

Concept of the People's Participation and Collective Responsibility in Managing the State and Local Government Affairs

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Abstract

This academic article has the objectives to analyze concept of the people's participation and collective responsibility in managing the state and local government affairs consisting of analysis framework which covers the participation concept of public sectors' management, concept on people's participation in government management and concept on collective responsibility in managing the state and local affairs.

The result shows that: currently, these three issues are addressed in the constitution with the principle to encourage and to support collective responsibility in local administration, in particular, to convey all knowledge, principle and ideas to the performance improvement process and to be the guideline for the promotion of participation with collective responsibility of the people for the local administration.

Keywords: Participation; Local Government; Public Management

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แนวคิดว่าการมีส่วนร่วมแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบในการจัดการภาครัฐ และท้องถิ่นของประชาชน

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิชาการนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์แนวคิดว่าการมีส่วนร่วมแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบในการจัดการภาครัฐและท้องถิ่นของประชาชน โดยใช้กรอบในการวิเคราะห์ ประกอบด้วย แนวคิดว่าการมีส่วนร่วมในการจัดการภาครัฐของประชาชน แนวคิดว่าการมีส่วนร่วมในการปกครองท้องถิ่นแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบ และองค์ประกอบของการมีส่วนร่วมแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบในการปกครองท้องถิ่น

ผลการวิเคราะห์ พบว่า การมีส่วนร่วมในการจัดการภาครัฐของประชาชน การมีส่วนร่วมในการปกครองท้องถิ่นแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบ และองค์ประกอบของการมีส่วนร่วมแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบในการปกครองท้องถิ่น เป็นแนวคิดภายใต้กรอบรัฐธรรมนูญแห่งราชอาณาจักรไทย ที่กำหนดหลักการส่งเสริมการมีส่วนร่วมของประชาชนในการบริหารงานขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นอย่างมีความรับผิดชอบร่วมกัน เพื่อนำองค์ความรู้ หลักการแนวคิด ไปใช้ในการปรับปรุงการดำเนินงาน และเป็นแนวทางในการส่งเสริมการมีส่วนร่วมแบบร่วมกันรับผิดชอบของประชาชนในการบริหารท้องถิ่นขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น

คำสำคัญ: การมีส่วนร่วม; การปกครองท้องถิ่น; การจัดการภาครัฐ

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Introduction

According to the Constitution and related administrative laws, decentralization leads to public awareness, to share, to initiate, to mutually make decisions, to co-operate and to help monitoring local administration at all levels. But in reality, several local administrations have capability and efficiency in managing and developing basic utilities to the public and be unable to have a role to link to mutual local political web. Furthermore, local administration (both authority and local big shots) shall exert their influences on political participation by the local public. The Constitution aims to ease this problem by promoting political grassroots, raising people's awareness on liberty, equality, and local public participation.

In current situation, the Constitution shall provide some opportunities to the people to join political arenas both in the local level and in the national level; however, people's participation has not yet been prevalent. This might arise from lack of correct understanding and aligned political interests from all stakeholders, mainly from the general public, on the meaning and benefits from particular people's participation.

Public participation is the way to give people some opportunities to join politics in some ways, and helps managing and making some decisions especially on resources distribution, advices, planning, operating and direct control. Public participation is the process that the public or stakeholders have opportunities

to voice their opinions, views, and to join in activities which affects their ways of life, as well as bringing their advices to bring upon a policy drafting or decision making. Public participation is an open communication process, i.e., both formally and informally, consisting of information sharing among stakeholders, and unity promoting. The reason behind is that people's participation should raise decision making quality, reducing costs and time wasting to reach consensus, and be easy to execute, more importantly to avoid any "extreme" conflicts. All of these could raise credibility and legitimacy and also gather information on people's concerns and norms, as well as skills and creativity promotion among the public (Watthanasap, 2000, p. 25-28)

People's participation is very crucial for democracy foundation, public governance, and public management. The more people can participate, the more public sector shall be monitored and the civil servants, therefore, must be socially responsible, and this prevents politicians to set forth any public policies that do not serve for the public needs. Last, public participation shall make the public more confident that their voices shall be heard and their needs shall be responded.

Concept and Theory

Concept on People's Participation in Government Management

Concept on people's participation was formulated since the Fifth Plan of National

Plan for Social and Economic Development (1982-1986) onwards. The Central government has promoted the participation as a tool to govern and join government's projects. People's participation is a lesson for everyone to learn about one another and is a foundation for local administrative evolution (Burikun, 2005) and mentions about the participation which everyone can have and earn some interests, e.g., utilities system, education, health care system, etc. These activities are directly linked to people's problems and needs.

People's participation is described in several dimensions both vertically and horizontally as follows:

1. Participation is a call for voluntary help for people from any public projects that provides national benefits but without any of criticism or modifications from the people.

2. In a broad sense, participation is for the rural people who are alert to seek any assistance from the authority and respond positively to development projects, and it promotes people's initiatives simultaneously.

3. In the term of rural development, participation is for people to involve in decision making process, operation and social benefit receiving from development projects, as well as in project monitoring.

4. For a sake of development, participation is a strong eagerness by the people to involve in decision making process that may have some impacts to them and their community.

5. Within the community, participation is that people have both rights and duties to solve community problems, had more responsibility to investigate all necessities, local resources acquisition, including proposing new initiatives with establishing and reserving the local organization.

6. Participation is an earnest procedure. It means that an individual or people are initiators and try with the best effort but not losing their own identities to follow up their initiatives.

7. Participation is the best ability to improve resources allocation and set up rules and regulations in the society by the operators that have no attachment to any authority.

Concept on Collective Responsibility in Managing the State and Local Affairs

Ideology or principles of the local administration is self-ruling of the citizens in the community. There were several types like a chief of the tribe or naturally elected community leader, and new democratic ruling system as in Thailand, for instance. Principle or ideology of democracy is based on the foundation of people living together, and sharing responsibilities on local public affairs, as defined as "collective responsibility" (Arendt, 1987)

Suwanmala (2004, p. 2) has defined collective responsibility as a source for local participation in local administration, or can also be called creative participation—participation with collective responsibility. This participation is collective behavior that community share

ideas and decision makings to seek public interest benefits.Characteristics of local participation within collective responsibility framework are as follows:

1. People in the community share ideas and set which types of activities or services, like community security, cultural promotion, or public utilities services, e.g. streets, sewage system, education services, health care etc.

2. People in the community share the search, choose representative(s) to act as their agents for public community services, starting from planning for people in the community to efficient execution.

3. People in the community share ideas and set who would bear some burden or costs associated with public services, how these costs should be allocated like tax collection, or service fares to contribute to share some of their land, assets, labor, natural resources etc. Who should fairly take a bigger piece of the pie? After agreed upon, all citizens will share responsibilities, and who that not be so co-operated shall be forced or intervened by

the general public.

4. People in the community altogether monitor, examine and express their opinions (like vote yes or no) on any outcomes from public utilities services, push for social remedies to improve the services for long-term maximum benefits.

5. People in the community have some sense of ownership of the public assets or public services like their own assets by helping maintaining, looking after, and trying to keep these assets in the best possible shape, ready for community uses. They feel disgusted if the public assets are vandalized because people believe in keeping public services and local administrative system in place, trusting in the system, believing in an individual power and in self-ruling local administration.

By literature reviews both in Thailand and abroad, we have found some ideas in political science, and in public administration science on the meanings of participation with collective responsibility as shown in Table1:

Table 1

Source and Participation Definition

Source	Participation and Collection Responsibility Definition
Reeder (1974, p. 39)	Define participation as engagement on social impact including both individual and group participation.
Williams (1976, p. 138)	Define participation development as process that people can participation in development by themselves, being creative and utilize their own skills and know-hows.

Table 1*Source and Participation Definition*

Source	Participation and Collection Responsibility Definition
Huntington and Nelson (1967, p. 4)	Political participation is defined as sporadic or from time-to-time people involvement peacefully or violently, lawfully or unlawfully, efficiently or inefficiently within their conscience as political persuasion.
Cohen and Uphoff (1980, p. 219)	<p>4 Steps an participation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision making 2. Implementation 3. Benefits 4. Evaluation
Shah (1988, p. 226)	Participation is defined as people involving and engaging in decision-making process, evaluation process or problem-solving consulting process.
Ruksasat (1981, pp. 90-91)	<p>Define community development participation as the way that people involved in community activities around the world improving qualities of life socially and economically 3 crucial participation concepts are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mutual Interest & Attention arising from similar individual interest & attention until lessening public interest and attention. 2. Non-satisfaction and difficulties on certain circumstance that drive people to form groups, plan, and jointly working together. 3. Joint decision making to change or to move community towards a certain direction; joint decision has severely been strong to initiate personal satisfaction mostly.
Kasemsuk (2014, p. 3)	Defined as process that people participate, joint together to improve communication and information exchanges own any members in the community. If people in the community can talk and exchange ideas, and participate in activities to be achieved altogether, then strengthening communities in order to thrive for area development & overcome obstacles.

Table 1
Source and Participation Definition

Source	Participation and Collection Responsibility Definition
Tejarin (1984, pp. 6-7)	Defined as the process that government persuades, leads, creates opportunities for people in the community, clubs, associations, volunteer groups, charitable organization to work together on a certain issue or particular agendas.
Wutimethi (1983, pp. 20-25)	Defined as an opportunity for people to co-create, make decisions, involve and take responsibilities on topics that affect their lives. People could have their say on community development to solve and improve lives. Change agents must be acknowledged that fundamental philosophy on individual needs to live peacefully, fairly together, being accepted by other people and ready to participate. Naturally, people keep improving, depending on right opportunity and proper advices.
Chamrik (1984, p. 22)	Not defined as people persuasion from scholars or activists to join activities, rather defined as community having their own activities and operation.
Pattanaphongsa (1990, pp. 19-20)	As defined as follows: 1. Participation means voluntary help by people to a public or any project that could influence on national development by not tampering or criticizing project details. 2. Participation means local people being alert to recognize their needs & response to development projects, at the same time promoting local initiative. 3. Participation means people involving in decision making process, project implementation process, and unusual benefit sharing form development project, as well as project evaluation attempt. 4. Participation means people have both rights and duties to solve their own health problems and share more burden to explore health needs, local resource accumulation and suggest new ways how to improve, e.g. establish and promote local institutions.

Table 1*Source and Participation Definition*

Source	Participation and Collection Responsibility Definition
King Prajadhipok's Institute (2005), pp. 18-21	<p>Local collective responsibility participation is defined as the way that people are involving in local administration not only provincial, municipal, or district -level. People will be able to involve in local administration several ways under the constitution that support decentralization and promote people's participation. First on local administrative election & 2nd on local administrative participation.</p> <p>First, local administrative election on be divided into 3 steps-pre, during, post-election.</p> <p>Second, local administrative participation including monitoring by people, organizations, communities, associations, and checking upon local elected administrators actions that benefit people's needs or not, participating by attending local council meeting to learn and digest information. If seeing any irregularities, people can check upon plans and annual budgets of the local administration, examining construction projects, budget allocated for such projects and veto or object to any susceptible issues, for example.</p>
Watthanasap (2000, pp. 25-28)	<p>Defined as process to focus on working together to resolve problems participation process consists at data collection, education, data accumulation, consultation, and definition test and suggestion, consensus, & vote to seek acceptance and reach expectation.</p>
Burikun (2005, pp. 1-2)	<p>Defined as process that people have opportunities to show their opinions & involve in activities that affect their lives & bring on such viewpoints to make final decisions & policies, two-way open communication both formally and informally consisting of data sharing & unity promoting including creativity & skill developments.</p>

From above definitions, some scholars have defined the term very differently, depending on eras, which can be categorized into 2 groups as follows:

1. International scholars who studied on participation theory during the year of 1974-1987 defined participation as “activities that people in the community do voluntarily and legally, mostly are political-related like election, petition or outcry to rulers, etc.” These scholars focused on political participation.

2. Both international and Thai scholars who studied on participation theory during the year of 1981-2007 saw participation not only political-related but also as stated that “supports, initiatives, and creativity to fulfill group objectives and share group’s activities on economic, social and political fronts”.

From all above, we can conclude that “participation with collective responsibility” means activities by the people to share responsibilities from activity outcomes by individuals, groups, organizations and associations, including sharing ideas and burden, co-planning, co-operating, and mutually monitoring and evaluating. Such activities can be economic, social, or political-related that affects the majority of the general public to reach the optimal goals that the public has set forth.

Analysis Framework

In this academic article, the analysis framework following:

1. The participation concept of public sectors’ management
2. Concept on people’s participation in government management
3. Concept on collective responsibility in managing the state and local affairs

Result

Components on Participation with Collective Responsibility

Since there are several definitions on the term; therefore, there are so many ideas on the components on such participation that local administration could utilize these ideas to execute, provide or manage the services efficiently, and all stakeholders must share responsibilities. Components can be categorized as shown in the following:

1. Sharing ideas and setting ideas that community should or could do which kinds of activities, like public security, cultural promotion, or public utility providing.
2. Sharing searching and election process from individuals or groups in the community to act as their agents on public services from planning. Try or manipulate around to get the jobs done effectively.
3. Sharing the ideas to share burden and costs associated with arranged public services like tax collection or service fares or to contribute to share land, assets, labor, or resources.
4. Co-monitoring, examining, exerting opinions on public service execution to

improve the services, correct any flaws for better long-term and sustainable service improvement for the community.

5. Creating public ownership like owning their own assets, so that people can help maintaining, looking after, keeping all public assets in the best possible shape, ready for community uses, and realizing significance and usefulness of these public assets and trusting in the system, believing in an individual power, and in self-ruling local administration.

Conclusion

From all these characteristics on participation with collective responsibility, there are seven components as stated: (1) participating to find the root causes of problems (2) participating in planning (3) participating in decision making

(4) participating in selecting who will run the public office (5) participating in investment and operations (6) participating in sharing benefits (7) participating in evaluating. All of which are attribute to the public service participation in both state and local level. Thus, local administration can apply this ideology to better their public services.

Recommendation

1. The local government organization should act as a mechanism between the people for political learning at the local level

2. Local government organizations must give people some opportunities to join politics in some ways, and helps managing and making some decisions, advices, planning, operating and direct control to join in activities which affects their ways of life.

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