

## **Proposal on Provincial Self Governance Model of Thailand**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Although Thailand has tried to develop decentralization movements, it cannot reach the ideological goal which is delivering of administrative power to people for self governance. This power continues to be held by the elite groups in the central government. This study presents the details of unsuccessful decentralization movements and the causes for their failures. It will furthermore propose an innovative idea to promote decentralization through the concept of “Provincial Self-Governance”, aiming to promote and foster citizen engagement instead of people participating in local administrations. This article would like to present how to apply this concept through studying the succession of making ‘Amnajcharoen People Charter’. The study found that this charter was developed by 4 major factors including constitution, the outside province organizations, the inside province organizations and the non-government organizations and civil society organizations in the area. There are 2 key success factors of making the people charter including as the succession in development partnership building and the development network management.*

**Keywords:** *decentralization, people participation, civic engagement, power structure reform, provincial self-governance*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Historically, decentralization has been used as a governing tool of human communities or states since ancient times. Its main concept was to strengthen local societies enabling them to take responsibility

for self governance. In terms of public affairs, there are three types of decentralization: political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. The common goal of all three types is to enhance government and management capacities of societies or states. Decentralization can increase the influence of local people and organizations on local administration by supporting their roles within political participation processes (World bank, n.d). For example, voting for and relieving local leaders, participation in all public policy processes and enacting local laws and regulations, etc (Kokphol, 2010).

From management capacities, decentralization can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services by transferring authorities from central government to local people and organizations. For example, it can provide public services directed at the needs of the local people, enhancing participation in local budgeting and performance appraisal of public deliveries (World Bank, n.d.). However, should a local society wish to be successful in decentralization, several key success factors have been carefully established, notably the institution, finance and, most importantly, the citizenship factor (World Bank, n.d.).

In Thailand, decentralization has been applied within state administration by political elites since the beginning. The objectives for usage of decentralization have been differentiated by the elites, depending on the social and political environments at the time. Regrettably the real goal of those decentralizations have not been aimed at strengthening local power and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of public services for the local societies. This implies that although there has been continuous decentralization, the role and power of local people and organizations in the local administration was still limited by the central government. Local people and organizations still had no real right to settle and administrate all public affairs that impacted on their lives. This paper therefore addresses three issues: 1) the series of decentralization movements in Thailand divided into three time periods, 2) the results of decentralization by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each period and in general and 3) alternative ideas creating the authentic benefits of decentralization for the future.

## PERIODS OF DECENTRALIZATION

According to the needs of the political elite at the time, decentralization movements in Thailand can be divided into three periods: before the bureaucratic system reform by King Rama V in 1887, after the reform by King Rama V up to the 1997 constitution, and after the 1997 constitution until the present. Elites in each period had specific reason to choose concepts and procedures of the movements depending on the needs at the time. The results had a different impact on Thai society and local people depending on the procedures followed within each period. This part of the paper will present some details of each period as follows:

### *Before the bureaucratic system reform by King Rama V in 1887*

The government formation of this period was a “Kingdom”. It comprised of the central government in the capital city and other local administrations such as the inner and outbound city within the kingdom, and colonized countries. The relationship between the central government and the local government was “the brotherhood system” and was the general form of the ancient government. This form of relationship between the central and local governments resulted in the central government loosely controlling the local governments. Function of elites was to create and maintain the supremacy of their kingdom, especially in the capital city. They did not need to control the local governments strictly. They only needed to make them pay respect to their supremacy. Central government and the local ones were both dependent on each other, in terms of exchanging protection and support (Keyes, 1987).

Even though these relationships seemed to be real decentralization concept, there was a noticeable weak point within this concept. There were no roles for local people in the local administration. The local elite groups and their clans still had the real administrative power. People had to obey and follow the rules and desires of the elites only. The conclusion of the analysis of the above is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Strength and weakness analysis of decentralization, the period before bureaucratic system reform by King Rama V in 1887*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Promote decentralization to local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The real power had been grabbed in hands of elite group such as the king and the local leaders</li> <li>• People did not have rights to participate or manage their destinies</li> </ul>

***After the reform by King Rama V until before 1997 constitution of Thailand***

The government formation of this period was “The Centralized State”. This form comprised of the central government, provincial administrations and local administrations. At the beginning, this form was created by the influences of colonial doctrine of western countries. These events caused severe coercions for Siam government (the former name of Thailand during the period). King Rama V, the head of state at the time, decided to entirely reform the bureaucratic system in order to challenge those coercions. Through this event the local power structures in Thailand had been changed radically. The former local government structures had been canceled and all administrative power handled by the local governments were expropriated by the central government. By doing this, the decentralization ideas of the past were almost terminated altogether (Nelson, 2002). However, there were some forms of local governments that were established instead, such as sanitary districts, municipalities, and provincial administration organizations including special forms such as Bangkok Metropolitan and Pattaya City. All types, except sanitary districts, comprised of two parts of inner management. Mayor and members of the local councils were selected through local elections and local officers were appointed through official recruitments and appointments. On the other hand, the provinces appointed all officers of the sanitary districts. Relationships between the local governments were principles of the hierarchical command system within the general bureaucratic system. Within that system the local governments could not function as conceptualized because they were often ordered what to do through the commands of the central government and the regional administrations. There

were functions which they fulfilled according to the needs of the local people such as garbage management and electricity and water supply services, etc. These forms of local government had a different set of principles from the former ones because they did not have real administrative power to govern themselves. They were merely some branches of the bureaucratic system. Their authorities were strictly limited and controlled by the central government and regional administration offices (Wong, 2007). Relationships between the central government and the new forms of local governments were the “order and command” form. That meant the local governments had to follow the rules of the central government only. The conclusion of the analysis of the above was presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Strength and weakness analysis of decentralization, the period after the reform by King Rama V until before 1997 constitution*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Clearer decentralization organization forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralization by terminology: most power was in hand of the central government and regional administration offices</li> <li>• The local needs disappeared and capacities of the locals in administrative participation were ignored</li> </ul>

***After the 1997 Constitution***

The government formation of this period was the “more decentralized state”. After the political crisis in 1992, Thailand wanted to develop domestic democracy politics. There was a calling for making a new constitution that was more democratic than ever. The new constitution was established in 1997. There were several articles of the constitution aimed at promoting decentralization to the local organizations. Thereafter, another legislative enactment confirmed the implementation process of decentralized power to the local administration organizations. This law dictated five forms of administration organizations to be established: Tambol (sub-districts) Administration Organizations (TOA), Municipalities, Provincial

Administration Organizations (POA), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya City (Wong, 2007). All forms would be granted political, administrative and fiscal power directly by the central government. Under the principle of local political and administrative autonomy, local administration organizations would have full authority relating to public services within their responsible borders. The central government or regional office would not be able to restrain any activities of the local government. They merely had an advisory and monitoring role in ensuring the local governments' act legitimately as intended by the constitution (Nelson, 2002).

This seemed to be another progression of decentralization in Thailand. There were many methods to support local administrations and local people. For example, local people could be involved in the local administration through local elections. There were several kinds of organizations which had appropriate responsibilities to render public services. The organizations themselves could take actions almost independently.

In fact the local governments have more opportunities to work than ever before. The local administration organizations still do not have the real power to do that. Because of the monitoring and advisory system, they always have to obtain consent from the central or the regional bodies before implementing any policies. Besides, in terms of local officers' management, they cannot fully do so because the officers are under indirect control of the central and regional governments as well. The local officers must apply practices following the regulations enacted and enforced by the supervised organizations. Even if the local ones will be able to create public policies responded to the needs of people, they have to wait for the consent of the supervised organizations. These obstacles have directly impacted on the people's participation in local administration because the local governments have been forced to prioritize the desires of the supervised organizations. Sometimes, they have to ignore the people's participation in some projects especially infrastructure projects and public services, because these projects often take a large part of the budget and there are a lot of interests involved as well. Therefore these projects are based upon the needs of the supervised organizations. Some projects might not even address the requirements of local people but the local governments have to do it if they want to get budgets enabling them to fulfill their duties. In order to avoid

resistance from the affected local people, they often do not allow local people to participate. There are some processes creating the impression that the people are participating in the workings of local governments. Unfortunately these are just formalities and those participations are managed entirely by the local government. Local people hardly have roles in the process. They are only gathered by the local governments and practices are followed as a formality pretending to adhere to the procedures defined by the local governments. For example, voting to approve the annual local plans, the people are not real participants. They are invited to be approvers of the local government's work or to be informed how the public budget paid by the locals is spent. The conclusion of the analysis of the above is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Strength and weakness analysis of decentralization, the period after the 1997 Constitution*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Promote decentralization to local Administration organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The real power is still in hand of the supervised organizations at all levels</li> <li>• People cannot actually participate into their local community administration</li> </ul>

### **THE COMPARATIVE MOVEMENTS OF DECENTRALIZATION IN THAILAND**

Decentralization in Thailand thus so far has been unsuccessful. It will be assessed from two different approaches in the next few paragraphs. First, the autonomous concept of local administration is considered, within which Thailand has had several decentralized forms constructed. Nevertheless, they are established by the sovereign group of people in order to maintain their power in the central government. Almost all forms and practices designed are to support the businesses of central government. The local government hardly has the power to do local work autonomously as the theories and relative laws stipulate. The work is still interrupted by the central government and provincial offices. In fact, the local governments are practically branches of the central government. The real power

still sits within the hands of the bureaucratic system, the real super power organizations or ‘the bureaucratic polity’(Thailand Reform Committee , 2012). Decentralization is only a concept formed by the forms in theories in text books and in the law.

Second, the power of the local people is considered, and in the real situation, there are rarely people participating in local administration. People still have a little power to govern their communities and country. The law allows several methods in which people can participate, for example, local elections, local meetings for policy making and joining in project evaluation committees, etc. However, these methods have to be technically enforced. Whenever there are some people participating, they are only delegators. They have no power to influence decision making of the local politicians and officers at all. They are merely the “rubber stamps” functioning only in getting approval for projects of the local government. In conclusion, the real power to handle local administrations has not been delivered to the people by the laws as mentioned in decentralization theories or as claimed by Thai government.

Therefore, in every period the decentralization movements, Thailand could not achieve the goals. It is used as a tool by the central government to reserve their administrative power. This study summarizes characteristics of each movement in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Characteristics of decentralization movement of Thailand divided by period of times*

<b>Period of times</b>	<b>Types of Decentralization</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
1. Before King Rama V	Brotherhood	Dependency	Absolute power of elites
2. Before 1997 Constitution	Controllable	Order and Command	No people participation
3. After the Constitution	Monitoring	Hidden Agenda	State interventions

In Table 4, there are three periods and each one has different types, characteristics and weaknesses of centralization. The first type is “Brotherhood Decentralization”. Its major characteristic is that the leaders in local and central governments depended on each other. The

central government allowed the local government to govern freely. In return the central government got respect for their government power and some support needed in terms of annual payments or man power in time of war from the local governments. However, this type did not correspond with the ideal of decentralization because the administrative powers were in the hands of local leaders. Local people had no rights to participate anymore.

The second type is “Controllable Decentralization”. The major characteristic is a control and command relationship between central government and local administrations. This period occurred after the country reform by the King Rama V reign until the 1997 constitution. Thailand developed several forms of local administration organizations instead of the former local governments. The central government could control the local ones’ work by giving orders and making a line of commands. Thus the local governments during this period had to follow the desires of the central government, and people seldom played a role in local administration.

The third type is “Monitoring Decentralization”. The major characteristic is the complexity of the control formation of the central government. After the 1997 constitution, the central government enforced the decentralization of power to the local administration organizations more than before. The new kinds of local organizations were developed. The authorized power for local administration was approved. The roles of people in local administration participation were created. This seemed to be the full decentralization operations. However, there were some problems. Although the central government would have no power to order and command the local organizations, it could indirectly control the local ones through the advisory system allowing them to give some advice to improve the quality of works of the local governments. The central government could properly use this channel to control operations of local organizations. It could intervene in the local organization’s work by controlling the local officers and approving local projects. Local administration organizations do not have autonomous rights to do their duties and have to wait for approvals from the central government. Besides, some people participation events are unreal. They are constructed by the local politicians and officers only in order to obtain approval for their projects. People cannot monitor and inspect local administrations at all. The movement in this period, therefore, is inevitably the state interventions enacted as the intentions of the constitution.

## **A NEW CONCEPT OF THAILAND'S DECENTRALIZATION**

### ***The Main Concept***

In conclusion to the above, the former decentralization movements could not solve the problems of inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the central government in any way. Problems of unworthy projects generally remain in occurrence within both local and central governments. Public services developed by both remained to be experienced. The corruption increasingly multiplies feverously because the networking collaboration among businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats was enlarged. All of these effects lead to problems of inequality in politico socio economic dimensions amongst groups of people. There are also great differences among them.

Given the objective of decentralization the public is demanding that political power be shared rather than monopolized by the central government. This idea of power structure reform is encapsulated in the slogan "decrease government power, increase public power", which means to decrease central and regional power, while increasing local power (Riggs, 1966).

It is believed that the centralization of power causes social inequality which, in turn, creates conflict and violence in society. Such a system provides government services that are accessible to only a small group of people. Most people in society do not have enough power to make demands on the government. Therefore, they cannot gain benefits from public services. This problem has been ignored for a long time. The reforming of the political power structure is proposed as a way to solve the problem. The idea is to provide opportunities for local people to decide their own futures instead of relying on representatives and government officials.

The idea to 'decrease government power, increase public power' is believed to be a way to reduce social inequality in Thai society since it transfers political power from the central government to local areas. The more administrative opportunities there are for rural people, the more benefits are available to them. Consequently, conflict in the society would be reduced. Benefits which are accessible to only small groups of people would disperse to the public. Stakeholders would move down to local areas and need to gain acceptance from residents in these areas. Residents would learn and co-operate to strengthen their society.

The principle of “Provincial Self-Governance” involves devolution of the power to the provincial level, as it is clear from the term itself. Political movements which adopt this principle would not cause conflict and are not illegal. All the movements would be accepted by public participation with the objectives to create citizenship in a democratic way, to exchange knowledge, and to extend self-management abilities in a concrete way (Thailand Reform Committee, 2012).

### ***The Applications***

This new decentralization should be able to improve the bureaucratic system to be more efficient and effective. The major characteristic of this type is “Engagement Decentralization”. Its main concept is to establish self-governance for people under a democratic regime. There are two approaches to enhance local people’s awareness in citizenship and to increase people’s power in the public policy enactment process. These approaches are to reduce the monopolized power of the bureaucratic organizations in the public policy enactment process and to create more opportunities for local people to engage in local administrations together with their local government (Meguid, 2007).

These concepts would like to change the public policy processes of all local administration levels from a top-down to a bottom-up direction. That means it aims to change the processes through which everything is controlled by the politicians and officers and people can merely “superficially participate” to a process in which local people can “richly engage” in local decision making. This type of decentralization is focused on the processes of “citizen engagement”. It aims to propose an alternative way to transform local people from the ones who have never been free from dominations of the central government to ones who can participate with the government in the decision making involving their own affairs (Khon Kaen University, 2012).

In order to achieve this goal, this type of decentralization calls directly for decentralizing power from “central government to local people”. This means there is no need for the central government to decentralize power by means of the local administration organizations as in the past. This approach is different from the old styles of decentralization. It advocates the termination of power of the central

government and provincial offices to intervene in local government's public policy processes. It calls for the push of people to have the real power to govern themselves and not only have the power to choose somebody to govern them such as the representatives of democracy in the present day. It also calls for empowerment of local people to engage in all local administrations and not only participating as spectators. That means it strives to create a new way of decentralization in Thailand mainly based on "Citizen Engagement". People should not just "participate" but have to "engage". This approach will facilitate successful decentralization in Thailand and will get much closer to the ideological goal of decentralization than any former movements (Delli et al., 2004).

This study shows the differences and benefits of the new decentralization idea compared to the summary of the former decentralization movements in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*The comparison between the new and the former decentralization movements*

Issues	New movement	Former movements
1. Power's Ownership	Local People	Local Government and Bureaucracy
2. Local Administration Capacity	Autonomous	Domination
3. Local Administration Processes	Bottom-Up	Top-Down
4. Role of People in Local Administration	Active Engagement	Passive Participation

In Table 5, there are four different crucial characteristics divided by major issues. Firstly, on the issue of Power's ownership the new movement promotes the delivering of power from the central government directly to the local people. The former movements decentralized power to the local governments and bureaucracy. Secondly, on the issue of Local Administration Capacity, the new movement aims to promote an autonomous body of local administration organizations which would reject the dominating power of the central government and regional offices. This new movement promotes freedom in local self-governance. It believes that

when the local government can handle administration unhindered it will be able to respond to the local needs better than when it is under the control of the supervised organizations. Thirdly, on the issue of Local Administration Processes, the new movement promotes the real bottom-up public policy processes instead of the unreal ones as practiced in the past. The local people will play a major role in the local policy processes replacing the politicians and officers. That means the local administration organizations will have to work as the local people need and give. They would not be able to engage in policy making providing that they do not have agreement from the local people. On the final issue, the Role of People in Local Administration, the new movement promotes citizenship. It strives to promote transformation of local people to be true citizens, in order to be able to get intense engagement in the local administration and public policy processes. This is different from the former ones because they preferred to promote people participation, which meant that they accepted roles of people merely as delegators giving information or making claims in the processes, but they could never be the decision makers because the decision making power had to be the politicians and officers. The new one then strongly calls for the active citizen engagement in the local public administration processes or “Active Citizen Engagement” and rejects the processes which always aim to oppress people to the passive ones who usually wait for services to be done by the local administration organizations or “Passive People Participation” (Delli et al., 2004).

### **CONCEPT ON ‘PROVINCIAL SELF-GOVERNANCE’**

In Thailand, a problem of decentralization is that there has not been the truthful decentralize power from the central to local governments yet, since local governments have been dominated by the central one through regional official mechanism. That is ‘Controlling’. The central government often uses this mechanism to control operations of the local. The decentralization is as the symbol only. Its major activity is local election for local participation. People can hardly participate in the local governances such as decision makings, operations and evaluations. Almost of participatory activities are in form of sub-district (tambol) and village meetings. This is the major factor of unsuccessful operations of decentralization. Results

are some performances of local governments which cannot respond to people needs. This is why decentralization has not yet been of a success (Delli et al., 2004).

The real context is that workings of local administration organizations are often intervened by the central and regional offices, especially in budgeting, policy and planning. Those activities are always strictly monitored. Therefore, local people's needs sometimes cannot be responded by the local administration's services (Thailand Reform Committee, 2012). The concreted impact of the unsuccessful decentralization is the political conflicts and violence's at central administration structure of more than a decade. The concentration of power and budget at the central government then pushes interest groups to compete with one another to get the power. Consequently there were severe crashes among groups. People then have been divided into several factions to support their favorite groups. All sides use their people and weapons to fight with one another until situation merely to be civil war. Even there are a lot of attempts to resolve the problems but they are not succeeded, because interest groups cannot balance their benefits. Finally, coup d'état by Thai army happened twice in 2006 and 2014 (Wasaphuti, 2012).

Thai society has been encouraged by these crises; especially it is suspicious of the current power structure. They propose that the power structure is the beginning of 'Social Inequality'. Some might think that it is the source of a major cause of the present political problems. Therefore they have called for a review power structure ordering or 'Power Structure Reform'. The main objective is to transform decentralization approaches. This approach would like to decentralize power to communities or local people more than the past. The main concept is 'Decreasing state Power, Increasing People Power'. The meaning is that they need to decrease power of regional and central offices and increase more power of local people (Tan-ud, 2012).

This concept believes that concentration of power at the central government is the origin of social inequality. The inequality then is the origin of current social violence. Since the concentration cannot support people to have power to ask government offices to equally serve their demands. The more powerful group which is always the minority group can have opportunities to do so more than the less powerful but majority one, because the later one does not have enough

power to push government to do so. Generally, the minority group would have more advantageous capabilities in approaching center to state power than the majority one. This cause of problem has been accumulated for a long time.

This concept proposes 'The Power Structure Reform in Thai Society' as an appropriate way to solve the problem. This reform aims to promote local and community people participation in decision making processes in order to given their destiny instead of depending on politicians or bureaucrats. The concept 'Decreasing State Power, Increasing People Power' will be able to substantiate lower inequality in Thai society since it will transfer most power used to be the central government to local government in order to enhance opportunities of local people for doing public services by themselves. Thus outcomes of development will be delivered to people with more fairness.

Theoretically, if local people self-governance is increased, violence in society will be decreased, because the main cause of problem which is the concentration of power and benefits at the central government will be diluted. Moreover, those will be delivered to the local and community organizations. The dependency of local people to national political factions such as politicians and bureaucrats will be declined. When they write their destiny themselves, there is no need to be political apparatuses of political factions. The confrontations of people supported the political factions then will be disentangled. Meanwhile, when the power and budget are transferred to locals and communities, people will be able to develop their capacities to improve their own societies. They will have to work with several interest groups both inside and outside areas. They consequently have to learn how to work with others. Finally, the lesson learned will also contribute to strengthening their capabilities in developing communities (Thailand Reform Committee, 2012).

Sompan Techaatik (Thailand Reform Committee, 2012) proposed that 'Provincial Self-Governance' meant provincial people have participated in decision makings for specifying directions of provincial development in every field. These directions included politic, economy, society, culture, natural resources and environment, mind and social wisdom which were conformed to problems and needs of people. Therefore, when the problems or needs of people occurred, they could penetratingly resolve those ones by themselves. The principle of this concept was that it was a provincial local government approach. It aimed to decrease administrative power

from the central to local government. The provincial self-governance was a type of new social movement. It was non-violence according to the law movement. It was a strategic movement of people sector. The main target was to enhance civic consciousness of people in democratic regime, which were the people who had attentiveness and abilities in creating, retrieving and sharing information in order to profitable co-manage their province (Techaatic, 2012).

Based on principle of self-dependency and lessons from political crises during 2004 - 2006, this concept was proposed for the first time in 2008. At first, there was an attempt to offer an alternative idea to solve political problems. In 2009, this concept was selected into the forums of political development especially local politics. The forums discussed about concept of country reform by changing local government structures. Unfortunately, there were few people interested. Until the end of 2009, this idea was taken into the form on 'Self-Governance' (Johnson & Hamilton, 1994). That meant the local government and community would be able to govern their destinies themselves. By this concept, they could do some of local public services which responded to their demands. There was no need to wait for helps from the central government anymore. The main topic was 'Integrated Province'. It was the concept of changing local government structure that did not reject the central power but developed local people participation approach through making 'People's Plan' submitted to the provincial governor.

The integrated province concept was the beginning of provincial local government trend. It took local government's experiences from several countries for example South Korea, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia and England, etc., as frameworks to create a new appropriate form of Thai local government, the form that problems or needs could be totally managed within the province. It was the area based solving more than the central government based.

In 2010, the provincial self-governance project was developed and supported by the 'Community Organization Development Institute' (CODI). Several pilot areas were then assigned. In 2011, the draft of 'Chiangmai Metropolitan Bill' was specified. This draft bill was the first model of mobilizing provincial self-governance movement of Thailand.

Meanwhile, National Health Forum Committee had proposed the concept of 'Area Based Self-Governance for Healthy Society'. This concept was changed to the policy for supporting movements

in the area level without governmental boundaries. It could make the concept of provincial self-governance to be well-known in society. Finally, the concept of 'Provincial Self-Governance' was proposed to the 'Thailand Reform Committee' as another way of country reform. It has been proposed as the issue on power structure reform for reinforcing in self-governance of local people. It has attracted attention from a lot of social movement networks. For example, there were workshop meetings in the northeast provinces, forums in the three deep south provinces in order to propose 'The Draft of Pattani Metropolitan Bill', and several workshops in the central region provinces. At the moment, more than forty five provinces are trying to establish the appropriated form of local self-governance (Chaisri, 2012).

### **CONCLUSION**

Thus the new concept of decentralization proposes some effective alternatives for reducing the obstacles. It aims to promote the idea of local administration autonomy. This concept supports freedom in administration of local governments by reducing supervised power of the central government. The main idea is to decentralize power directly to the local people and not through the local administration organizations. Empowerment of people can be done in several ways, for example, allowing rights to elect the provincial governors and all levels of local leaders, instead of appointing them by the central government, encouraging local organizations by giving them bigger annual budgets in order to increase freedom in decision making, and establishing a local delegation of people to work for and check and the balance system instead of the advisory system of the central government and regional offices. Finally, this idea will be crucial in enabling Thailand to reach the ideal of decentralization more effectively than any former approaches ever.

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