (1) advantage from municipal contracts; (2) advantage from municipal regulation; and (3) advantage from municipal economic policy. Each is examined in the following.

Advantage from municipal contracts

The most direct and obvious economic advantage to be gained by political participation is the acquisition of public contracts. This group consists of people who do business with the municipality, and their income relies heavily on contracts or commission they win from this local administration. The construction business and material supplies are the most obvious in this category.

Local construction contractors usually form a group. They monopolize the municipal construction contracts via manipulation of project bids. Contracts of high-budget

projects are shared among the members, which leaves little space for external firms to win small budget projects from the municipality. Moreover, construction contractors are sponsors of candidates during the election campaign. In some cases, nominee firms from Bangkok are sent to participate in the bid in order to make the bid more authentic. Reports claim benefits from the municipal construction projects are shared among municipal politicians and some relevant municipal officials (Interviewee K., a local journalist of Phuket, personal interview, 28 January 2008).

In one of the selected cities, three construction firms (two local construction firms and a large construction firm from a neighboring city) control municipal construction projects. A son of a local company is currently a member of the municipal council. It is claimed that a deputy mayor is the liaison connecting the municipal executives with construction contractors (Interviewee C., a local journalist of Khon Kaen, personal interview, 24 December 2007). Communication and negotiation between the municipality and the firms have transferred through him.

A particularly obvious corruption case was a construction of a public park – a project for green public area providing outdoor activities, including sports and recreation for the city, located in the eastern part of the city. Newspapers recently condemned this project. The Office of the Auditor General of Thailand (OAG) found that the construction cost, which was calculated by the municipality, exceeded standard cost for 64 million baht (Mathichon, 2008).

Another exemplary case is an improvement of a park located on the southern part of the city, constructed in the period of the previous mayor. An enormous sum was spent on this project to create a fenced park around the lake with the unfounded reason of crime protection. A local journalist claimed that the corruption tax of this project was used for the election campaign when the mayor turned to the national parliament (Interviewee C., a local journalist of Khon Kaen, personal interview, 24 December 2007).

In another selected city, various members of the municipal council apparently maintain businesses in the construction sector. There is no evidence of construction corruption shown in media or found by the Office of the Auditor General of Thailand

(OAG). However, local journalists and scholars confirmed its existence. According to local journalists, profits of construction projects have been shared fairly among local contractors (Interviewee E., a local journalist of Phitsanulok, personal interview, 15 January 2008). It is asserted that corruption at the municipality level occurs very smoothly (Interviewee I., a local scholar, personal interview, 17 January 2008). Various members of the municipal council are contractors; they send nominees to acquire municipal commissions, or force the bid-winner contractors to purchase construction materials from their companies. Occasionally, Bangkok-based companies receive municipal commission instead of local companies. These incidents are set in order to make municipal commission more realistic.

In the last selected city, the municipality was accused of construction bid manipulation in the roundabout monument project founded by the Assets Examination Committee (AEC). However, the current municipal executives claimed that the former executive board, relevant local officials and private companies who won the commission were guilty, but not themselves.

Business people also commit corruption through other means than construction contracts, as demonstrated in the following three cases. Firstly, a municipal leader of a selected city has a contract with the municipality in running his business. His political opposition claimed that it is a conflict of interest with his position as an elected official. Secondly, the municipality approved the budget to purchase a mobile unit car. Though it had similar specification, the price proposed by this city was almost 50 per cent higher than that of another municipality. Thirdly, maintenance budget of a municipal technical equipment of a selected city, which costs about 60 million baht, had an unclear expenditure description. There was lack of explanation and detail how the money was spent which provided the municipality the flexibility and opportunity for corruption. In this city, expenditure ambiguity occurs with many other projects.

Advantages from municipal regulation

Municipal regulations have both positive and negative aspects for local business elites. Some municipal regulations restrain profits for their business; on the other hand, these regulations possibly protect their benefits from competitors. Therefore, local business communities wish to have a municipal authority in order to enact the municipal regulations in their preferences. The building regulation is the most obvious case regarding this aspect.

In one of selected cities, many buildings (e.g. shopping malls and hotels) have received dubious building permission from the municipality. For example, there is a hotel built aside the city storm water canal (Interviewee C., a journalist of Khon Kaen, personal interview, 24 December 2007). The municipality, who is responsible for local building permission, approved the construction plan although a certain setback distance from the canal was required. Furthermore, the municipality approved building extensions with unsafe conditions in terms of fire protection and construction strength. Typically, illegal building extensions are exposed when accidents occur and subsequent media investigations reveal that extensions were built illegally. Many other cases of building code contraventions by local hotels and shopping malls have not been penalized. Additionally, the municipality is known to prolong the granting of business permits for businesses in competition with those of the mayor and/or other local politicians. To this end, the operation of the municipality in respect to building controls remains very questionable.

An interview with a local businessman of a selected city revealed that the municipality overlooks illegal buildings when donations are made to them during elections. The businessman himself donated money to all candidates during the election campaign specifically to avoid municipal regulations. Essentially, he viewed the donation as an investment to enjoy regulation relaxation from the municipality in return (Interviewee H., a local business elite, personal interview, 16 January 2008).

In addition to the relaxation of regulations, local politicians use municipal regulations to protect their business from external entrepreneurs. Recently, economic growth that has expanded to provincial cities attracts entrepreneurs from Bangkok and foreign

countries to invest in the areas. Retail and wholesale trade is the most obvious business sector confronting the external invasion. Powerful local traders could reach an agreement with the invaders by using their municipal power and their landownership as capital in negotiations. Most small traders who had a little capital and political power could not compete with the newcomers and subsequently closed their businesses.

Expansion of shopping complex from Bangkok to regional cities is an example of the external threat of local business elites. In one of selected cities, a Bangkok-based firm wished to open their shopping mall to this area; and preferred to be the single shareholder.

As the prominent politician's firm dominated the local shopping mall business, it did not agree with this condition. As such, building permission, which must be provided by the municipality, was delayed for many years. Following protracted negotiations, building permission was finally approved, but only when it was agreed to the politician. Such examples demonstrate that local business elites use political power for business protection.

Advantage from municipal economic policy

Profits of some businesses, particularly the tourist industry and real estate business, rely highly on municipal economic policy. Unlike municipal contracts, the advantage earned by local politicians from the municipal economic policy is the strengthening of their business profitability via increasing numbers of customers, expanding the market, or raising the value of their properties.

Municipal incentives are a significant factor in the tourist industry. They exist in three forms: (1) creating places to visit, such as parks, temples, shrines, cultural centers; (2) providing tourist utilities including streets and pedestrian paths; (3) creating occasional tourist activities, such as festivals and events.

In Khon Kaen, various tourist attractions have been rebuilt, including a city shrine and a city gate. As Khon Kaen has no historic city wall, the reconstruction of a city gate does not represent the city's historical value. Instead, it is supposed to be a tourist attraction welcoming visitors arriving from the Mittraphap Highway to Khon Kaen. The rebuilding of a city shrine located behind the city gate emphasizes the area's importance. A one-week opening ceremony with attendance of a royal family member attracted many visitors around the region.

In Phitsanulok, an area along Nan River from 'Wat Yai' temple to a main market was intensively developed. This project consists of a park along the river called 'Suan Chom Nan', new market construction, bridge reconstruction and the Wat Yai temple upgrade. Previously, Wat Yai temple – where one of the most important Buddha images is located – was the single tourist attraction in this area. The project began with the removal of boathouses, which were purported to be contaminating the river. The residents were relocated to a new site. The park along the river was subsequently constructed, proceeded by market relocation and bridge reconstruction.

Following this project, the tourist area expanded until the market and crossed to the opposite site of the Nan River – in effect local people acquired a public recreation area in the heart of the city. As business is always the first priority, restaurant boats were permitted to replace the previous location of the boathouses that were accused of polluting the river. The municipality has created many other tourist attractions elsewhere in the city. They include the city cultural centre, the Queen Sirikit Park, historic city gate restoration and the historic palace renovation.

The municipalities arrange tourist activities regularly. The most renowned attempt in Khon Kaen is the 'Songkran' festival or a Thai traditional new-year day, held in mid April. In the past, this festival in Khon Kaen was famous only across neighboring cities. Owing to the current mayor, the Khon Kaen Songkran festival was elevated in importance and broadcast on a free-to-air television channel. One local street was named 'Tanon Kau Neuw' (or Sticky Rice Street), which is taken from 'Tanon Kau San' or Rice Street, which is a famed in Bangkok's Songkran festival. Currently the Songkran festival in Khon Kaen is one of the most spectacular Songkran festivals in Thailand.

In Phitsanulok, Loikrathong festival (floating festival), the Boat Race event, Songkran festival (Thai New Year), and Food and Souvenir Festival have been held regularly. The food festival is held for a month in the location along the Suan Chom Nan Park. It is a cooperation of the local administration and local business groups. The municipality is responsible for location arrangement while members of local groups open their shops to sell products here. This festival highly stimulates local economy. However this business-orientated project generates some difficulties for the city, particularly traffic. Many local residents post complaints on the municipal website about traffic problems as nearby streets are closed during the festival.

For utility provision, street construction is one of the most obvious municipal contributions in economic development. Standard streets provide access to sites, and consequently raise land values; as such street construction is a significant consideration. In the case study, the municipalities strengthen the politicians' business profitability by improving access to their land. In one selected city, the road was constructed covering the city storm water canal that passes a side of politician's building. This municipal project provides an additional customer parking lot and eliminates the unpleasant scenery and odor of the open canal. Recently, the municipality extended the coverage though the entire city storm water canal. A municipal official claimed that the coverage with street pavement prevents the canal from garbage of nearby households.

Street construction also promotes traffic flow in the city. For landlords, new streets provide access to their properties and land that was previously valueless has become valuable. Many points along street projects have transformed to commercial uses such as a market and entertainment street. Though there were some arguments about canal maintenance and its capacity reduction after road pavement coverage, it seems that the benefit to local business is the first priority in decision-making.

Moreover, business value of the land also can be increased via construction of parks nearby. A municipality of selected cities approved to construct a park in front of a local politician's hotel. This new park will eliminate the unpleasant odor from the previous use as a pig farm and beautify politician's hotel approach. In another selected city, the municipality received permission to develop a park beside a lake.

The municipality has constructed a park and streets and areas around the lagoon have been developed into residential area – particularly luxury housing. Local activists claimed that many public lands around the lagoon have gone to the hands of private land developers during the development (Interviewee A., an activist, personal interview, 12 January 2008).

6.3 Does ‘Participatory Planning’ matter to local leaders?

The preceding research illustrates the dominance of business elites in local politics with the primary purpose of promoting their business interests. In the following, the author investigates the performance and attitudes of local politicians who derive from the business community concerning participatory planning.

By using the model of a ‘corruption government’ constructed by O.E.G Johnson (1975), the net income of politicians from corruption is a result of the money channeled from the governmental budget to them and the corruption tax with a constraint cost deduction. In order to obtain the highest corruption profit, politicians have to reduce the constraint cost that includes legal constraint and competitive constraint. According to this model, the author raises the question:

What is the relevance of the participatory planning with the constraint cost of corruption?

Theoretically, one of the objectives of participatory planning is to make the public decision more transparent, (i.e.) corruption eradication. To Herbert Simon, this approach offered flexibility to address the particularity of decision circumstances while constraining corruption by clear accountability of actions to policy criteria (Healey, 1997). All decisions must be made collectively with civil community. Municipal information – regarding their performance, their decision in projects, budget and contracts – must be revealed to the public, including NGOs and their political opposition.

According to O.E.G Johnson, corrupt government requires the closure of public information to public, justice and political opposition. The accessibility of public information to such groups would harm a corrupt government in penalization or lose in an election (Johnson, 1975). This means participatory planning generates constraint cost of corruption to local politicians.

The unwillingness of municipality concerning public information disclosure is demonstrated in one of selected cities. According to a municipal official, the public meeting of this city is quite sensitive in terms of conflict. Due to the strong political opposition, contradiction in the collective meeting occurs regularly. Due to this, the public meeting in this city is undertaken with a moderate level of participation that is compatible with the Local Development Planning Regulation. Moreover, municipal information is well protected. People who request municipal information are required to submit an official paper to the mayor for approval. Information is strictly provided within the framework of the Public Information Disclosure Act of the year 1997 (Interviewee M., an official, personal interview, 30 January 2008). Similarly, the public meeting of another selected city has a modest reputation. An opposed political party has raised many pertinent issues during public meetings.

In Phitsanulok, an opposed political party raised the issue that the construction of the Midnight Market overlapped the Nan River; but the Municipality rejected this. In the case of Suan Chom Nan Park, it was claimed that the park is prone to flooding in various parts during the rainy season. The Ekatosros Bridge was accused of being pro-Burma, as bridge ornaments were perceived to have a Burmese style. The incidents show that the participatory activities change the way of municipal management. As municipal information is open to the civic community, including political opposition, mayors must be more aware of their decision regarding municipal performance. Every aspect of their execution must be explainable; otherwise, they lose confidence and trust of the local citizens. This type of participatory action increases the cost of corruption for local politicians.

The previous discussion reveals that local politicians tend to prevent particular participatory actions in municipal practices in order to retain personal benefits. However, the three case study cities demonstrate that particular participatory action is

common in municipal execution. Mayors praise people participation as one of their management principles; and, in practice, certain participatory forms have been integrated into their planning. Therefore, the attitude of local leaders towards participatory action is not solely negative. In contrast, they gain advantages from it. According to this phenomenon, the author raises the question:

How do local politicians benefit from participatory action?

Firstly, participatory action is an obligation according to the various laws detailed in Chapter 5. Essentially, municipalities arrange civic forums and public hearing activities regularly in order to meet legal requirements. When the projects show highly local support through participatory activities, they are unlikely to be rejected by the provincial development committee (Interviewee G., an official, personal interview, 18 January 2008).

Another benefit of participatory action to local politicians lies in the mass support it can harness. By learning from the political strategy of Thaksin Shinawatra (the former Thai Prime Minister), mass support is one of significant tools in current Thai politics, which tends to empower the leader and strengthen his or her premiership stability. Thaksin conducted himself as a politician of the Communication Age, delivering weekly radio talkback shows concerning his activities (Phongpaichit, 2005). In this one-way communication, the sense of involvement in the exercise of his government emerged among citizens, though they had no power to negotiate in the government's decision. Additionally, the feeling of intimacy, which is highly significant for politicians, arose through such communication.

In local politics, a significant shift of a mayor's position away from the 'strong mayor form' was enacted in 2000, as previously mentioned. Similar to national politics, the significance of mass support increased. Therefore, communication between mayor and local citizens – concerning policies, achievements and citizens' requirements – is very important. The model of Thaksin's political strategy was repeated here.

A politician's popularity can be strengthened in numerous ways. They regularly visit local elites and community leaders in personal occasions such as funerals and

wedding ceremonies. They take part in the municipal mobile units, visiting local communities monthly. Their images regularly appear on city billboards, the official municipal website and local newspaper, promoting their policy achievements or even giving best wishes for the New Year. They speak on local radio, reporting their work and answering questions from callers. Some post their mobile numbers in the reception hall of the municipal office building so that people can reach them directly, to reduce red-tape complications. They provide web boards in the official website of municipality that allow people to post their opinions or complaints concerning municipal executions and the mayor's response to those questions.

Participatory action in municipal execution is also used for increasing a local politician's popularity as well. The following discusses the attempts of local politicians to use participatory actions in order to gaining political popularity.

In Khon Kaen, the municipality arranges a 'civic forum' three or four times per year. The term 'Civic forum' is employed by the municipality for public meetings that are excluded from the requirement of laws. According to Suwanich Silaon, the Khon Kaen municipal clerk, Khon Kaen is the only city in Thailand that arranges the civic forum (personal interview, 13 February 2008). The civic forum provides local people with an opportunity to discuss certain topics in public. The municipality invites particular stakeholders relevant to the topic. Meanwhile, non-relevant people in the topic are also welcome to participate in this meeting. The mayor chooses topics and agendas of the meeting. Most are less controversial issues. Two examples of the civic forum are: (1) the reconstruction of the city shrine and the city gate, and (2) the Khon Kaen transit system.

In the first project, the mayor desired to rebuild the city shire and the city gate in their current location. This project aimed to beautify the main city approach and reduce traffic congestion caused by the narrow size of the old city gate. The project indicates good cooperation between local business community and the municipality. Most of the budget was acquired via donations of local business elites. In the meeting, the design of the building was presented, and the opening ceremony arrangement was discussed. As this project had no negative impact to anyone in the city, there was no serious argument during the meeting.

The Khon Kaen transit system is a cooperation project of Khon Kaen City Municipality, Khon Kaen University and the Office of Transport and Policy Planning under the Ministry of Transport. The project aims to facilitate the city with a mass transit system that is appropriate for the future growth and environmentally friendly. The Faculty of Engineering in Khon Kaen University is responsible for the master plan and provision of technical knowledge. In the forum, the mayor presented the background of the project and showed how Khon Kaen mass transit will look in the future according to the proposal. The only group who would be negatively impacted is the existing public bus providers. Nevertheless, the solution to this had been discussed and agreed before the civic forum took place. From the two case studies, it appears that the civic forum in these two topics aimed to exhibit or advertise the mayor's achievement, rather than take crucial opinion from local citizens.

Some participatory actions emphasize the helpful character of the mayor. Mostly, these topics hold conflicts between local residents with governmental agencies, for example slum clearance and the crossing intersection project.

In the crossing intersection construction, there was a conflict between a central governmental agency – the Department of Highway – and local people. Since Khon Kaen City has traffic congestion during rush hours, the solution to build a bridge crossing over a major intersection was introduced by the Department of Highways with academic support of a research from the Khon Kaen University. This project created the neighboring community concern that the bridge would cause negative effects: the unpleasant scenery and inability for doing business. Due to the protest, the project was put on hold. Meanwhile, the municipality arranged a public meeting with relevant stakeholders including governmental agencies, the Department of Highways, and the community. Consequently, the tunnel construction was an agreeable design replacing the elevated bridge, however, the cost of construction was double. The construction began after the Prime Minister approved the project in the community preferable solution.

The clearance of a squatter settlement also used a civic forum to find a solution. Initially, the SRT made a contract with the community allowing vegetable planting, brick producing, and doing business in small shop houses. In 2006, the SRT stopped

renewing the contract; meanwhile, the organization leased the land to a real estate firm for commercial buildings. Therefore, the squatter dwellers were forced to relocate. The municipality took action by arranging a public meeting to find a solution. Relevant groups: the State Railway of Thailand, the slum dwellers, NGOs, CODI and relevant governmental officials, were invited. A compromised solution was agreed, some dwellers had to be relocated; the municipality would produce special housing registration for them; and CODI and the municipality were responsible for community capacity building.

These incidents demonstrate that politicians were able to use civic forums to their advantages by employing it to protect local people's interests from the external threat including the central government; as such civic forums increased their popularity amongst local people.

Participatory activities are used only for particular circumstances, despite being able to help a mayor's popularity. In the three case studies, only Khon Kaen City Municipality uses this method to increase the politicians' popularity, while it is unlikely to happen in Phitsanulok and Phuket City Municipalities. Khon Kaen has almost no political opposition due to political stability, however this is not the case in Phuket and Phitsanulok.

6.4 Conclusion

In sum, it is obvious that local business elites dominate municipal politics. They occupy most of municipal executive positions that are legitimated for public decision determination.

Delegations of business groups are exclusively integrated in the municipal decision-making process. Apparently, their main purpose for joining municipal politics is to arrange direct profits to their respective businesses. Such benefits are diverse: they can derive through channeling municipal budgets to their businesses; from municipal commissions; from municipal policy; and from the economic growth and the physical improvement of the city.

Through having an orientation focused on personal benefits, the attitude of local leaders towards the participatory planning is mixed between positive and negative. They use participatory actions strategically for particular issues. Those that strengthen their popularity and their policy and plan legitimacy are practiced regularly, while the participatory forms in issues that curtail their benefits are avoided.

Chapter 7

Associations of Civil Society Interests

Overview

The preceding chapter examined the various means by which business interests have dominated local politics. Local business elites occupy notable municipal positions that have authority in public decision making. They only allow as much ‘participation’ necessary to help their interests. With such tight control of business elites in the Thai municipality, the question emerges:

How does the rest of civil society organize itself under these conditions?

To answer, the author investigates notable local associations working in urban development, in respect to their formation, objectives, types of development fields, methodologies to contribute their works and their involvement in municipal development planning. Essentially, this research focuses on three groups of people who are prominent urban development actors: activists, businessmen and scholars (university teachers). The author selected these individuals and local associations with assistance of CODI, local journalists, local officials, local prominent business elites and local scholars.

In Thailand, it appears that non-governmental associations and their leaders are equally significant. In many cases, names of founders or leaders are more important than principles of organizations. Therefore, the author investigates both local associations and respective leaders.

7.1 Background of local associations and persons involved in the local development process

Khon Kaen City

For issues concerning vulnerable people in the city, CODI and the Northeast NGO-CORD are the most notable organizations. They cooperate with many local activists and university teachers in their development projects. The most renowned activists are Decha Premruedeelert – a leader of the Northeastern NGO-CORD and Somphop Bunnag – a leading activist in slum issues.

Of the local academic institutes, Khon Kaen University plays a significant role in the city's development. It was officially established in 1966. Currently, it offers a wide range of programs, covering humanities and social sciences, sciences and technology and medical sciences. Among the three case study cities, Khon Kaen city has the highest potential of local university concerning city development planning. The university has long establishment and the expertise on subjects related to the city planning. Cooperation between the municipality and the university concentrates on technical expertise provision, for example, the design of the city shrine, the wastewater management planning, the traffic planning, evaluation reports concerning the municipal execution and the Khon Kaen mass transit system. For this research, three university teachers involved in and who influence the city development were interviewed: Samphan Techatik, a social development teacher; Thanoo Polawatara, architecture teacher; and Rawee Hanpachern – urban planning teacher.

For the middleclass interests, three associations exist in the city: the Anti-Corruption Organization of Khon Kaen; the Benjamitra Group; and Chomrom Kon Rak Khon Kaen (People Loving Khon Kaen Club).

The roles of these selected persons and organizations concerning city development are described below.

Decha Premruedeelert and Northeastern NGO-CORD

The Northeastern NGO-CORD is a liaison organization bridging regional NGOs with the state and relevant organizations. Originally, the NGO-CORD focused on rural issues; later it expanded to cope with urban problems. Currently, the organization covers 7 issues: (1) alternative agriculture, (2) natural resources and environment, (3) women, (4) AIDS, (5) children and youth, (6) human rights and (7) slums. The most prominent person associated with the Northeastern NGO-CORD is Decha Premruedeelert – a pioneer in social issues who helped establish the organization. At present, Decha operates as a consultant of the organization.

In terms of cooperation with Khon Kaen City Municipality, Decha has maintained a good relationship with the current mayor of Khon Kaen since being acquainted in 1994. According to Decha, the mayor seems to be enthusiastic with the principles and activities of NGOs. He participated in demonstrations and meetings arranged by grassroots and activists (Decha Premruedeelert, a local activist, personal interview, 26 December 2007). In 2003, the mayor appointed Decha as a mayor's consultant, in charge of municipal education. An alternative pedagogic method, which is relevant to Buddhist practice, has been integrated into the educational system of municipal schools. His work has been highly promoted by the municipality (*ibid*). Additionally, he is renowned among business elites who work cooperatively with the municipality.

While Decha works on the issue with less contradiction to local politicians, NGOs under the Northeastern NGO-CORD focus on more intractable problems, such as the protest against construction of a major bridge, as discussed in Chapter 6. In this project, the community coordinated with the municipality, academics and a NGO to stop the project. The Northeast NGO-CORD submitted a petition to the governor for project reconsideration.

Currently the Northeastern NGO-CORD and NGOs under this umbrella are in decline. Staff numbers of the Northeastern NGO-CORD have decreased constantly due to the fund shortages (*ibid*). In the past, major grant providers were bilateral agencies including CIDA, GTZ and the Thai Government. Nowadays, the organization receives grants merely from the Thai Government through CODI and the

Thai Health Promotion Foundation (THPF). Activists must submit project proposals that relate to the objectives of grant providers – CODI focuses on community development, while the THPF focuses on the health issue. Besides these issues, activists for agricultural problems receive grants from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives; public administration issues receive grants from the King Pradjadhipok's Institute. Hence, the central government is the main grant provider and able to control NGOs, which represents a transition period for Thai NGOs.

Somphop Bunnag

Somphop Bunnag is a well know activist in Khon Kaen. He began his work in the slum issue of Khon Kaen, the first slum-upgrading project outside Bangkok, in 1990. The project was sponsored by UNDP. In the project, his team made a survey numbering slum settlements in Khon Kaen city. As the result, more than 50 slum settlements were found, contradicting governmental data stating an absence of slum settlement in the area.

Initially, the Khon Kaen City Municipality rejected the responsibility, claiming that the squatted land, which belonged to the State Railway of Thailand, was beyond their duty. As the slum issue became more critical, the municipality began to provide assistance to the slum settlements. It provided household registration to slum dwellers, legalizing them as Thai citizens. Registration provided their children educational opportunities and rights to vote in an election that favored local politicians. Since then, the municipality expanded their aid to another slum settlements. Aid including legal community establishment, community road construction, water supply and some social programs were undertaken. Slum communities became increasingly significant to municipal operations and local politics. In contrast to urban middle-class, slum dwellers often participate in municipal activities and their votes are reliable. Therefore, their political power increases, and negotiation between them and local politicians is possible (Somphop Bunnag, an activist, telephone interview, 20 July 2009).

As the slum issue has been alleviated, Somphop and fellow activists shifted focus to work on issues of consumerism. They founded the ‘Khon Kaen Consumers Protection Association’ in 2008 aiming on preventing unfair trades and services for products including: mobile phones, telephones, Internet service, credit cards and insurance; while promoting environmentally friendly consumption. The association essentially provides advice, making claims and arranging legal assistance for consumer related issues. Additionally, the association organizes public meetings in order to educate people on notable consumer issues, for example resistance to a Bangkok-based convenience store.

Somphop recognizes that the corruption issue still dominates municipal politics. However, it is too risky for local NGOs to cope with this problem. The recent suspicious disappearance of a citizen who fiercely opposed a corrupt local politician in a neighboring town indicates the presence of a dark, malevolent underbelly in local politics. Moreover, local politicians are able to control local masses. Therefore, Somphop and his colleagues avoid dealing with sensitive municipal projects, particularly large constructions projects that greatly facilitate benefits to politicians (ibid).

In municipal development planning, Somphop was involved in the plan evaluation procedure as a consultant. After working in this position for two years, he resigned in a matter of insignificant voice in planning (ibid).

Sampan Techatik

Sampan Techatik is a lecturer at the Department of Social Development, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University. In the early 2000s, he was involved in a cooperative project called ‘The Livable City’. In this project, he worked together with the Khon Kaen City Municipality and many notable local development actors. Since then, he became one of local scholars who work closely with the municipality.

The apparent roles of Sampan in municipal development concentrate on technical expertise provision. He received municipal commissions for producing: (1) an evaluation on municipal policy; (2) an evaluation on the management effectiveness of municipal departments; and (3) a municipal official training regarding community plan making. On the topic of corrupt politicians, Sampan is tolerant as long as politicians attempted city development (Sampan Techatik, an university lecturer, personal interview, 24 December 2007).

Thanoo Polawatana

Thanoo Polawatana is a retired scholar. He was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Khon Kaen University, from 2000-2004. In 2003, he began his social work in the slum-upgrading program in Khon Kean area, cooperating with the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI). This program intends to strengthen the community's capacity to manage their needs and solve their problems by themselves. The board, so called the 'City Committee', was established consisting of CODI, the municipality, local scholars and activists. The main duty of the committee was to make decisions on proposals submitted by slum communities. An example of his work with CODI is the squatter settlement located on State Railway of Thailand (SRT) land as mentioned earlier.

Concerning participation in municipal development planning, the municipality invited Thanoo as a delegation of a local university to provide advises to the municipality in the public park construction project. Since the design process was already completed, he could only offer little comment on the plan; and his comments were mostly ignored (Thanoo Polawatana, a former dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Khon Kaen Univeristy, telephone interview, 30 July 2009).

Rawee Hanpachern

Rawee Hanpachern is a head of the Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture and a vice-management executive of the Research and Development

Institute, Khon Kaen University. In 1999, the Khon Kaen City Municipality chose several proposed projects of his research – so called the potential of open space in Khon Kaen city – to implement. These projects included the reconstruction of the city shrine and the city gate, the revitalization of Srichan Road, the pedestrian way along the storm water canal and the construction of City Gate Park. Some projects retained their original purposes while others were highly modified, for example the storm water canal as mentioned earlier. Initially, the researchers proposed a pedestrian way along the side of the open canal with highly ecological concern. The municipality converted the pedestrian way to a street way covering the entire length of canal, with a claim of additional road surface provision.

Concerning participation in municipal development planning, Rawee was appointed as a member of municipal development committee. During the post, the board rarely considered his opinions. According to him, the planning process with budget-oriented projects and projects favored politicians has dominated municipal planning (Rawee Hanpacher, a head of the Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Khon Kaen University, telephone interview, 30 July 2009). Due to a disagreement in principle, he left the committee a posting of three years.

Apart from involvement through a municipal committee, Rawee and his fellows formed the movement opposing the construction of a bridge crossing an intersection previously mentioned. He argued that the city should find another solution to overcome traffic congestion in the city – for example, a ring road and/or improvement of the mass transit system. A petition with several academic signatures was submitted to the provincial governor. He participated in the public hearing meeting arranged by the municipality and revealed his opinion in public. For him, this incident was the most obvious action of local academics against governmental projects (ibid).

In terms of local civic associations, Rawee was a member of the Chomrom Kon Rak Khon Kaen. However, as the group was not effective, he left. Currently, he and other local middle-class citizens are in the process of forming a new local development group (ibid).

Kumphong Phumpukeaw and Khon Kaen Anti-Corruption Organization

The Khon Kaen Anti-Corruption Organization was founded in 1999. It is a non-registered group working on the issue of corruption of politicians. The group targets broad public support by making public speeches, radio broadcasting and flyer distribution. One of group leaders stated that the public issues must be solved with mass politics, not by courts (Kumphong Phumpukeaw, a leader of the Khon Kaen Anti-Corruption Organization, personal interview, 12 January 2008).

Kumphong Phumpukeaw, who is a professional lawyer, is the group leader. His activism began during university studies. In that time, he assisted vulnerable groups, for example the landless people, to fight for their rights. These social assistant actions have continued to the present. In terms of politics, he was a candidate of general election three times.

The current campaign, purposed by the mayor, is an ambiguous project of street construction over the city storm water canal as mentioned earlier. Kumphong argued that the mayor intended to distort his corruption of partially paving the street on the storm water canal near his shopping mall. By paving a street through the entire canal, he possibly turned the issue around. Additionally, the mayor gained support from local people who benefited from the street and eased his initial guilt (ibid). Despite the Anti-corruption Association's persistence, the mayor remains popular among local citizens.

Regarding participation in municipal development planning, Kumphong is not a member of any municipal committee. He chooses to makes an explicit attack on politicians and aims to win an election (ibid). Therefore, his movement takes place in public, instead of in the municipal structure.

Surapol Thaweangsakulthai and Chomrom Kon Rak Khon Kaen

Chomrom Kon Rak Khon Kaen (People Loving Khon Kaen Club) is an informal association focusing on the urban development of the city. It was founded by Surapol

Thaweesangsakulthai – a prominent local business elite. Currently, he takes a post as a president of the Khon Kaen Chamber of Commerce.

The group has about 100 members (Surapol Thaweesangsakulthai, a leader of Chomrom Khon Rak Khon Kaen, telephone interview, 21 August 2009). They are middleclass from various backgrounds for example, attorneys, businessmen, policemen, local politicians and academics (including Thanoo Polawatana and Rawee Hanpachern). According to Surapol, the group invites persons who are social-minded to be members of the group, many of whom do social work together in the Rotary Club and JC association – i.e. local associations working in social assistance. Meetings of the group are arranged monthly. To take an action, the group uses their members' relationship with responsible administrations to transfer its proposals.

Concerning their achievement, the club has no substantial success concerning city development. According to Thanoo – a scholar member, the club lacks a concrete objective. Members only discuss the municipal policy and unpleasant conditions of the cities without making serious action (Thanoo Polawatana, a former dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Khon Kaen University, telephone interview, 30 July 2009). Also, due to a lack of academics in city development, chosen topics focus primarily on visual experience, for example a rusty bridge handrail or unpleasant pavement; rather than on the core issues (Rawee Hanpacher, a head of the Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Khon Kaen University, personal interview, 30 July 2009). Accordingly, many scholars find this club insignificant for greater purposes of urban development.

Banjamitra Group

The Banjamitra Group, also called the 'Five Alliance Group', was formed as a response to damage of local businesses. It is a non-registered organization consisting of leaders of notable organizations: the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Industries, the Khon Kaen Municipality, the Khon Kaen Administrative Organization and the Khon Kaen Lawyer Council.

The group focuses on business issues, especially, local business protection. The most renowned achievement is the enforcing Tesco-Lotus (a Bangkok-based discount store) to pay local tax.

The organization has a high influence in the city, noticeable from its reputation among key city development actors, though it is a non-registered association. The meetings are arranged monthly in a form of lunch meeting among the alliances' leaders and prominent local business people. During meetings, various issues concerning current local economic situation, external trade and direction of city development are discussed. Each organization addresses these issues in their own policies and plans.

Phitsanulok City

In Phitsanulok Province, prominent NGOs focusing on issues of vulnerable people consist of the Kon Phraing Phai Group (People Beside Forests Group) and the Indo-China Intersection Institute. While the Kon Phraing Phai focuses primarily on rural issues, the Indo-China Intersection Institute expands its concerns to urban problems. It cooperates with local business elites and organizations in city development.

Unlike Khon Kaen, there was no local activists or NGO leading a housing alleviation program in Phitsanulok. Community leaders played a significant role before governmental organizations appeared on the scene (Watchra Songma, a leader of the Northern CODI, telephone interview, 6 August 2009). The Urban Community Development Institute, under the National Housing Authority, was the first organization assisting on this issue. It received a special fund so called Miyazawa program during the economic crisis in the late 1990s. Currently, CODI is a leading organization in charge of this issue. It provides grants and helps to establish the 'City Committee' consisting of the municipality, CODI and relevant governmental agencies.

Concerning local academic, there are two universities located in Phitsanulok: the Naresuan University and the Phibulsongkram Rajabhat University. The Naresuan

University offers broad program covering from pure science, medical science, engineering, architecture and social science. The Phibulsongkram Rajabhat University was originally a teacher's college. Currently, the university offers programs in pedagogy, pure science, agriculture and food technology, industrial technology, management science and social science. Both of them have involved in many municipal projects.

Naresuan University has a significant role in city development regarding technical expertise provision – for example, the university medical centre sent a mobile unit to municipal fresh markets to investigate food contamination and provide healthcare to shopkeepers. Also, the Environmental Research Centre, Naresuan University, cooperated with the municipality in the garbage disposal management and municipal school environmental management (Wimala Chayodom, a teacher of the Naresuan University, personal interview, 14 January 2008). For housing issues, Surachet Kasemsiri – an urban planning teacher – is a prominent academic. He is also involved in a major housing program of the city as well as many projects of PNEX Group, a local middleclass group. Makasiri Chaowakul is an economic teacher who plays a significant role in rural issues; however, she has also been a past critic of municipal development projects.

Similarly, teachers of the vocational training college and Rajabhat University have cooperated with the municipality in many development activities – for example, garbage disposal management. Dr. Prathep Binchai is a teacher at the Phitsanulok Vocational College. He is well known among local scholars in his political influence (Phraphot Srithet, local scholar, personal interview, 9 January 2008). There is regular communication between him and the Phitsanulok City Municipality.

PNEX Group and Indo-China Intersection Institute are important actors for middle class interests. Although founders of both organizations are middleclass, they have different backgrounds; primarily businessmen established the PNEX GROUP, while officials founded the Indo-China Intersection Institute.

The contributions of the selected persons and associations concerning city development and municipal planning are described below.

Indo-China Intersection Institute

Indo-China Intersection Institute is the most well-known and renowned local non-governmental organization in the city. The organization founders were medical doctors, local scholars and a local prominent military general. Originally, the founders were involved in the AIDS protection project in the early 1990s. As the project was so successful, good practice of the group became a model of AIDS prevention in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, China and Burma. Later, the founders expanded their works to broader social issues and area. They believed that the key success was their capability to change people's behavior, and this strategy could be used in various community problems.

The cooperation with neighboring countries in the social assistance program together with the collaboration with business community inside the city inspired them to expand their goal further to support economic growth. Meanwhile, Wiroj Jiratikanchot, the current chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and former president of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, proposed Phitsanulok to be an Indo-China Intersection city in the National Development Board (Interviewee E., a local journalist of Phitsanulok, personal interview, 15 January 2008). Hence the Indo-China Intersection Institute was established to promote this goal by dealing with social issues. The association was registered as a foundation in 1994, and later turned into a development association in 2001.

During the Thai economic crisis in 1997, the association focused only on human development. Their project aimed to strengthen communities by organizing training courses for university students, governmental officers and local activists, concentrating on network formation and participatory processes (Siri Thiwaphan, an leader of Indo-China Intersection Institute, personal interview, 15 January 2008). This course intended to produce development facilitators to communities.

The organization has cooperated with many development actors across the city including the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Industries and entrepreneur whose businesses relate to trading with neighboring countries – for example, the garbage recycling firm, the agriculture product distribution firm and the public

transportation firm. Also, the association has their own radio station to communicate with local people.

The organization receives grants from international bilateral organizations and Thai governmental agencies including the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (THPF). The organization must submit project proposals to acquire this sort of grant. Another type of grant comes from sponsorship of local business firms including the garbage recycling firm, the agriculture distribution firm and the public transportation firm (Sorn Kamprod, a member of Indo-China Intersection Institute, telephone interview, 21 January 2008). They donate money to the organization due to the close relationship with General Siri Thiwaphan, who is one of the main founders.

Initially, the relationship between the organization and local business community was close as the organization clearly showed its non-political purpose. Recently, the main founders became distant to the organization; General Siri Thiwaphan became the single remaining symbol of the organization. Due to his obvious political attempt (he was a candidate for a member of the representative and a member of the senate), various prominent local businessmen were uncertain that General Siri Thiwaphan would use this organization for his political will. Therefore, the cooperation between them declined (ibid). Currently, the organization is working on the topic of public television. The organization arranges meeting with local activists, scholars and mass media producers.

Concerning municipal planning, General Siri Thiwaphan is an appointed consultant to the mayor of the Phitsanulok City. It seems that his personal significance is the main ground for his invitation to the post, rather than the being a leader of the Indo-China Intersection Institute.

Dr. Pratheep Binchai

Dr. Pratheep Binchai is a teacher at the Phitsanulok Vocational College. He works corporately with the municipality. With his profession as a researcher, the Phitsanulok City Municipality committed him to do a survey on the local citizens' satisfaction in

the municipal performance. Another survey was on election poll before the municipal election took place.

Besides researcher, Dr. Pratheep is a local journalist. He produces a local news program for a local cable TV. The program functions as a mediator between the municipality and local citizens: showing municipal activities and reflecting problems of local citizens to the municipality. The method taken to produce a report is compromising; there is no excessive accusation towards the municipality's performance. When he receives an accusation from local citizens, Dr. Pratheep directs the complaint to the municipality, instead of presenting it to the media. For him, it is the matter of reducing social conflict (Dr. Pratheep Binchai, teacher at the Phitsanulok Vocational College, personal interview, 17 January 2008).

Surachet Kasemsiri

Surachet Kasemsiri is a university lecture in urban planning, faculty of architecture, Naresuan University. Since the government began the housing in the early 2000s, he has been involved in many housing projects with CODI and the National Housing Authority, covering the area in Phitsanulok and some neighboring cities. His main contribution in these projects is to provide technical expertise concerning architecture and physical planning to the team.

Working on a housing project with the National Housing Authority, Surachet and his team produced a housing plan for Phitsanulok and convinced the municipality to integrate the plan into municipal policy. Little was achieved as municipal executives had modest involvement in the process, only low-ranked municipal officials were sent to the meeting (Surachet Kasemsiri, an urban planning teacher, Naresuan University, telephone interview, 4 August 2009). Later, Surachet worked with CODI in a slum relocation project of Phisanulok. Slum dwellers who had resided on a historical preservation area were relocated to new land. In this project, Surachet produced a housing design appropriate for the community.

As well as working with governmental agencies, Surachet is involved in projects of PNX Group - a local civic group. His task is to provide a concept or architectural design. The group requests him to initiate projects in order to stimulate tourism for the city. The Chinese lantern festival is an example of his cooperation with the PNX Group. The event aims to gain tourists by using extraordinary community culture as an attraction. In this project, Surachet compiled community history by making a survey. The Chinese lantern tradition was chosen to promote, and the festival arrangement was planned.

Although Surachet is an urban planning teacher at a local university, he does not participate in any plan making procedures for Phitsanulok city, yet is willing to join the public meeting (ibid). Nevertheless, he expects that his opinions would not be considered, since the municipal plan and policy is very rigid. The municipal executive boards seem to be rarely open for external ideas (ibid). Therefore, cooperation with PNX Group who has good connection with the municipality is a suitable way to do his social work.

Makasiri Chaowakul

Makasiri Chaowakul is a lecturer in economy, at the Faculty of Management Science, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok. She is renowned for her rural development contribution. In 1997, Makasiri began her social work by involving in the program of the Social Investment Fund (SIF). It aimed to strengthen social capital of locality during the recession. The World Bank funded the program. Since then, she has been involved in notable community development programs - for example, the Citizen and State Program and the Miyazawa Program. Currently, she is the president of the regional World Environmental Fund – a UNDP program aimed at creating environmental awareness in local communities – in which renewable energy, organic fertilization, and self-sufficient economy are promoted.

Apart from rural problems, Makasiri has participated in various urban development issues – for example, the slum and the environmental problems. She has cooperated with development organizations including CODI and the Indo-China Intersection

Institute. In the CODI's housing program, she was appointed as a member of the evaluation committee. Moreover, she is a member of committee of the Indo-China Intersection Institute.

In municipal projects, Makasiri has formed movements which oppose the construction of the Night Bazaar Market, located on the bank of the Nan River. The Phitsanulok City Municipality initiated this project. Makasiri claimed that the new concrete bank and the heavy construction process would damage the ecological condition of the river. Moreover, she accused the municipality for having no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project (Makasiri Chaowakul, a university teacher, Naresuan University, telephone interview, 4 August 2009). In her actions, she spoke about this issue in public radios and the public hearing meeting held by the municipality. She gained support from activists and a political group who opposed the municipal executive team. In response, the municipal leaders claimed that Makasiri was agitated by the rival political team to discredit them for the coming local election (ibid).

Makasiri does not participate in the municipal development plan making process. She prefers to have development actions through communities, rather than dealing directly with local politicians. For her, it is uncertainty that municipal executives consider external opinions (ibid).

PNEX Group

PNEX Group is a non-registered civic association for city development. The main distinctive character of PNEX is that the members who are young local business people devote themselves to urban and social development rather than solely taking benefits from the city. Originally these people were chosen to attend a one-week training from the Foundation for Business and Community Leadership Development (BCL) in Bangkok. This course aims to strengthen capacity of public-minded businessmen in social assistant works. It is expected that the course participants must have a perspective of their own city development in the next 10 years and capable to realize the vision after they have finished the course. After the program, some of the participants formed the PNEX group in 2006.

The association consists of 15 core members. Most of them are local entrepreneur making business in, for example, hotels, shopping mall, hospitals, car dealer, restaurants and construction material traders; and few are bureaucrats. Unlike the first generation of Chinese businessmen, the members who are the second generation have high education. They could bridge the political power with academic expertise. The leader of the group is Dr. Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri – the owner of a local hotel and a university teacher in industrial engineering.

PNEX has done many development projects in the city. Most of them aim to strengthen the local economy. Since the members are a young Chinese generation who are public minded, their projects tend to be more creative and environmentally friendly. The followings are samples of their projects. First, PNEX run the Clean River Project aimed to stimulate local awareness in the cleanness of Nan River, the main river of Phitsanulok. Volunteers were sent to local communities located nearby the river. They were supposed to educate local residents to look after the river. A garbage collection day was arranged. Second, PNEX promotes a car-free zone in the front street of the Provincial Court. Third, PNEX attempts to develop the landscape of Wat Yai, the most important tourist attraction of the city. The members use their personal connection with the abbot to introduce their development scheme proposal to the temple executive board. Fourth, PNEX is involved in urban infrastructure development, including the bus terminal relocation and the airport improvement. Fifth, PNEX initiates the Chinese Lantern Festival. This festival aims to create tourist activities in the city and thereby promote the local culture, which had been long forgotten. In this project, PNEX cooperates with many development actors, including a university lecturer (Surachet Kasemsiri), the Phitsanulok City Municipality, the Regional Industrial Promotion Center, local Chinese associations and the provincial chamber of commerce.

PNEX maintains a strong connection with notable local public administrations. Its members have leading positions in the Provincial Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Provincial Industries. Some of members take posts in the municipal council; one is a member of the PAO executive board. Because of these good connections, PNEX became a mediator bridging local organizations in the Integrative Provincial Management Committee.

Moreover, PNEX and another similar organizations in neighboring cities form a network. They have regularly meeting with each other, and sometimes participate in another ones' projects. Resources and experiences have been shared among them.

The group leader – Dr. Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri – has never participated in the municipal development plan making. For him, the municipal executive team has a rigid development plan. It is difficult for external opinions to intervene the municipal plan. Therefore, it is useless to participate in the public hearing of the local development plan (Dr. Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri, leader of local NGO, 5th August 2009). The group tends to initiate development projects, rather than criticizing municipal performance.

Phuket City

Unlike Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok, Phuket is not a regional administrative city. There is no NGO regional office, for example, CODI and NGO-CORD, located in Phuket. However, Phuket requires much assistance from NGOs. According to its extremely high economic value, there have been conflicts between business people, local residents and environmental groups. Major conflicts concern landownership, cultural preservation and environment degradation. The well-known activists in these issues are Bang Mann and Chot. Bang Mann focuses on a problem between villagers and business people (mostly hotel investors). Together with a group of villagers, Bang Mann organized a protest against a large hotel complex – the Yamu Project. He claimed that the construction of a marina, which was a part of project, would damage sea grass and coral reef. In contrast, Chot avoids involvement in conflicts concerning business interests. Rather, he mediates the conflict between vulnerable people and the state – for example, unlicensed people and residents without landownership.

In the housing issue, CODI cooperates with the Mulanidi Chumchon Thai Phuket (the Thai Community Foundation of Phuket). The CODI provides grants and technical expertise, while the Thai Community Foundation is responsible for community empowerment procedure. As the housing problem is much more critical in areas outside Phuket city, and the Phuket City Municipality thoroughly looks after its

responsible communities, the Thai Community Foundation has no project located in the Phuket city area (Chokdee Somprom, a leader of the Thai Community Foundation, personal interview, 1 February 2008).

The single notable NGO in the city is the Environmental Protection Civil Society Group. This group focuses on environmental and social issues. It works cooperatively with the Phuket City Municipality and local communities.

In terms of local academic institutes, there are two universities located in Phuket: (1) the Phuket Rajabhat University and (2) the branch of the Prince of Songkla University. These two universities provide degrees in human and social science, management, science and technology, science of education, service and tourism, and computer engineering. Since there are no relevant subjects in city planning, architecture, and construction engineering, the roles of local universities concerning the municipality are limited. The most apparent works of local universities is to produce evaluation reports concerning municipal planning execution. In addition, the Phuket Rajabhat University has a notable role in local cultural promotion. The ‘Art and Cultural Centre’ of the university provides advice and collaboration with city administrations. Sommai Pinbuddhasin – a former director of the Art and Cultural Centre, is a well-known scholar who involves in city development process.

Concerning middleclass interests, the Phuket33 Group and the Phuket History Supporters Group are the most known in the city. While the Phuket33 Group focuses mainly on business interests, the Phuket History Supporters Group aims at local cultural preservation. Sommai Pinbuddhasin is a leader of the group.

The contributions of the selected persons and associations concerning city development and municipal planning are described below.

Mulanidi Chumchon Thai Phuket (Thai Community Foundation of Phuket)

The Thai Community Foundation of Phuket is a Bangkok-based NGO. It cooperates with CODI working on a housing issue in Phuket province. Chokdee Somprom is a

current leader of the branch in Phuket. Concerning background, Chokdee initially worked on slum issues in Bangkok. After the 2004 Tsunami incident in Phuket, he was sent to the area to help affected local residents to cope with problems. The main issues are housing reconstruction and landownership. Currently, the organization has four full-time staff members.

In working with CODI, the main responsibility of the group is to strengthen community capacity, assisting them to determine problems, create a community plan and plan realization; while CODI supports technical assistance and grant. Besides, the organization obtains grants from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, Community Organization Project on environment (COPE) and UNDP (Chokdee Somprom, a leader of the Thai Community Foundation, personal interview, 1 February 2008).

The relationship between the group and local administrations is neutral. The group avoids involving in local political issues. They reduce their activities during local election.

Concerning the Phuket City Municipality, there is no community in the Phuket city submitting assistance to the group. According to Chokdee, the Phuket city municipality looks after its responsible communities very well (ibid).

The Environmental Protection Civil Society Group

The Environmental Protection Civil Society Group is a nonregistered NGO founded in 2000. Currently, there are six full-time staff members; Thiti Sawisai is a group leader. Their office is located at the municipal garbage incinerator site. The organization promotes the sharing of municipal tasks that exceeds the municipal's capacity, particularly environmental, social and cultural issues. Its methodologies concentrate on changing human behavior and instructing people to consider the environment, culture and society. Some of its projects are the 'Community Environmental Protection', and the 'Family, Art, Cultural, and Environmental Preservation'.

The organization formed a group's committee by appointing members of the municipal development committees including community leaders, professional group leaders and voluntary group leaders. Later, it expanded to coordinate with local schools, the local university, business sector and neighboring local administrations.

Its current project is a garbage reduction campaign in which garbage segregation and recycling are key concepts. The major activities include: (1) collection of data concerning garbage production; (2) informing and instructing people and entrepreneurs about the significance of garbage reduction and methodology; and (3) coordination with the municipality to create a garbage disposal system.

The group maintains a close relationship with the Phuket City Municipality. While other NGOs are well known among local journalists, the Environmental Protection Civil Society is renowned among local administrative officials. Obviously, the municipality authorizes the status of the group, though it is a non-registered NGO (Thiti Sawisai, a leader of the Environmental Protection Civil Society Group, telephone interview, 31 January 2008). Additionally, the municipality is the main fund provider, supporting projects of the group.

Somma Pinbuddhasin

Somma Pinbuddhasin is a well-known scholar in local art and cultural preservation. Before retirement in 2008, he was a Thai language lecturer of Rajabhat University Phuket. Since 1969, he has participated in many social development projects – for example, the promotion of special local administrative form of Phuket, the museum establishment and the district preservation proposal. Some examples of local cultural institutes that he has involved are the Phuket Cultural Centre, the Tau-Thepkasatri Tau-Srisunthon Foundation, the Wat Prathong Museum, the Talang Cultural Community, the Phuket Cultural Archive, etc.

Somma is a member of the Young Buddhists Association and the Phuket History Supporters Group. The Young Buddhists Association aims to educate young students about Buddhism. The organization sends members to local schools, including

municipal schools, to train students. The organization has decreased in size due to lack of trainers.

The Phuket History Supporters Group was founded in 1981. The group has four leaders; Sommai is one of them. The aims of the group are to research on the history of Phuket and preserve historical architecture and items for the purpose of education and tourist promotion. Members of the group come from various professions: scholars, local journalists and local politicians. Since local politicians who are members of the group are from different political teams, the group avoids touching political issues. This non-political action enables the group to work peacefully with all notable local organizations, including the municipality, the Provincial Organization Administration, the Phuket Tourist Association and the Phuket Guide Association (Sommai Pinbuddhasin, a leader of the Phuket History Supporters Group, telephone interview, 11 August 2009).

The renowned project of the group is the 'Phuket Live Museum' on four historic streets. The project was initiated in 1981 and has continued until now. Partial power grid line was relocated to underground; front house was rearranged; and the Phuket City Museum is on the process of establishment. This district became a centre of Phuket city. Many public activities are held here - for example, the environmental campaign on oil usage reduction. According to Sommai, the delay of the project implementation was the matter of the low budget of the municipality and corruption of another responsible governmental agencies (ibid).

Concerning the municipal development plan making, Sommai has constantly invited to the municipal public hearing meeting. He is familiar with municipal politicians and officials.

Phuket 33 Group

Phuket 33 Group is the most well known non-registered association among local business community. Its title is an abbreviation of the year of establishment (B.E. 2533 or A.D. 1990). There are about 60 members, consisting of local businessmen

and governmental officials. Chaipitak Apichit-Sidikul - a real estate businessman, is the current group leader. He is one of the executive boards of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce.

Similar to Banjamitra Group of Khon Kaen city, the Phuket 33 Group aims at protecting business benefit of members. In the monthly meeting, members discuss about their businesses and assistances required. The group functions similar to a cooperative: it is a collective investment of local business people (Interviewee L., an official of business association, telephone interview, 11 August 2009). Nevertheless, the group has done many social assistance activities - for example, donating money to schools, temples, senior homes, and victims of floods and accidents.

In respect to municipal planning, the group avoids involvement in any political issues. It has no desire to participate in municipal plan making procedure (Chaipitak Apichit-Sidikul, a leader of Phuket 33 Group, telephone interview, 11 August 2009).

7.2 What are the formations and contributions of notable local associations concerning present urban development?

The three cities show that the local associations of middleclass interests play a significant role in urban development. This middleclass consists of local business people, bureaucrats, lawyers and scholars. They form local associations in various purposes – for example, cultural preservation, environmental protection, economic promotion and good governance promotion. Rather than focusing on solely benefits of members, they generally aim on development of the entire cities.

By using cooperation with local administrations as criteria, there are two types of associations concerning middleclass interests. The first group works cooperatively with a municipality. These associations trend to compliment the performance of municipal executives, rather than oppose municipal policy. They essentially propose development projects to municipal boards. The local associations in this group include the Banjamitra Group, the People Loving Khon Kaen Group, the PNEX Group, the Indo-China Intersection Development Institute and the Phuket History

Supporters Group. Members of these associations are local business people, bureaucrats and scholars.

The second group has little cooperation with municipalities. The case of Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok cities shows an expansion of middleclass interests to cope with ‘good governance’, which was a taboo issue in the past. In their actions, they publicly criticize municipal projects and policy. Rawee Harnpachern, Makasiri Chaowakul and Khon Kaen Anti-Corruption Organization are local scholars and association acting in this field.

Changing status of NGOs and Activists

The three cities exhibit a reduction of work by in urban areas. Previously, NGOs and activists had close relation and high influence on vulnerable people. Activists assisted vulnerable people to form communities and strengthened their capacities. Since popular politics became a crucial strategy to win an election, politicians (both national and local levels) focus on problems of poor people, replacing the role of local NGOs and activists. This is most obvious in slum issues. Currently, municipalities play a dominant role in slum alleviation programs, substituting activists who formerly tackled the problem. National politicians also now pay more attention to the slum issue; consequently, CODI is promoted. The emergence of local politicians and governmental agencies in the slum issue decreases the working space of local activists. Therefore, activists concerning urban issues have shifted their social focus to other urban problems – for example, as discussed Somphop Bunnag in the consumer issues, and Thiti Sawisai in the Environmental Protection Civil Society Group working in garbage reduction campaign.

Table 3: Contributions of local associations and persons concerning urban development

| Persons and associations | Professions | Contribution to city development |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Decha Premruedeelert (The Northeastern NGO-CORD) | Activist | Protesting against the construction of a bridge crossing over an intersection A leader of a local NGO community Working on municipal school pedagogy |
| Somphop Bunnag (The Khon Kaen Consumers Protection Association) | Activist | Working on slum and consumers protection issues |
| Samphan Techatik | Scholar | Producing evaluation reports on municipal policy and management effectiveness of municipal departments A lecturer on community plan making provided to municipal officials |
| Thanoo Polawatana (People Loving Khon Kaen Group) | Scholar | Working on slum issues with CODI |
| Rawee Hanpachern (People Loving Khon Kaen Group and On the process of forming a new development group with local business elites) | Scholar | Protesting against the construction of a bridge crossing over an intersection Research on urban planning |
| Kumphong Phumpukeaw (Khon Kaen Anti-Corruption Organization) | Lawyer | Arranging protests against municipal projects Broadcasting a local radio program |
| Surapol Thaweangsakulthai (People Loving Khon Kaen Group and Banjamitra Group) | Business elite | Enforcing Bangkok-based discount store to pay local tax Involved in the provincial development board A member of many local social assistant groups |
| Siri Thiwaphan (The Indo-China Intersection Institute) | General | Arranging an AIDS prevention campaign Arranging a facilitator training course Broadcasting a local radio program |
| Pratheep Binchai | Scholar | Making a local TV program Producing surveys on the local citizens' satisfaction in municipal performance and the |

| Persons and associations | Professions | Contribution to city development |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| | | election poll |
| Surachet Kasemsiri (PNEX Group) | Scholar | Working on slum and housing issues with CODI and the National Housing Authority Assisting the PNEX Group in design and planning |
| Makasiri Chaowakul (The Indo-China Intersection Institute) | Scholar | Involved in social development and environment programs in rural area A member of evaluation committee of CODI's housing program Arranging a facilitator training course of the Indo-China Intersection Institute |
| Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri (PNEX Group) | Scholar, Business elite | Arranging projects including the clean river, the car-free zone, Wat Yai beautification, urban infrastructure development, Chinese lantern festival projects Involved with the provincial development board |
| Chokdee Somprom (Thai Community Foundation of Phuket) | Activist | Working on housing issues |
| Thiti Sawisai (The Environmental Protection Civil Society Group) | Activist | Social and environmental projects including the community environmental protection, the family, art, culture and environmental preservation, the garbage reduction campaign |
| Somma Pinbuddhasin (The Phuket History Supporters Group and the Young Buddhists Association) | Scholar | Social and cultural work – e.g., museums establishment and tourism promotion |
| Chaiphitak Apichit-Sidikul (Phuket 33 Group) | Business elite | Social welfare works A member of executive board, Phuket Chamber of Commerce |

7.3 Does the legal framework of municipal development planning contribute towards genuine participatory planning in practice?

The three cities show that local associations relevant to urban development have been involved in many forms of citizen participation in the municipal development planning process (Table 4). Some of them participate in committees; others use public hearing meetings arranged by municipalities to communicate with municipalities.

Although it appears that the legal requirements of local development planning concerning people participation are fulfilled, genuine participatory planning is not achieved. Municipal executives are able to manipulate and control the planning process. As members of municipal committees, some local scholars and activists stated that their opinions were seldom considered in the committees, which caused them to resign as members of the municipal board.

One of selected scholars participated in a public hearing arranged by a municipality in order to oppose a municipal project. The municipality ignored his argument and discredited him for being a political tool of the mayor's opposition.

Some local associations disregard these legal forms of citizen participation in municipal development planning. Some selected interviewees have never participated in municipal committees or municipal public hearing meetings. They expect that the municipal executives will not consider their opinions as the municipal plan is too rigid and the municipal team consistently opposes external opinions.

Table 4: The extent of participation of local associations and selected persons in local development planning

| Names | Professions | Committee | Public Meeting | Evaluation | Means of Participation |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Decha Premruedeelert | Activist | o | o | | A mayor's consultant |
| Somphop Bunnag | Activist | | o | o | A consultant of municipal plan evaluation committee |
| Samphan Techatik | Scholar | | | o | Producing municipal evaluation reports |
| Thanoo Polawatan | Scholar | o | | | A consultant of municipal project |
| Rawee Hanpachern | Scholar | o | o | | A member of municipal development committee |
| Kumphong Phumpukeaw | Lawyer | | | | |
| Surapol Thaweesangsakulthai | Business elite | | | | |
| Siri Thiwaphan | General | o | | | A mayor's consultant |
| Pratheep Binchai | Scholar | | | o | |
| Surachet Kasemsiri | Scholar | | | | |
| Makasiri Chaowakul | Scholar | | o | | Protesting against a municipal project in a public hearing arranged by the municipality |
| Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri | Scholar and Business elite | | | | |
| Chokdee Somprom | Activist | | | | |
| Thiti Sawisai | Activist | | o | | |
| Somma Pinbuddhasin | Scholar | | o | | Participating in municipal public meetings |
| Chaiphitak Apichit-Sidikul | Business elite | | | | |

7.4 How do local associations contribute their urban development works when the opportunities of citizen participation in the municipal development planning are desperately insufficient?

In respect to the three case study cities, local associations advance their development works: (1) through their intimate contacts with local politicians; and (2) through mass support. Some local associations (the People Loving Khon Kaen Group, the Benjamitra Group, the Indo-China Intersection Institute, the PNEX Group, the Phuket History Supporters Group) have close connection with local politicians. Their members who are local businessmen are familiar with local politicians; and some of them are politicians themselves who are capable to push forward their development proposals to local administrations.

In the case of the Environmental Protection Civil Society Group, its relationship with the Phuket City Municipality goes further than the associations mentioned above. The Environmental Protection Civil Society Group functions as a sup-organization of the municipality. The organization reappoints people who are involved in municipal development (community leaders, municipal officials and local volunteers) into its structure. Particular duties of the municipality are handed to the organization, together with municipal grant.

The local associations that use this methodology to contribute their urban development works generally work on issues of less contradiction to municipalities. They avoid criticizing municipal performance.

Another way to do their urban development works is using mass power. As they lack support of local politicians, they seek support from local citizens to empower their arguments and tend to participate in public hearings arranged by municipalities, broadcast public radio programs, or arrange their own public meetings.

7.5 Conclusion

Civil society has existed in Thai society, at least, as long as Buddhism arrived in the country. It has transformed in line with political, economic and social changes. Recently, the purposes of local associations have expanded to broader urban issues: from slum issues, protection of business interests, city plans, community development and corruption. Groups involved in these local associations are generally local business people, scholars and bureaucrats. Their achievements are known among local development actors.

It appears that the local planning system has contributed little to the achievements of local associations concerning middleclass interests. On the contrary, they require close connections with local politicians or mass support to advance their development agendas. Local associations connected with local politicians are more able to achieve their social works. However, compromise of both interests must be made; often, important issues such as corruption must be overlooked. They submit project proposals to municipalities or provide assistance to complete municipal development planning, rather than contradict municipal plans. Therefore, involvement in municipal development planning is not significant for them.

The second group using support of the masses appear to have achieved little. Their actions concentrate on criticizing municipal plans. Municipal public meetings required by law have limited significance for them, as municipal executives are able to manipulate meetings.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Participatory Planning, Civil Society and the Thai Context

‘Participatory Planning’ is an alternative paradigm in planning that involves various interest groups in the public decision-making process. In it, planning is perceived as a political arena of civil society able to negotiate or debate with the state. In the 1960s, participatory planning was emphasized as an alternative to conventional planning, which was viewed to be incompatible with prevalent socio-economic circumstances. The gradual development of participatory planning has occurred alongside that of the ‘Civil Society’ concept.

‘Civil Society’ refers to a political sphere comprised of citizen’s associations positioned between the state and individuals. Such organized groups sit outside the state structure and attempt to function on a non-profit basis – for example, churches, communities, neighborhoods, commercial associations, industrial associations, trade union, and development organizations.

In the Western World, civil society initially referred to the bourgeoisie of the 18th century. It asserted its independence from the (monarchical or feudal) state in the Age of Enlightenment, the time that capitalism and democracy substituted the feudal and aristocratic order. However, many scholars saw danger in a society led solely by private interests and the market mechanism; as such, a collective form of interests was introduced. Civil society became a meeting place of both the will of the individual and the universal will of society. Within the concept, civil society referred to the sphere of life between the family and state, which brought individuals into relationships of cooperation with others on the basis of their own inclinations to work and live.

In the 19th century’s Age of Industrialization, civil society referred to the site of struggle for the legitimate use of state power. As rich (industrial owners) exploited working classes and forced dire living conditions upon them, the proletariat were

forced to fight for change – such combat for legitimate state power took place within civil society. In this setting, the planning process was perceived solely as a technical process of design and drawing for achieving an ideal model, separated in its operation from economic and political processes. Engineers and architects dominated this profession.

The third shift of civil society occurred in the (late) 20th century. In the early post-war period, the state played a leading role in the development scene. It retained its authority in planning and controlling development to reach an ideal goal. A development orientation that focused mainly on economic growth by ignoring negative social and environmental impacts was highly criticized; the market and the state were perceived as more problematic. Moreover, the neo-corporatist system in the late 1960s and early 1970s tended to exclude democratic grassroots movements from the political game. Consequently, the New Social Movement emerged. This movement aimed to promote a healthy civic consciousness and a pluralistic society. Their demand was to open the political process to a more diverse and citizen-oriented set of interests. They advocated greater opportunities to participate in the decisions affecting one's life.

The strong state model faced another great challenge, so called globalization, in the later half of the 1980s. Globalization enabled countries with cheaper labor costs to undercut high wage economies. Manufacturing – the main economic sector of western countries – declined, which caused shrinkage of state revenue while the demand of state expenditure increased. Hence, neo-liberalism, which encourages the supply side of the economy, was introduced. In this development orientation, the state reduces constraints on the private sectors and the state's enterprises and public services are privatized.

This model has generated severe problems, such as a widening gap between rich and poor, social inequity, and environmental degradation. This led people and collective forms who disagreed with the development strategy of the state to demand involvement in public decision-making, including planning. For them, an alternative planning: must be suitable for the current pluralistic society; should promote civil society; and remain a political space open for various groups of interests.

The Thai Context

In Thailand, an initial form of civil society was the Buddhist temple. It provided philanthropy and propelled a socialization process conducive to merit making. Later, this philanthropic works expanded to foreign associations, for example, Christian churches and Chinese speech groups. In the late 19th century, significant hurdles confronted Thai traditional civil society. In order to prevent Thailand from the colonialism, the centralized state policy was promoted. The leading roles of the monasteries in providing public services to localities were substituted by the state. Some new modern associations concerning philanthropic works were established; however, they were under the patronage of aristocrats and royal members. Even after the public administration conversion in 1932 – from the absolute monarchy to the constitutional democracy – there was little incentive for civil society. A form of local government was established; however, it was kept in a fragile state. Simultaneously, the strong centralized state continued.

Particular ethnic associations were strongly suppressed during and after the Second World War. This factor was due to an international political situation and the nationalism policy of the Thai government. Chinese people – the majority of Thai urban residents and entrepreneurs – were perceived as a threat as they were in conflict with the Japanese who had become a significant partner of Thailand during wartime. Consequently, Chinese ethnic associations were highly controlled. During the communist insurgency, the government monitored civic associations. Only the philanthropic and social welfare groups could contribute social works, while political-orientated groups were highly controlled. Civil society began to grow after communism was believed to have vanished in 1980s. Various kinds of associations, including political concerns, were formed.

Systematic planning appeared in Thailand in the 1950s, introduced by the U.S. government, the most significant ally of Thailand in the post war period. It introduced the term ‘development’ and assisted Thai government to establish necessary planning institutions – i.e. a planning board, a budget bureau, and investment promotion machinery. The first Thai national development plan was adopted in 1961. The development model received from the U.S. aimed to generate wealth by turning

natural resources to capital. Private sectors were positioned as the main mechanism driving economic growth. Consequently, a form of corporatism of the state and business associations has appeared since the third National Development Plan. These business associations consisted of the chamber of commerce, the federation of industries, and the bank's association.

Like other civil groups, business sectors gained significant political power when Thai politics reopened in the 1980s. Instead of maintaining patron-client relationship with high-positioned members of the military who dominated Thai government, business people turned to directly participate in the national parliament in order to gain legislative power. Eventually, they became a dominant sector in Thai administration.

During an economic boom in late 1980s, governments dominated by business people made policies to favor their personal interests. The term 'development' was emphasized on economic growth and transforming Thailand to be a new industrial country. The poor were forced to make a sacrifice for the wealth of Thai society; natural resources were intensively exploited.

Activists in alternative development played a prominent role intervening in public policy. Some cooperated with affected citizens protesting against the state's projects, others were included in a formation of national development policy and a number of their development concepts were integrated in the national development agenda.

In the economic crisis of 1997, state dominance on locality declined. This incident incensed Thai civil society. People highly criticized the ineffective and nontransparent management of the government. Civil society gained high acceptance, apparent in the promulgation of the first People's Constitution, which was drafted through a comprehensive participatory process, after being held by politicians for several months. This constitution aimed to promote decentralization to local government, participatory process in public administration and transparent government. Thaksin Shinawatra – a business elite who survived the crisis – became the first Prime Minister of this People Constitution with a landslide result.

However, instead of promoting civil society ideal, Thaksin Shinawatra adopted a policy that consolidated his power and suppressed non-governmental groups. Political space for ordinary citizens was curtailed; public media was controlled; NGOs' development orientations were tightened with the governmental policy by using a funding mechanism and scholars' opinions were ignored. The government made populist campaigns – for example, housing for low-income, cheap public healthcare scheme, village funds, to gain mass support. The survival business conglomerations intended to use this authoritarian state policy to operate with the globalization and democratization processes.

Other elites who lost benefits through this policy formed a group opposing Thaksin and his colleagues – the so called 'Yellow'. Thaksin reacted by forming the group 'Red', backed by particular business conglomerations, middle class and working classes. The incident of 'Yellow' versus 'Red' represents the struggle among elites (old and new) to gain legitimate power within the Thai civil society.

Concerning locality, the first form of local government – Thesaban (Municipality) – appeared in Thailand in 1933. The first civilian government intended to use this local administrative form to instruct citizens on democracy. Consequently, a structure of municipality was duplicated from the national parliament system. Later, other forms of local government were established, i.e. the Provincial Administrative Organization, the Sukaphiban (Sanitary District) and Tambon Administrative Organization. However, the government retained its power and left these local administrations powerless, as they had insufficient authority, autonomy and resources.

Local public administrations gained great improvement from the People Constitution of 1997. The Decentralization to Local Government Plan and Procedure Act, which aims to empower local administrative organizations by transferring authority, duties and resources from the central agencies to local governments, was promulgated in 1999. This new task includes comprehensive city plan making.

Citizen Participation in Local Development Process

In the local development process, it appears that much citizen participation is taking place. Various local groups of interests gain accesses to negotiate their needs with local decision makers. However, this participation process is hierarchic and informal. To this end, the local planning system acts moderately as a political sphere for various groups of interests to be involved in public decision. It fails to be a single political space for civil society to manage their public affairs; accordingly many public decisions are made outside local planning procedure.

The middleclass, who has little vote power and potential conflict with politicians' benefits, are kept out of planning procedures. As such, the middleclass advance their interests in municipal development as: (1) activists; (2) scholars; and (3) business people.

Activists are the primary group working on issues for vulnerable people in urban areas – for example, slums that attract little attention from government. The activists adopted community process aimed to strengthening community capacity as a main strategy. Recently, local administrative leaders and governmental agencies replaced the leading roles of activists in particular issues. As the political power of activists highly relies on mass support, they loose their significance in municipal development. Moreover, many activists become subcontractors of government development, as the government is the major grant provider of activists.

The significance of scholars in local planning primarily underlines technical support. Since municipalities have insufficient resources, they require expertise of scholars to realize their policy. Particular university teachers are included in municipal works, especially in engineering, culture and public healthcare. In contrast, scholars are also perceived as a threat to politicians' policies. Scholars are unmanageable for politicians. They have academic backgrounds supporting their arguments; their interests mainly focus on public well-being; and they obtain honor in society. Therefore, local leaders who mostly are business people trend to avoid involvement of particular academics who potentially oppose their policies in public meeting since it is difficult for local leaders to defend using academics. As a result, some academics turn

their focuses to issues that are irrelevant to local politicians' interests – for example neighborhood issues; some overlook non-transparent decisions of politicians in order to maintain their social work with municipalities; others cooperate with business people who maintain strong connections with local politicians.

Among private sectors, interests are not only personal business benefits, but also the well-being of cities. Public-minded business people formed a group for local development. Their public activities focus mainly on urban environment and local economic promotion, particularly tourism. Projects include a water cleanness campaign, local festival arrangement, museum establishment, tourist site revitalization and city beautification.

These groups comprise second or third generation Chinese-Thais. Unlike their ancestors, they have a higher education and greater connection to Thailand, rather than their Chinese origins. They cooperate with politicians with legislative powers and scholars who provide technical expertise. Their connection with local politicians is tight, since they are familiar with each other in the business community, and most have Chinese roots. Some members are local politicians and others have close relations with local leaders. Simultaneously, they are able to cooperate with academics. The distinction between them and academics is rather blurred: some business owners even have professions as university teachers.

Unlike business politicians, this business group has no legislative power. Therefore, positive connection with politicians who have legislative authority must be maintained. They must show their nonpolitical interests and ignore nontransparent public decision made by local politicians. This positive relationship with politicians and their supportive activities to the urban business community provides them a privileged position in the local development process. Rather than using conventional planning procedures, they are able to access to the municipal executive board via personal contacts. This overcomes problems of uncertainty and extensive bureaucratic processes.

Although the planning system fails to be a central political space for diverging groups of interests, it highly empowers particular groups of interests, particularly the

grassroots who were previously neglected. They are involved in many steps of the development planning system, such as: the planning committee that determines development policy; the committee who drafts the plan; public hearing meetings and community development planning. In community development planning, local citizens independently initiate a community plan. They learn to analyze their problems, setting a development goal and strategy, and realize their plan. According to this process, they learn politics and governance – a necessary basis of democracy.

Likewise, the scholars and activists who have no personal links with business society or politicians gain advantage from this planning system. The public meeting is their political arena. Here they have an opportunity to convince the mass to follow their arguments. Some of them are members of the local development committees. However, many of them (activists and scholars) perceive that the planning procedure is not an effective political arena after their proposals that deter business groups have been often ignored in the participatory activities; only opinions that are compatible with business interests are accepted in the local development scene.

Local Development Planning as a Political Area for Civil Society

Ultimately, it can be concluded that the local development planning system makes a moderate contribution as a political area for civil society. Only particular groups of interests benefit from this planning system; those who fail to use planning to promote their interests intervene in the public decisions by informal means outside the legal planning procedure.

The main hindrances of participatory planning in Thai municipality are the dominance of state over locality and the dominance of business elites in local administration. It appears the state retains high influence on local development. The decentralization process that was emphasized in 1997 is rather delayed and gains little support from the central government. Consequently, municipalities are incapability considering local development planning. They have inadequate authority, duties and resources (staff, equipment and fiscal autonomy); and their legitimate boundary is unmatched with the real urban boundary.

Within this weak local administration form, the central government intends to promote people involvement in public decision. Many regulations and acts provide opportunities to people and civic associations to be involved in the public decision process. Political space has opened for civil society in many aspects – for example, access to public information, local ordinance proposition, public project involvement and planning. In planning, the Local Development Planning Regulation of 2005 states that delegations of civil society must be included in the municipal development committee who defines development orientation, and the planning supportive committee who is responsible for plan formation; the draft of local development plan must be presented in an open public meeting in order to gain feedback; and the local development plan must be relevant to the community plan – a plan done collectively by neighborhoods with municipal assistance. Citizens, particularly grassroots, reflect their attitudes and requirements concerning public affairs to municipal executives through these channels. They discover their political significance; consequently, civil society is encouraged.

Nevertheless, these regulations primarily aim at information collection from the grassroots, rather than collective public decision-making. According to Sherry R. Arnstein, this participation is categorized in the low rank of citizen participation. The Thai public administration system still preserves a democratic system that emphasizes the role of representatives. Municipal executives and members of the municipal council maintain high authority in making important municipal decisions – i.e. the final local development plan approval and the municipal budgeting. They are able to manipulate the participatory process. Therefore, the municipal executives are a significant mechanism pushing municipal planning to participatory processes. In effect, the success of local participatory planning greatly relies on attitudes of municipal politicians.

Like the national parliament, local administrations are dominated by private sectors. Most members of the municipal council and municipal executives have business backgrounds; many of them are members of the local chamber of commerce. These local business elites have accumulated their wealth from four main sectors: (1) the agribusiness or national resources, (2) trading and service budgets, (3) government contracting for construction work and supply materials, and (4) illegal businesses.

In the late 1980s, the rapid urban growth of regional towns, accordingly to national policy to slowdown migration to Bangkok, benefited local business people. Together with the reopened politics of Thailand, local business people could access municipal legislative power. Currently, they are the majority of the local politicians, having legislative power and controlling local development orientation. It seems that, their aims of involvement in local politics is primarily to enhance their personal business benefits. Such benefits include winning municipal construction contracts, material supply contracts, municipal permissions, and determining municipal development orientation.

Apart from personal business benefits, local politicians serve as a delegation of business communities protecting profits of their members from the state and external business people. Business people must support politicians by providing necessary resources to win an election. In return, these business people gain privilege and protection from the politicians who have legislative power – for example, relaxation of municipal regulations. It's apparent that corruption and bribery have become notable characteristics of Thailand.

Citizen participation in public decision hinders politicians' business benefits. In this participatory process, they must compromise their interests with another stakeholders. To serve their interests, local politicians need to dominate public decisions. Therefore, they manipulate people participation processes. Much evidence demonstrates the reluctance of local politicians to undertake participatory planning. For example, the public hearing of local development planning, which is supposed to be an open public meeting, has participants who have close contact with municipal executives (community leaders and particular groups registered by a municipality). These people maintain a type of patron-client relationship with the mayor; therefore, debate and negotiation rarely take place. Scholars – the potential opposition – are likely to be excluded from this meeting. Their opinions that conflict with the mayor are neglected.

Similar incidents are repeated at the development planning board – a collective form responsible for planning formation. For local academics, municipal leaders are highly authoritarian; academics' views are perceived as a threat rather than an advantage to local executives.

However, participation also favors business interests of politicians, particularly in terms of legitimating their public decisions. Such participatory actions are required in governmental funding processes. The central government is unlikely to reject projects and development plans that passed the public hearing process, although it might have been manipulated. Some collective meetings raise popularity of local leaders. It empowers a majority of people in negotiating with governmental agencies, as well as, propagates local leader's works.

The popularist campaign of Thanksin Shinnawatra has been duplicated at the local political level. Grassroots interests, for example slum and community issues, gain much attention from local administrative leaders, particularly when they are likely to enhance votes and promote a reliable or manageable electoral vote, or their interests do not conflict with those of local politicians. Therefore, local leaders are not reluctant to include them in the local planning process.

In conclusion, the greatest hindrances to participatory planning in Thai municipality derive from external and internal threats. The predominant external threat is dominance of the central government over local decisions. The uneven decentralization process makes municipalities powerless in the planning system. The dominance of local business elites in local public decision is an internal threat. They retain supremacy by manipulating participatory actions for their own purposes. Another group of interests use informal methods (outside the planning system) to achieve their objectives. Hence, the planning system fails to be the central political arena for all interests in a municipality.

The Coexistence of Two Contradictory Interests within a Local Business Community

An additional issue emerges in this local development context – ‘the coexistence of two contradictory interests (corruption and social work) within a local business community’. Supposedly, the purpose of a business group working towards city well-being primarily focuses on the wealth of business community. This business group creates projects chiefly for environmental protection and cultural preservation. As

tourism has become a significant industry in the urban economy, a pleasant physical environment and an interesting culture is required to attract tourists. The primary beneficiaries from such projects are urban business people whose businesses highly connect with tourism and trading – for example hotels, restaurants, local shops and local administration.

The advantages of public-minded business groups are that they have stronger abilities (i.e. in technical expertise and flexibility) than bureaucrats for creating development projects. Therefore, the public works undertaken by this group could complete municipal tasks. However, although the well-being of the city is ostensibly their primary focus, their work deters from harming the business community. Unlike activists, they are inoffensive. There is evidence, for example, in the campaign on water cleanness, that they focus on changing citizens' behavior rather than requiring business owners to treat water before releasing it into a river. Similarly, they do not attack corruption of local politicians (who are members of business society).

For academics, the term 'corruption' is extensively offensive; however, it has been viewed as normal practice in Thai business society for decades. In the period of the strong authoritarian state, business people maintained good connection with the military and bureaucrats by providing bribes or gifts to them. In the age of open politics, they allowed military patronage and joined the parliament to earn legislative power. In Thai politics money remains a significant factor, as exemplified by the term 'money politics'. Therefore, politicians require a high input of money to win an election. For business politicians, it is viewed as an investment to obtain direct control of administrative works.

Other business people unwilling to use direct participation in local politics support business politicians by providing funds in elections. In return, they obtain exclusive priority from local executives. Therefore, the corruption of business politicians is a logical consequence of their investment in legislative power in the context of money politics. Not only are business politicians involved or gain benefits from this process, but also numerous non-political business people, including business people involved in social work.

Ultimately, important advantages of money politics exist for social work undertaken by the business community to improve the city. The domination of business people in local administration who have similar interests provides them with a privileged position in the local development process. Their political space is separated from other actors, such as activists, scholars and grassroots groups. Here, corruption does not conflict with their principles; rather it facilitates their work.

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Appendix

List of Interview Participants

Khon Kaen City

| Name | Profession | Organization |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Dawin Chompang | Journalist | |
| Decha Premruedeelert | Activist | Northern NGO-CORD |
| Kumphong Pumpukiew | Activist | Khon Kaen Anti-corruption Organization |
| Interviewee A. | Activist | |
| Interviewee B. | Official | |
| Rawee Hanpachern | Teacher | Khon Kaen University |
| Reungyot Phaireepinat | Official | Khon Kaen Provincial Office |
| Pensinee Theerapanu | Businesswoman | |
| Samphan Techatik | Teacher | Khon Kaen University |
| Somphop Bunnag | Activist | Khon Kaen Consumers Protection Association |
| Interviewee C. | Journalist | |
| Surapol Thaweeksangkulthai | Businessman | Khon Kaen Chamber of Commerce |
| Suwanich Silaon | Official | Khon Kaen City Municipality |
| Thanoo Polawatana | Teacher | Khon Kaen University |
| Wirunthip Dokseaw | Official | Khon Kaen City Municipality |
| Interviewee D. | Official | |

Phitsanulok City

| Name | Profession | Organization |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Benjawan Ronkana | Official | Phitsnulok City Municipality |
| Chaithamrong Phongphattanasiri | Teacher | Naresuan University |
| Dolerdee Chalit | Official | Phitsanulok City Municipality |
| Interviewee E. | Journalist | |
| Kirati Sathanon | Teacher | Naresuan University |
| Makasiri Chaowakul | Teacher | Naresuan University |
| Mareena Meechaiyo | Official | Phitsanulok Provincial Office |
| Interviewee F. | Journalist | |
| Nergnit Chaiyapoom | Official | Phitsnulok City Municipality |
| Interviewee G. | Official | |
| Interviewee H. | Businessman | |
| Pornsri Yongreupraphan | Official | Phitsanulok Provincial Office |
| Praphot Srithep | Official | Khon Kaen Provincial Court |
| Pratheep Binchai | Teacher | Phitsanulok Vocational College |
| Interviewee I. | Scholar | |
| Sakorn Songma | Activist | Kon Praing Phai Group |
| Siri Thiwaphan | General | Indo-China Intersection Institute |
| Interviewee J. | Journalist | |
| Son Kamplod | Official | Indo-China Intersection Institute |
| Surachet Kasemsiri | Teacher | Naresuan University |
| Surasak Prasatkrut | Official | Phitsanulok Provincial Office |
| Thiti Wongnum | Official | Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization |

| Name | Profession | Organization |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wachara Songma | Activist | CODI Phitsanulok |
| Wimala Chayodom | Teacher | Naresuan University |
| Wiset Wachirasrisirikun | Businessman | Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce |

Phuket

| Name | Profession | Organization |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Interviewee K. | Journalist | |
| Chaiphitak Apichitsiddikul | Businessman | Phuket33 Group |
| Chokdee Somprom | Activist | Thai Community Foundation of Phuket |
| Kanathip Sukjarern | Official | Phuket Provincial Office |
| Maitree Nareukatpichai | Businessman | Phuket Tourism Association |
| Interviewee L. | Official | |
| Pramot Ngerbprasert | Teacher | Phuket Rajabhat University |
| Sathien Kaewphraprab | Official | Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization |
| Somma Pinbuddhasin | Teacher | Phuket Rajabhat University |
| Somsak Kanjanathipkajorn | Businessman | |
| Interviewee M. | Official | |
| Sunun Limjanon | Official | Phuket City Municipality |
| Surasak | Official | Phuket Provincial Office |
| Interviewee N. | Journalist | |
| Interviewee L. | Official | |
| Thipawan | Official | Southern CODI |
| Thiti Sawisai | Activist | Environmental Protection Civil Society Group |

