

The Role of the “Public Sphere” In Thai Local Administrative Organizations: Challenges And Strategies for Fostering Community Participation

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the "Public Sphere" within Thai Local Administrative Organizations (LAOs), focusing on challenges and strategies for fostering community participation. Despite Thailand's decentralization efforts since 1997, obstacles persist, including a lack of empowerment tools for communities and bureaucratic centralization. Structural inequalities and delays in addressing local issues impede progress, highlighting the necessity of effective community involvement for sustainable development. The research analyzes the evolution of public administration in Thailand and its implications for local governance, emphasizing the importance of the "Public Sphere" as a catalyst for participation processes. By facilitating dialogue, collaboration, and decision-making at the local level, the "Public Sphere" empowers communities to address challenges effectively. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of confidence in local potential, rooted in principles of freedom of expression, to support community self-management and sustainable development. Through policy recommendations and practical insights, this research contributes to advancing local governance in Thailand, offering guidance for policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote community participation within LAOs.

Keywords: Local Administrative Organizations (LAOs), Community Participation, Public Sphere, Sustainable Development, Community Self-Management