

Editorial Note

The purpose of this Social Science Asia issue IV is to provide knowledge and analysis for academics and interest groups in Southeast Asian countries on aspects of public administration and current social context.

The first article is the work of Nuttakorn Vititanon. He studied the obstacles in providing public service by authorized government agencies in the border district in Chiang Rai province. He demonstrated that the local governments in Thailand have very limited authority. The overlapping of authorities has led to many conflicts between central and local government agencies. So when conflict arises, the central government always overpowers local administrative organization. Two cases study were presented to support the finding.

The second article concerns the issue related to investing in trust as a way to superior local governance. The work was conducted by Narong Kiettikunwong. The author pointed out that when a government is perceived as trustworthy people are more willing to co-operate which usually leads to a better performance. He also discussed the meaning and all the elements of trust. The dilemma game theory model was presented to explain individual and group behavior in the trust relationship between local government and its citizens. The overall concept was relevant for the promotion of trust for the local government and the citizen.

The third article is by Autthapon Muangming who analyzed local government in Thailand and decentralization after the 2014 military coup. The author analyzed the direction of decentralization under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 (2017). He found that the essential aspects of decentralization had not changed and some aspects had been added. It was also reported that the 2014 political situation caused the drawback of power to the central government. Although there was progress on various issues, certain others still did not show a clear direction towards strong decentralization to local government.

The fourth article is the work of Atchara Sakrajai who investigated the role of women in local development and analyzed what motivates them to participate in local activities. It was found that the women see the opportunity for them to earn extra income as well as leading to the economic growth for the community. Self-esteem was also found to be a motivation for women to devote themselves to their local community.

The fifth article is from Inthida Chamnongnit who studied the decentralization in Indonesia after the declaration of independence. The six key lessons that were drawn from the study: 1) the readiness for and needs of decentralization and local administration, 2) a good image for local administration, 3) acceptance of elections and laws, 4) the role of leaders, 5) decentralization, and 6) promoting local leaders to become national leaders.

The last article presented the movement towards Thailand 4.0, highlighting the issues of the preparedness of workers in the marketplace and a new group of manpower. The author, Yuwadee Vaitayachoti, pointed out that the quality of vocational education needs to be improved to meet the universal standard known as dual vocational education. The process of dual education for the success of human resources for Thailand 4.0 was presented.

This issue of the Social Sciences Asia also presents two books reviews.

The first review is of “Heritage and Identity in Contemporary Thailand: Memory, Place and Power (2017)” by Ross King. This book is the integration of work of Dr. King’s partnering with Thai Ph. D. scholars. The work is more suitable for Thai studies’ specialists, particularly those with an interest in architecture and heritage, as well as for specialists in place semiotics. The chapters concern: the role of Chaing Saen in Thai historiography, the architecture of the palaces of three Thai kings, a discussion of the ambiguities of love in Thai tradition focusing on the evolving historiography of the heritage sites, historical, monuments, bridges, the hidden heritage of historical landscapes, historical canals, and craft communities. The overall book provides a useful alliance between expert and academic and Thai Ph. D students. It was reviewed by John Draper.

The second book, reviewed by Narut Wasinpiyamongkhon, is of Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right (2016) by Arlie Russell Hochschild. The reviewer pointed out the significant contribution on the analysis of the Trump supporters by Hochschild. The reviewer also draws attention to great detail about the Tea Party advocates concerning their backgrounds, aspirations, beliefs, and their goals. The reviewer contended that even though Hochschild shows some disagreements with the Tea Party supporters, the well-structured and carefully written work is more than useful for readers.

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Editor