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# Local Government in Thailand

—Analysis of the Local Administrative  
Organization Survey—

Fumio Nagai  
Nakharin Mektrairat  
Tsuruyo Funatsu

Joint Research Program Series No. 147

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## **Preface**

This report is an interim outcome of the first year of a two-year research project (FY 2007-2008) “The Central-Local Relationship in Thailand: Analysis of the Thai Local Administration Organizations.” In the first year of the project, the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE), JETRO conducted the Joint Research Project “Local Government in Thailand: Analysis of the Local Administrative Organization Survey” with the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University. The preliminary results and cross-tabulations of this survey are also distributed by the report “Preliminary Results: The Survey of Local Administrative Organizations in Thailand” published by the IDE in March 2008.

Since the 1990s, Thailand has established a more decentralized local administration system as part of the democratization process. Almost ten years of decentralization has brought about a massive change in the Central-Local relationship in Thailand. Moreover, the pace of change has accelerated especially after the introduction of directly-elected executive system into Local Administrative Organizations throughout the country.

However, no empirical survey on the decentralization process and the massive changes after the decentralization has been undertaken so far the in Thailand. To make up this blank in data, our project team planned the first ever quantitative survey of the Local Administrative Organization in Thailand.

The survey itself was conducted from June 2006 onwards by sending questionnaires to all the LAOs in Thailand (about 7,800 except for Bangkok and Phatthaya). The completed forms were collected during June to August 2006 and the data underwent a cleaning process throughout 2007. Among the team members, Dr. Nakharin made an important decision to distribute the questionnaires to all the LAOs and made this survey data the valuable one in academic sense. An efficient administrative efforts and suggestions in the research by Dr. Supasawad as well as analytical skills and compassionate work done by Professor Kagoya made a significant contribution in making an analysis of this survey this year.

For the preliminary analysis in this report, the discussions with the project members as well as the distinguished discussants in the Workshop (January 12-13, 2008, held at

International House of Japan), Dr. Toshio Kamo and Dr. Kengo Akizuki have contributed greatly to formulate the analysis.

However, due to time constraints, papers and analysis in this report present only preliminary analysis of the issues we would further discuss. The remaining questions and shortcomings of our report will be clarified in the second, and final year of the project.

Editors

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	i
List of Contributors.....	iii
Chapter 1 Central-Local Government Relationship in Thailand....	Fumio Nagai Tsuruyo Funatsu Kazuhiro Kagoya
1. Background of the Decentralization.....	1
1-1. Gradual decentralization and local government reform after the 1997 Constitution in Thailand.....	1
1-2. The state system and the local autonomy system in Thailand.....	4
2. The Central – Local relationship in Thailand’s local government.....	8
3. Decentralization process.....	11
4. Effect of Decentralization.....	16
5. Survey on the Thai Local Administrative Organizations.....	19
5-1. Procedures and the focus of the survey.....	19
5-2 Aims of the survey.....	20
6. Preliminary results of the survey.....	21
6-1. Urban-Rural Hierarchy and resource allocation.....	21
6-2. Central-local government relations.....	22
6-3. Signs of a change.....	25
7. Summary.....	29
Reference.....	29
Chapter 2 Decentralization under Threat?: Impacts of the CEO Governor Policy upon Thai Local Government.....	Supasawad Chardchawarn.....31
1. The Politics of Recentralization: A Framework for Analysis.....	32
2. The Nature of Thai Public Administration and Decentralization Process in the 1990s.....	34
3. Prime Minister Thaksin’s CEO Governor Policy: A Threat to Decentralization? .....	41
4. Impacts of the CEO governor policy upon Local government: View from the PAO and Other local Authorities.....	45

5. Conclusion: What Will Happen after This?.....	48
Reference.....	49
Chapter 3 Local Capability and Decentralization in Thailand.....	Fumio Nagai
	Kazuhiro Kagoya....
1. Dual system of local administration and local government in Thailand.....	51
2. Problems of measuring ‘local capability’ in Thailand.....	52
3. Analysis of Survey Data .....	54
4. Summary and Interpretations.....	59
Chapter 4 Decentralization and changing local politics in Thailand:	
Different Outcomes among the Regions.....	Nakharin Mektrairat....
Introduction.....	61
1. Background and history of locality in Thailand.....	62
2. The Development Decade: Changing local economy and politics.....	64
3. Different contexts of local politics in the regions of Thailand.....	65
4. Decentralization and Development of local politics.....	67
5. Briefing of the Survey Results: Different reactions among the regions towards the directly-elected executives system.....	69
Chapter 5 Performance of LAO Presidents in Thailand	
– How do their academic qualifications matter? –.....	Tsuruyo Funatsu....
1. Background of the topic.....	73
2. The Decentralization scheme to control the rural LAOs.....	74
3. Changes in the selection of LAO President after Direct Election.....	75
4. Summary and Interpretations.....	83
<b>Appendix:</b>	
Questionnaire Version 1: For LAO president of Municipality and TAO.....	I
Questionnaire Version 2: for LAO Clerks.....	IX

