

**PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS: A
CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPATION IN ORDINANCE MAKING
OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS
IN SUPHANBURI, THAILAND**


Tanasarn Chongpanish

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)
School of Public Administration
National Institute of Development Administration**

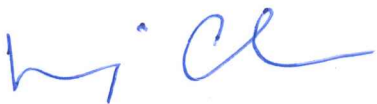
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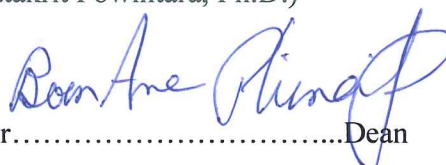
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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	People's Participation in Public Policy Process: A Case Study of Participation in Ordinance Making of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand
Author	Mr. Tanasarn Chongpanish
Degree	Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)
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This study aimed: 1) to study the development of local administration in Suphanburi, Thailand, emphasizing people's participation in policy-making process, i.e. local ordinance; 2) to study and identify the obstacles regarding local ordinances by people's initiatives in the local administration organizations in Suphanburi; and 3) to provide solutions and policy recommendations for people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by people's initiative in Suphanburi and the entire country of Thailand.

The research questions are: 1) How does the development of local administration in Suphanburi emphasize people's participation in the policy-making process and ordinance creation?; 2) Why have the local ordinances by people's initiatives in Suphanburi never been enforced, and what are the obstacles?; and 3) What are the solutions regarding people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by people's initiative in Suphanburi and for Thailand overall?

This study used qualitative research methods. The data obtained were of two types of data; primary data were from field survey, in-depth interviews, and focus group interviews; secondary data were from related documents, ordinances, research, and academic articles. The key informants were the government officers responsible for supervising local administrative organizations, executives in the local administrative organizations, community leaders, and law experts.

The results of this research provide solutions regarding the problems surrounding people's participation local administrations, policy recommendations, and recommendations for future research. The three main research questions were asked in order to ascertain the obstacles to the people's participation in local ordinance creation in Suphanburi. The research results revealed that the total of participation rate in Suphanburi was at a medium to low level. Although the local administrative organizations encourage the people to participate in public hearings, the results turned out to be not attractive. The main obstacle concerned the socio-economic problems, i.e. level of education, poverty, and local ways of life. The second obstacle involved the laws, rules, and regulations related to the local administrations. The third obstacle was the local political culture of Suphanburi. Therefore, the results confirmed the hypotheses that the three obstacles were the main problems concerning the people's participation in the creation of the local ordinances in Suphanburi. The research results showed that the model of people's participation in the creation of the local ordinances introduced by the western countries could not be applied to the locals in Suphanburi. The bureaucrats that are working closely with the people are not proactive enough to encourage the participation rate. At the same time, the local people were bored, inactive, and did not see the importance of participation in their local ordinance creation process. At the end of this research, the researcher made two levels of policy recommendations: government policy recommendations and local administrative organization recommendations. The increase of people's participation in local ordinance creation must be carried out by the people themselves with the full of support from the government. The government should launch policy to lift up the people's quality of life, education, and opportunity for making a living, and meanwhile the local people should acknowledge their rights and duties of citizenship; they should be responsible for their local hometown and not just wait for government support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study and Problem Statement

Since the first constitution of Thailand was enacted in B.E. 2475 (1932), it has been the key mechanism used for governing and organizing the structure of government and public administration. But there have been several political problems under the umbrella of the constitutional monarchy regime, such as students protesting, junta governments, unstable politics, and so forth, until the first constitution by the people was enacted in 1997. The main purpose of the constitution of Thailand B.E. 2540 (1997) was to encourage people's participation at every level of politics, i.e. the national and local level. Under this constitution, the direct democracy principle was introduced in order to fulfill the shortcomings that usually occurred during the time of a representative democratic constitution. In addition, it was to promote the involvement of the people of Thailand in governing the country, checking the use of power of the government, as well as to protecting and preserving the rights and freedom of Thai citizens, for instance, the rights of initiatives by the people which was first introduced in this constitution.

Moreover, the decentralization principle is also the aim of this constitution: to delegate the power to the local administrative organizations as the first mechanism to involve people in the governance and self-reliance of their own areas. After the coup in 2006, the new constitution was enacted in 2007. The purpose of this constitution was the continuity of the previous one; that is, the decentralization principle and the people's right to have political participation. The essence of the purpose was to protect and preserve the rights of Thai people to be involved in any political actions. Though a coup occurred again in 2014, reference can be made from the previous constitution because this principle was not the problem that caused the recent situation and the principle of the new constitution could not be neglected.

Thailand's public administration has had a hold on bureaucracy and the centralization principle for many decades. The burden of work loads, responsiveness to the needs of the people, and solving several national problems such as poverty, inequality, income distribution, accessing basic infrastructure, and so forth were depended only on the central government. Therefore, the principle of decentralization was promoted, indicating that the state will support and encourage potential local units of government to be able to self-govern themselves and establish local government organizations. Mansuri and Rao suggested that "decentralization is the principle that helps support village and municipal governments. Decentralization helps support and encourages the people to participate in local government activities such as participating in elections, improving access to information, and participating in the decision making process of the local government. It also increases the ability of local governments to provide services by increasing their financial resources, strengthening the capacity of local officials, and streamlining and rationalizing their administrative functions." (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). In addition, Shah Abraham purported that "the objectives of living, working, and self-governing communities are included in the local governance. Therefore, the importance of the existence of local administrative organization is to providing public services and creating the environment of people's participation." (Abraham, 2014). In the case of Thailand, the local administrative organization is the key unit that the objective of encouraging people at the grass-roots level to participate in politics and to have a political voice. The role of this organization would also be the immediate response to the needs of the local people in the community. It could also relieve the tasks of the central government which could not respond to micro-level problems in small communities. In addition, the basis of democracy can be found in the local government, where the people in the community would be aware of and acknowledge the social phenomena in their community. Although the local governments in Thailand are under the supervision of the central government, they tend to have independent and sufficient authority to provide public services to the people in the community.

The Act of Local Ordinance Initiative B.E. 2542 (1999) opened an opportunity for the local people to initiate their own local ordinances. The purpose of this act was to promote self-governing, people's participation, and the right to protect the

environment of local communities and properties. Local ordinances are basic laws made by the people in a particular community to protect and preserve the environment or any kind of good tradition and culture of the community. However, there seems to be sufficient guidance for the local government to operate the administration to encourage the people in the community to participate in community actions. The constitutions and the acts that allow the people to have the right to participate and access information of the local government might be perfect “on the shelf” to be a guidebook, but in reality the people have less opportunity to access information and involvement in the decision-making and policy processes.

Suphanburi is located in the central region of Thailand. Most of the local people there are rice-growing farmers, although it has been recently promoted to be a new tourism attraction in Thailand near Bangkok. The interesting point about Suphanburi however is the local politics, where the 21st prime minister of Thailand was the representative of this province—Mr. Banhaan Silapa-archa from the Chartthai party. This party has dominated this province for more than 4 decades and it is also known as Suphanburi’s political party at the national level. Countrywide, there are 72 registered political parties, but only 4-5 major parties are voted to the parliament, including the Chartthai party. It might be assumed that the people of Suphanburi are the localism, here the local people always preserve and protect their rights under their loyalty to one political party. Additionally, the local politics is strong considering the number of people participating in elections. In addition, the executives in the local administrative organizations in this province are always the same group of people that have a relationship with the Chartthai party. Though the situation of national politics is facing instability problems, the local politics in Suphanburi seem not to be affected by external problems. Because of the uniqueness of Suphanburi’s local politics, the researcher focused on this province by looking at the people’s participation in local politics, especially in terms of local ordinances by the people’s initiative. In addition, the attractive point of this province is the percentage of the population of voters in both national and local elections during this decade. The rate of voter turnout in Suphanburi is quite a bit higher than the country average in terms of the general election of the country (see Figure 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). The voter turnout in the general election in 2007 and 2011 was 74.49 and 75.03 percent consecutively, whereas voter

turnout rate in Suphanburi was 76.3 and 75.5 percent consecutively. Even the voter turnout for local administration organizations was high, with the rate of 79.5 and 80.3 percent in 2009 and 2014 consecutively.

Statistic of Local Administrative Election of Suphanburi province				
Type of Elections	Date of Election	Number of eligible voters	Actual number of eligible voters	Percentage of actual voters to total number of eligible voters
General Election of Subdistrict Administrative Organizations	6/9/2009	106,344	84,545	79.5%
General Election of Subdistrict Administrative Organizations	13/10/2014	100,720	80,832	80.3%

Figure 1.1 Statistics of Local Administrative Elections of Suphanburi Province

Statistic of General Election of Suphanburi province				
Type of Election	Date of Election	Number of eligible voters	Actual number of eligible voters	Percentage of actual voters to total number of eligible voters
Members of the Parliament	3/7/2011	642,872	490,426	76.3%
Members of the Parliament	23/12/2007	617,478	466,435	75.5%
Senators	2/3/2008	625,467	344,036	55.0%
Senators	30/3/2014	657,716	365,845	55.6%

Figure 1.2 Statistics of General Elections of Suphanburi Province

Statistic of General Election of Thailand				
Type of Elections	Date of Election	Number of eligible voters	Actual number of eligible voters	Percentage of actual voters to total number of eligible voters
Members of the Parliament	3/7/2011	46,939,549	35,220,377	75.03
Members of the Parliament	23/12/2007	44,002,593	32,775,868	74.49
Senators	2/3/2008	44,911,254	24,981,247	55.62
Senators	30/3/2014	48,786,842	20,873,688	42.79

Figure 1.3 Statistics of General Elections of Thailand

The researcher collected data on local ordinances enacted during a 5-year period and found that no local ordinances were initiated by the people in the area; only by the endorsement of the executives and the order of the central government (see Table 1.1). There was a total 39 ordinances that can be categorized into 8 categories: city planning, public health, public utilities, public welfare, traffic management, the environment, city administration, and taxes. The meeting minutes of all local councils revealed that most of them approved the ordinances with a consensus and without discussion or objection. As mentioned earlier, the right of local people to have their own laws aims to encourage the people's participation in preserving and protecting their rights in their own land.

Table 1.1 Tables of Approved Local Ordinances in Suphanburi Province during 2011-2015

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
1)	Nongratchawat Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
2)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
3)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
4)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
5)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
6)	Suphanburi Town Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Aug-2014	Public Health
7)	Baan Don Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Jan-2015	Public Health
8)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Jun-2015	Public Health

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
9)	Nongpho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Market	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2014	Public Health
10)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Pig Farm	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
11)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Seeling Goods on Public Place	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
12)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Waste and Garbabage Management	Municipal Council	Sep-2015	Environment
13)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	Environment
14)	Donchedi Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2014	Environment

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
15)	Talingchan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Feb-2015	Environment
16)	Suantang Subdistrict Administrative Organization Management	Waste Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2015	Environment
17)	Baan Chang Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Water Usage	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2015	Public Utilities
18)	Hua Pho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Water Usage	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jan-2015	Public Utilities
19)	Ton Taan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waterworks	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Mar-2014	Public Utilities

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
20)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Waterworks Management	Municipal Council	2015	Public Utilities
21)	Tarahad Subdistrict Municipality	Waterworks Management	Municipal Council	2015	Public Utilities
22)	Nongpho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waterworks Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2014	Public Utilities
23)	Suphanburi Town Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Municipal Council	Aug-2014	Public Health
24)	Baan Don Subdistrict Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jan-2015	Public Health

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
25)	Nongratchawat Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
26)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	Public Health
27)	Donphotong Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Mar-2014	Public Health
28)	Bangtatel Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Nov-2015	Public Health
29)	Banglen Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2014	Public Health

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
30)	Chorakhesampan Subdistrict Municipality	Waste Water from Building Manangement by Installing Grease Trap	Municipal Council	May-2014	Public Health
31)	Ton Taan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Construction Control Area	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	City Planning
32)	Nongkratoom Subdistrict Municipality	Adtisement by Amplifier Control	Municipal Council	2014	City Administration
33)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Traffic Control	Municipal Council	Aug-2011	Traffic Management
34)	Nernpraprang Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Child Development Center	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Dec-2015	Public Welfare

Table 1.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organization	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
35)	Sanamkli Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Common House Mosquito Control	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Feb-2014	Public Health
36)	Chorakhesampan Subdistrict Municipality	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	May-2014	Taxes
37)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Dec-2009	Taxes
38)	Ruayai Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2015	Taxes

Source: Office of Local Administration of Suphanburi Province

Another reason for choosing this province was the accessibility to the data. Because of its location and the transportation advantages of this province, the researcher was able to access the data from both the provincial office and the local administrative organization offices. Since interviews were the main research tool, transportation to the field was important. In addition, the accuracy and reliability of the data were of important concern for the research—if the data were difficult to access, the research results would be a distortion of reality.

Therefore, the physical condition and administration could be problems for a local province like Suphanburi, but why is there no evidence that shows any of the people's participation in local ordinance initiatives by the people? What is the development of the local administration in Suphanburi like? The local administration might have an effect on the behavior of the people of Suphanburi. Although the size of the voter turnout there is much higher than the country's average, there might be a hidden problem under those numbers. In addition, the law opens an opportunity for the people to initiate their own laws, but in Suphanburi, there have been no ordinances created by the people. It is significant in the author's opinion that the present research will identify some of the obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances and make policy recommendations for the central government, which is in the middle of drafting a new constitution now to develop policy that will encourage the local people to participate and exercise their rights through the formal form of direct democracy.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

1) To study the development of the local administration in Suphanburi, Thailand emphasizing the people's participation in the policymaking process, i.e. local ordinances

2) To study and identify the obstacles to the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiatives in the local administration organizations in Suphanburi

3) To provide solutions and policy recommendations for the people's participation in local administrations in the case of local ordinances by the people initiative in Suphanburi and for the country of Thailand overall

1.3 Research Questions

1) What is the development of local administration in Suphanburi emphasizing people's participation in policy making process and ordinance making?

2) Why have the local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi never been enforced? What have been the obstacles?

3) What are the solutions regarding the people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for Thailand?

1.4 Hypotheses

According to previous research on the local ordinances initiatives by the people under the people's participation principle in Thailand, initiatives have rarely been carried out or applied by the citizens in a particular area in Thailand. The obstacles mostly concern the conditions required by the laws, the political culture of the Thai society, and socio-economic issues. Therefore, the hypotheses that were tested in this research were divided into three obstacles as follows:

1) The laws, rules, and regulations related to the promotion of the people's participation principle, such as Act of Local Ordinance Initiative 1999 and the Act of Local Executives Recall 1999 are obstacles in terms of local administration having political participation in local ordinance initiatives.

2) The political culture in Suphanburi, that is the influential power of local politicians on the local people in particular organizations, is an obstacle to local administration organizations having political participation in local ordinances initiatives.

3) Socio-economic status (poverty, education, and such matters) are obstacles to local administration organizations having political participation in local ordinance initiatives.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study emphasizes the people's participation status in Suphanburi province, where field research was applied in order to identify and study the causes of the problems of the people's participation, especially regarding local ordinance initiatives in the area. In addition, policy recommendations will be made after the analysis for the further development of the local democracy of this province and for Thailand.

1.5.1 Scope of the Population and Sampling

The population and sampling are the groups of people involved in local administration organizations in Suphanburi province: government officers, executives in the local administration organizations, residents, community leaders, and experts. The groups of informants were divided into four different groups of people involved in these organizations' activities as follows:

Group 1: The government officers responsible for supervising local administrative organizations such as the Provincial Governor, the Director of the Provincial Office for Local Administration, district chief officers, and the Chief of District Office for Local Administration

Group 2: Executives in local administration organizations, such as the Chief Executives of Provincial Administration Organization, mayors, and the Chief Executives of the sub-district administration organizations

Group 3: Residents, citizens, and community leaders

Group 4: Experts, researchers, and university professors that are in the field of local administration in Thailand

1.5.2 Scope of the Content

This research aimed to study the following:

- 1) To study the theories and thoughts of the people concerning the participation principle to be the standard of study

2) To study the situations and issues of the local administrations in Suphanburi province, focusing on the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative

3) To identify the obstacles to local ordinance initiatives by the people in Suphanburi province

4) To study the causes of the problems of local ordinance initiatives by the people in Suphanburi province

5) To study the concepts and directions of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for country

1.6 Expected Results

The expected results of this research are as follows:

1) To understand the obstacles to and the causes of the problems of local ordinance initiatives by the people in Suphanburi province

2) To understand the situations and issues of local administrations in Suphanburi province

3) To be able to make policy recommendations for further improvement and development of the people's participation especially regarding the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and countrywide

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to review several useful works, research papers, and theories related to the field of study. The list of cited works below contains some of the scholars' suggestions concerning political participation, the design of participation, the basic principle of participation, the advantages of people's participation, the factors affecting the level of participation, and problems regarding people's participation in Thailand.

In this research, documentary research, i.e. research papers, journals, books, and e-resources, was conducted in order to review the related theories and practice of the people's participation in the creation of ordinances as follows:

2.1 Political Participation

2.1.1 Definitions

2.1.2 Patterns of Participation

2.1.3 Level of Participation

2.1.4 Process of Participation

2.1.5 Benefits of Participation

2.1.6 Limitations of Participation

2.2 Factors Affecting the Level of Participation

2.3 Local ordinances by the people's initiative

2.3.1 Local ordinances by the people's initiative in foreign countries

2.3.2 Local ordinances by the people's initiative in Thailand

2.4 People's participation problems in Thailand

2.1 Political Participation

Political participation is an important direction or activity in a democracy. The role of political participation is necessary for the balance of power between the government and the benefit gained by persons; if any political system neglects or ignores political participation, it will not be able to secure the system. Related suggestions from various scholars on political participation are as follows:

2.1.1 Definitions

According to the United Nations, people's participation requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in three ways:

- 1) People in the communities being involved in development plans
- 2) People in the communities sharing the benefits derived therefrom equally and
- 3) People being involved in the decision-making process, including setting goals, planning and formulating policies, as well as implementing policies for economic and social development (Midgley, 1986)

James Creighton suggested that "people's participation is the process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making. It is two-way communication and interaction with the goal of having better decisions that are supported by the people in the communities" (Creighton, 2005).

Aragones and Sanchez-Page suggested that participatory democracy is a regime that requires people's participation in both direct and indirect action in the government decision-making. They defined participatory democracy as a regime that includes the foundations of both direct and indirect democracy in any decision-making regarding government policy (Aragones & Sanchez-Page, 2008). Such regimes encourage people to have the power to make decisions on any public policies that will have an impact on their living. The people eligible for elections are able to monitor politicians' activities by checking the policy performances proposed by the politicians. In this regime, the extent to which people can affect policy and the benefits to societies depend on the degree to which they choose to involve themselves

in the process. This means that the principal of participatory democracy is not about the people that access the information or read news about their communities, but it is the people in the community that have the right to investigate, to acknowledge, and to initiate policy for their own sake.

Johnson suggests that the people's participation includes a range of activities carried out by the people in the communities in shaping or decision-making regarding public policy without the involvement of politicians or elites. This activity involves collective activity by directly producing or determining public services and political outcomes in their communities (Johnson, 2015).

Verba, Nie, and Kim define political participation as those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or actions they take (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1979).

Burkhart, Eisenstein, Fleming, and Kendrick suggest that political participation is a complex activity carried out by the people in the community in being engaged in political processes, such as policy decision-making. This activity requires motives ranging from self-interest to friendship and personal response (Burkhart, Eisenstein, Fleming, and Kendrick, 1972).

According to Huntington and Nelson, political participation is an activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making (Huntington & Nelson, 1976).

In the view of the researcher, political participation or public participation is an activity of the private citizen at any decision-making level of the government which shares collective benefits for both the government and the people in the particular community.

2.1.2 Patterns of Participation

David divided the patterns of participation into two forms as follows (Barber, 1972):

- 1) Direct participation. This is a pattern where the people have direct power to control and govern the regime, such as participating in policy decision-making or the policymaking process.

2) Indirect participation. This is a pattern of participation where people vote for representatives to exercise their rights.

In addition, Almond and Powell (Almond and Powell, 1976) divided the patterns of participation into 2 patterns:

1) Conventional participation includes voting, referendums, campaigns, and initiatives.

2) Unconventional participation includes illegal protesting, demonstrations, coups d'état, and political violence.

Two famous scholars in political participation study, Samuel Huntington and Joan Nelson, suggest, like Almond and Powell, that the patterns of participation can be divided into 5:

1) Electoral activity is the most practical conventional participation pattern.

2) Lobbying is to contact government officials or politicians to influence the decision-making process regarding policy.

3) Organizational activity is an activity of one political organization aiming to become involved in particular political interests.

4) Contacting is an activity of an individual contacting government officials for personal interest.

5) Violence is unconventional participation where individuals are involved in acts of violence to influence the government.

Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) conducted research on the modes of participation by comparing seven nations and they found that the patterns of participation activities could be divided into 4:

1) Voting is the most frequent activity carried out by the people.

2) Campaign activity is the second regular activity, and participation in elections depends on this activity.

3) Communal activity combines two types of activity: individual contacts by citizens with government officials where the subject contact is some general social issue, and cooperative, non-participation activities involving group or organizational attempts to deal with some social issues.

4) Particularized contacts involve people in individually contacting a government official on a personal problem.

However, there has been empirical study done by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the EU in 2012 on the topic “Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviors of Young People Report.” This report was about the study of the EU young people’s political participation, which suggested that the trend of young people’s political participation is changing in the way that young people tend to feel that traditional forms of participation are insufficient to influence policymaking in communities important to them. They neither see that their interests are well represented by elected politicians, nor do they feel that their voice is heard effectively (Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency, EU, 2012)

In a nutshell, the patterns of political participation in the researcher’s view can be divided in terms of conventional and unconventional participation, where the right to create initiatives is one of the conventional patterns.

2.1.3 Level of Participation

Arnstein has suggested that the level of participation can be in the form of a ladder divided into eight rungs. Arnstein explains the eight rungs in the ladder as follows:

The bottom rungs of the ladder are as follows: 1) manipulation and 2) therapy describe the levels of “non-participation” that have been affected by some to substitute for original participation. Their real objective is not to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power holders to educate or cure the participants (Arnstein, 1969).

Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of “tokenism” that allow the lower middle class people (the have-nots) to hear and to have a voice: 3) informing and 4) consultation. When they are preferred by power holders as the total extent of participation, people may indeed hear and be heard.

Rung 5, (placation, is simply a higher level of tokenism because the ground rules allow the lower middle class people (the have-nots) to advise, but preserve for the power holders the continued right to decide. Rung 6 is the partnership which means that the citizen can be in the position to be able to negotiate with the traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs 7) delegated power and 8) citizen control, the citizens could be in the major seat of policy decision-making.

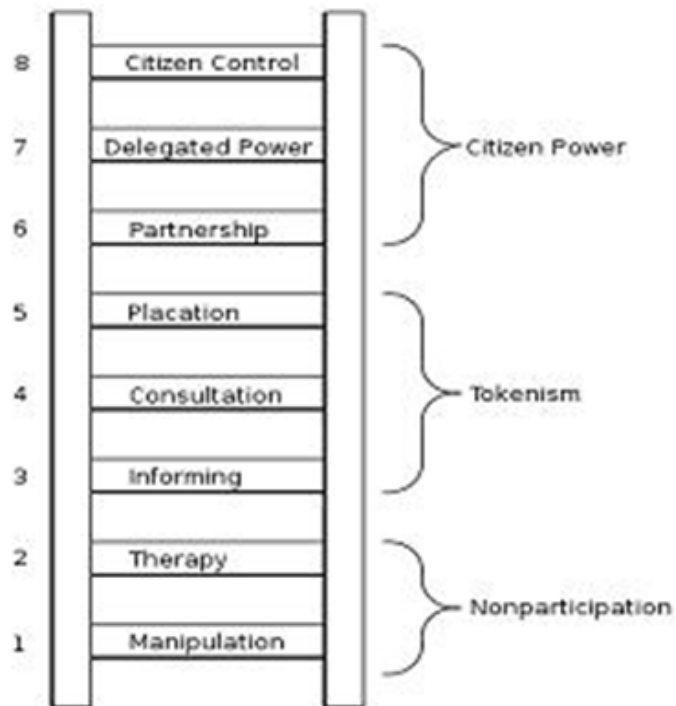


Figure 2.1 The Ladder of Citizen Participation by Sherry Arnstein

Source: Arnstein, 1969.

In “Political Participation: How and Why Do People Get Involved in Politics?,” Lester Milbrath posits such a model, as shown in Figure 2.1, for political participation (Milbrath & Goel, 1977).

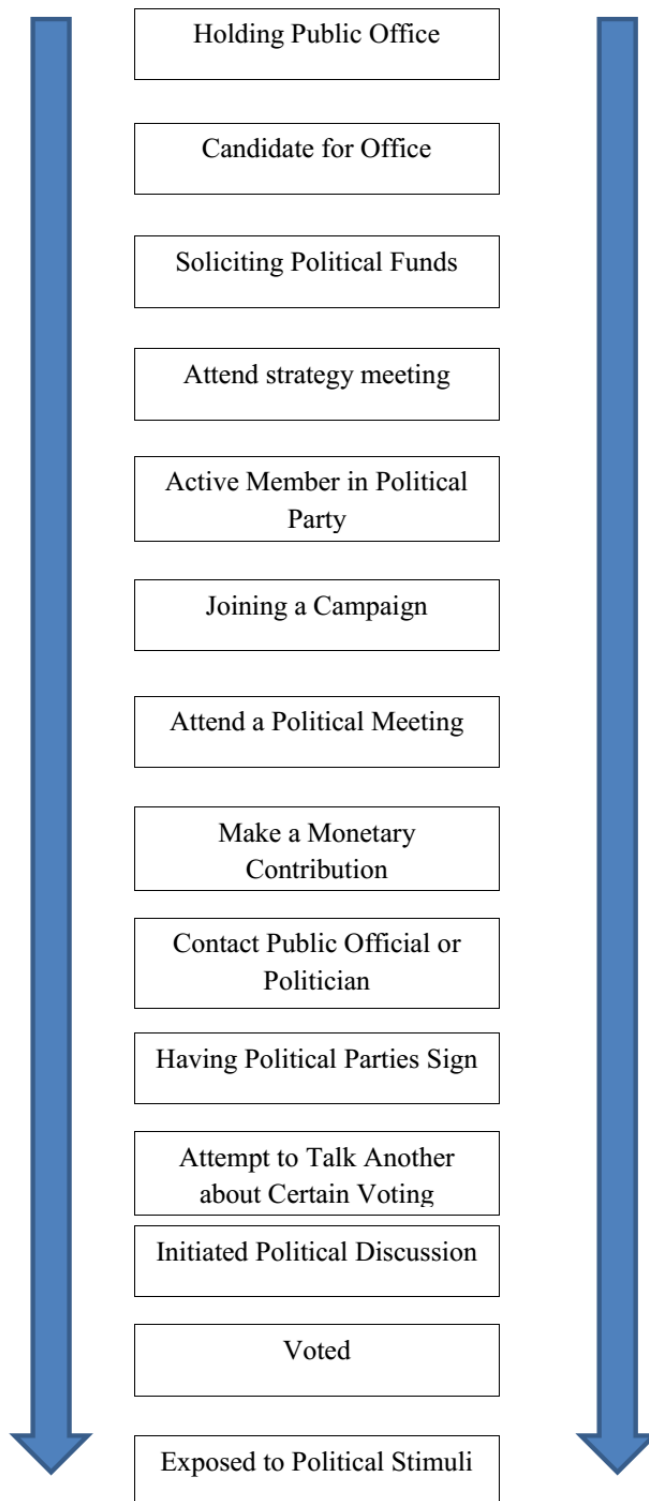


Figure 2.2 Milbrath's Model of the Level of Political Participation

As we can see from Figure 2.2, Milbrath confirms the ladder of participation of Arnstein, where the level of participation would be hierarchical—from the highest participation to the lowest participation or no participation.

Therefore, in the researcher's point of view, the level of political participation can be divided into 4 levels: 1) the highest participation means that the individual is holding the political position or is a candidate in the election; 2) mid-level participation means that the individuals are active in the campaign or are members of the political party and are attending a political rally; 3) low participation means that the individuals are going to vote and engage in political discussion and finally 4) no participation.

2.1.4 Process of Participation

There are also several scholars that have suggested how to design the public participation process. Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, and Crosby found that the process of people's participation must follow 3 design guidelines, which are assessing and designing the context and purpose of the activity, listing the required resources and managing the participation, and evaluating the performance of activity and redesigning the policy (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013). They also suggested details for each type of guidance: in the process of assessing and designing context and purpose, it must be assured that a public participation process is needed, fits the general and specific context, and is based on a clear understanding of the challenge or problem.

In addition to guidance for involving the people in the community or managing participation, we should consider the following factors:

- 1) Analyzing and involving stakeholders
- 2) Involving stakeholders in creating a legalized process of participation
- 3) Fostering leadership
- 4) Pursuing resources for participation
- 5) Creating appropriate rules and structures to guide the process
- 6) Using inclusive processes to engage diversity productively
- 7) Managing the balance of power

8) Employing information technologies to achieve goals

In addition, Creighton suggested in his book “Public Participation Handbook” that the process of participation must contain 6 steps (Creighton, 2005):

Step 1: Stakeholders’ analysis

Step 2: Decision-maker analysis

Step 3: Clarify the problems

Step 4: Design the process of participation and decision-making

Step 5: Identify institutional constraints and conditions impacting the participation process

Step 6: Decide the need for participation

In the “Citizen Participation Handbook” created by the People’s Voice Project International Centre for Policy Studies, editors Holdar and Zakharchenko suggest that the necessary elements for constructive citizen participation require the following (The World Bank)

- 1) The initiative to make a difference
- 2) The commitment of the people to the issue
- 3) The understanding of the people in the community of people’s participation
- 4) People’s awareness and education in the communities
- 5) The cooperation between locals and officials
- 6) The win-win situation among the stakeholders (locals and officials)
- 7) Planning and implementing the policy
- 8) Transparency
- 9) Flexibility
- 10) Employing experts to facilitate or guide the participation

2.1.5 Benefits of Participation

In terms of the benefits of people’s participation, Creighton suggests the following (Creighton, 2005):

- 1) It improves the quality of decisions at any level because any project that has passed the consultation among the stakeholders will come up with the best solutions and clear objectives.

2) It decreases the cost and time in implementing the projects or policies. Although the decisions made by the top level or executives alone are the quickest way, it might increase the cost to implement or delay the time to achieve the goals. This is due to the people in the communities being negatively impacted by the decided policy or projects, so the people might protest or reject the projects. This could cost more money and delays in time.

3) It creates consensus decisions by all stakeholders.

4) It increases the effectiveness and efficiency of policy implementation. This is due to the effective participation of the people in the planning process; the people feel that they own the projects and can make their own decisions, so they will be responsible for the consequences of their decisions.

5) It helps the issue of not being in the worse situation because participation opens the floor for stakeholders to express their comments and concerns before the issue becomes worse.

6) It keeps the projects valid and legitimate because the people in the communities are involved in every step in the decision-making.

7) It helps officials to well understand the needs of the people in the communities due to the participation programs involving all stakeholders.

8) It helps to develop a civil society by involving people in every process of the projects or policies. Therefore, the people are well educated and understand the issues of participation and democracy.

The support of the idea of the benefits of participation was made by a Thai scholar, Orathai Kokpol (Kokpol, 2009), who studied the advantages of the public participation in Thailand. She attempted to point out seven advantages of the involvement of the people in the community in the public policy process:

1) The quality of decision-making: if the organization involves the people in the community, the richness and detail of the information for the decision-making will be of good quality.

2) Budget savings: the public is involved in the early stage of decision-making on a particular policy, resulting in the implementation being faster and easier and saving money for creating understanding among the people in the community.

3) Community consensus: in the case of Thailand, public participation will decrease the conflicts among the people in the community. It utilizes discussion methods to find a consensus in the community.

4) Public cooperation

5) The community leaders and executives of organization will have a close relationship with the citizens.

6) Building the knowledge and education of the people in the community

7) Public awareness of community activities

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed “Core Values for Public Participation” for use in the development and implementation of the public participation process. The core values consist of 7 values which are as follows (International Association for Public Participation, 2016):

1) The people have the right to be involved in decisions if they are impacted by the policy.

2) The participation must include public opinions in the decisions.

3) Sustainable decisions require considering the needs and benefits of all stakeholders.

4) The participation must involve all stakeholders that are affected by or are interested in the policy.

5) The input from stakeholders is required in order to design and formulate the policy.

6) Access to information is a key value for public participation.

7) Participation creates a clear understanding before making any decision.

Halvorsen did research on the effects of public participation. She suggested that a higher quality participation, i.e. numbers, education, and social class, would increase the responsiveness of public agency (Halvorsen, 2003). Handley and Howell-Moroney confirmed what Halvorsen suggested concerning the importance of public participation—that more public participation will make the public agencies accountable and responsive to the needs of their citizens (Handley & Howell, 2010).

In addition, public participation in local administrations will also protect against the over-centralized of the power of the central government. The decision-making on policy would be in the hands of the government but not carried out by local people's initiatives. This also could lead the local elites to take over the position in the decision-making process of local policy (Montgomery,1980).

2.1.6 Limitations of Participation

King, Feltey, and Susel suggested three categories of the limitations of public participation: the nature of life in contemporary society, "administrative processes, and current practices and techniques of participation. First, the nature of life in contemporary society includes social class positions, transportation, time constraints, family structure, the number of family members in the labor force, child care, and economic disadvantages. For example, some people have to work two jobs and have no time to focus on the participation in local administration. Second, the administrative processes include the politics and administrators of the local government, which can be obstacles to the people's participation. For instance, the information provided by the administration is usually managed, controlled, and manipulated, due to the administrators and the executives wishing to maintain the *status quo* regarding the policy or they are not willing to make changes. Third, the most problematic are the participation techniques used, public hearings, citizen councils, and public surveys. These techniques are not so attractive and people are less attending, specifically the public hearing" (King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998).

Walsh also suggested that government officers are not willing to share the power of decision-making regarding policy with the local people because greater public involvement in policy decision-making means a decline in the control of the power of the government officials (Walsh, 1997). Creighton's idea supports what Walsh suggested that government officials are opposed to the people's participation due to it is more time consuming, expensive, complicated, and emotionally draining (Creighton, 1981).

Asim Ijaz Khwaja, Professor at Harvard University, did research on the limitations of public participation. He found that "while people's participation improves project outcomes in nontechnical decisions, increasing people's

participation in technical decisions actually leads to worse project outcomes” (Khwaja, 2004).

In the view of the researcher, the people’s participation actually has several limitations, although it provides brilliant benefits. The most problematic limitations of the people’s participation would be the administrative and bureaucratic power, which has a politic influence on the people’s participation in the public policy process.

2.2 Factors Affecting the Level of Participation

Another important point regarding public participation is the factors affecting the level of participation, which means that the degree of participation depends on the following factors suggested by scholars.

Sombat Thamrongthanyawong (2006) suggests three factors affecting the level of participation.

1) Political System

Democracy gives the most opportunity for the people to have political participation: democracy is government of the people, which means that the sovereignty is from the people; democracy is government by the people, which means that the people choose the rulers and executives; democracy is government for the people, which means that the people choose their representatives to work in response to the needs of the people. Democracy provides and preserves the political rights of the people, which they can exercise through voting, public comments, rallying, and having accessibility to information. In contrast, a dictatorship regime controls the rights of the people and the sovereignty owned by a person or a group of people or one political party.

2) Political Culture

The characteristic of a democratic political culture is the process of encouraging the people to have political participation, which requires knowledge and understanding of the values of democracy.

3) Socio-economic Structure

Socio-economic structure factors have an impact on the behavior of the people regarding political participation, such as level of education and economic

status. In terms of education, the people that have a high level of education will understand and be aware of the duty of being a citizen in the political system. Economic status is also important—the poor may not participate and on the other hand the rich may participate to a greater extent.

Roth and Wilson (1976) also suggest 3 factors affecting the level of participation, which are:

Personal factors such as political attitudes, beliefs, and duties

1) The political setting such as the media, accessing information, political parties, and political thoughts

2) Socio-economic factors

Montgomery suggested that the activities that are organized by the local government and that are effective because of the good participation of the people are activities that have to be made frequently but not routinely, activities that require quick responses from the public, and the activities that impact major changes in the behavior of the public (Montgomery, 1983).

Yang and Callahan suggested that in order to improve the people's participation rate in local administrations the local executives must follow the following strategies (Yang & Callahan, 2007):

1) Focus on community-wide strategic issues and create public value

2) Treat citizens as a policy issue and involve elected representatives

3) Initiate a network community with long-term commitment such as non-profit organizations, community business groups

4) Emphasize professionalism and cultural norms that value citizen participation

5) Provide training for local executives to build up people's networking skills

6) Market participation opportunities and educate the people to become active participants

There are several empirical studies on the factors affecting people's participation in Thailand, which mostly tested the aforementioned factors, both personal and environmental factors.

Siriphat Lapchit, a graduate from the Faculty of Political Science at Chulalongkorn University, studied the “Factors Affecting Citizen’s Decision to Participation in Tambol Administration Organizations in Warinchamrab District, Ubonratchathani,” and found that individual, community, and organization factors have significant effects on people’s decisions in terms of participating in activities supporting the sub-district administrative organization. Lapjit clarified three factors: 1) individual factors include the perception of the people of their duties, knowledge, community ownership, skills, and experiences; 2) community factors include the support from the community, community unity, and other support from different communities; and 3) organizational factors, including the organization’s rule of law, the willingness to join activities, concerns about problems, and the responsiveness to problems (Lapjit, 2007).

In addition, a graduate from Sukhothaimathiraj University, Amnaj Sriprajan, conducted research to investigate: 1) the levels of political participation of voters in electing the executive officers of the Udon Thani Provincial Administrative Organization in 2012, a case study of Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province; and 2) the factors affecting the voters’ participation in electing the President of Udon Thani Provincial Administration Organization in 2012, a case study of Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province. The following results were found. First, the size of the voter turnout was at a moderate level, although campaigning and voting promotion were exercised. Secondly, the factors affecting the voters’ participation in the election were gender, age, educational level, occupation, and income. However, the set of factors affecting the decision to vote for the candidate the most were the qualifications, experience, and personal appearance of the candidate. In addition, the voter considered the benefits of the policy that he or she would gain from the campaigning candidate. Lastly, the voter would consider if the candidate was well-known or would give any support to the community (Sriprajan, 2015).

Chutima Tunaranga, Boonchong Chawsithiwong and Kantapan Pisansuksakul studied the “Factors Influencing Public Participation and Guidelines for Development of Solid Waste Management in Samutprakan Municipality” and found that the several factors related to public participation included the individual’s family status, education, occupation, income, numbers of years living in Samutprakan municipality,

and waste management knowledge, attitude and willingness to participate in solid waste management (Tunaranga, Chawsithiwong & Pisansuksakul, 2011).

Therefore, the factors affecting the level of participation can be categorized as personal factors, i.e. gender and occupation, and political system factors, i.e. level of democracy, political culture, and socio-economic factors, i.e. education, wealth, and living condition.

2.3 Local Ordinances by the People's Initiative

An initiative is a mechanism which opens opportunity for the people to express their will or needs by initiating their own laws with the legislature (Kokpol, 2009).

2.3.1 Local Ordinances by the People's Initiative in Foreign Countries

Regarding the case of Switzerland, the people in each state can initiate their own laws by using their right to write petitions to the parliament, in terms of both the constitution and codes in each state (Prasobsup, 2002). The initiative to amend the constitution in Switzerland has the following process:

- 1) Enlisting the signature of the people eligible for the vote at the amount that the constitution provides
- 2) Submitting a petition to the parliament of each state with a draft of the amended chapter or section of the constitution
- 3) The parliament approves the draft in the parliament. If the parliament rejects the draft, the members of the parliament can send their own draft to the parliament again.
- 4) Finally, a referendum is needed to approve the amended constitution.

Similarly, the local ordinances of each municipality or state codes have the same process as initiatives in accordance with the constitution.

In the case of the United States, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures website, the initiative process is as follows:

- 1) “Preliminary filing of a proposed petition with a designated state official;
- 2) Review of the petition for conformance with statutory requirements and, in several states, a review of the language of the proposal;
- 3) Preparation of a ballot title and summary;
- 4) Circulation of the petition to obtain the required number of signatures of registered voters, usually a percentage of the votes cast for a statewide office in the preceding general election; and
- 5) Submission of the petitions to the state elections official, who must verify the number of signatures.

If enough valid signatures are obtained, the question goes on the ballot or, in states with the indirect process, is sent to the legislature. Once an initiative is on the ballot, the general requirement for passage is a majority vote” (National Conference of State Legislatures).

In the case of the Philippines, there is an act called the “Local Initiative and Referendum.” The procedures are as follows:

- 1) The number of people required for an initiative is set by the act as follows: not less than 2,000, 1,000, 100, and 50 consecutively registered voters for autonomous regions, provinces and cities, municipalities, and barangays. The signatures are collected and propose to the local councils.
- 2) Submit the initiative to the legislative body
- 3) Collect the signatures within the date
- 4) Vote
- 5) And enact (If it fails to obtain the said number of votes, the proposition is considered defeated.)

2.3.2 Local Ordinances by the People’s Initiative in Thailand

In the case of Thailand, local ordinances can be categorized according to the local administration level, which are: provincial ordinances, municipality ordinances, sub-district ordinances, Bangkok metropolitan ordinances, and Pattaya City ordinances. In the case of the Suphanburi province local administration, there are

three levels of administration, excluding Bangkok and Pattaya. Thai local ordinances are divided into 2 types: general ordinances and temporary ordinances.

1) A provincial ordinance is a law enforced by the Provincial Administrative Organization covering the provincial area, excluding municipality and sub-district administrative organizations. The ordinance can be enforced in accordance with the following conditions: (1) being enforced in accordance with the duty of the provincial administrative organization under the Act of Provincial Administrative Organization 1999 (2) being enforced when there is a law enforcing it to do so; and (3) being enforced when there is any act of the organization related to commerce. The initiators are the chief executives of the provincial administrative organization, the members of the council, or citizens eligible for voting. The approving person is the governor. The enforcing person is the chief executive of the provincial administrative organization.

2) A municipality ordinance is a law enforced by the municipality covering the municipality area. The initiators are the mayor, members of the council, and citizens eligible for voting. The municipality council would consider the draft. The person responsible for the approval is the governor. The enforcing person is the mayor.

3) A sub-district ordinance is a law enforced by the sub-district administrative organization covering the sub-district area. The initiators are the chief executive of the sub-district administrative organization, members of the council, and citizens eligible for voting. The sub-district council would consider the draft. The approving person is district chief. The enforcing person is the chief executive of the sub-district administrative organization.

According to the Act of Local Ordinance Initiative 1999, the steps of the Local Administration Organizations Ordinance Initiative in Thailand can be illustrated according to the following steps:

- 1) More than 50 percent of the population of eligible voters sign the draft.
- 2) Draft the ordinance.
- 3) Submit it to the Chairman of the Local Administration Council.
- 4) Announcement the list of signed people.

- 5) Open it for discussion and objection.
- 6) Approve it by the council.
- 7) Governor, District Chief, approves it.
- 8) Ordinance is activated.

2.4 People's Participation Problems in Thailand

Dheravegin (2006) suggested that the success of the people's participation in Thailand under a constitutional democratic regime requires three variables. which are as follows:

1) Socio-economic status must be well developed, such as the education of the people; the understanding of the people of politics, political alertness, and opportunity to access the information, and economic growth will increase the level of participation.

2) The political structure and system must be well organized to promote the liberty and rights of the people to participate.

3) The democratic political culture is the most important variable for the success of the people's participation under a democracy. This culture contains respect for individuals' rights, the political and legal equity of individuals, being open to different ideas, and the government must be patient with opposing thoughts. If the two variables above are well performed, but lack of the third variable, which is the heart of democracy, successful participation will not be achieved.

The UNESCAP Bulletin 1999 has written about the smallest local administration organization, the sub-district administration organization. Chaiyan Rajchagool pointed out the problems that have occurred in the organization concerning the participation of the people in the community, stating that although the organization is the key unit for the people's participation, the policies and projects made by the central government dominate. Therefore, local projects cannot be initiated due budget constraints and central government projects. Moreover, the budget problems that most of the local governments have are budget deficits (United Nations Social Commission, 1999).

Chaiyapong Samnieng (Samnieng, 2014), a scholar from the Institute of Public Policy Study at Chiang Mai University, suggests that the local governance by the people for the people in Thailand, where the people can be involved in the organizations' activities, requires particular local administrative organizations, and their citizens must have common problems and use the organizations as a mechanism to find solutions. For instance, Maetha and Thanue Subdisstrict administrative organizations have had problems in terms of land for farming. The citizens in the area became involved in an organization to initiate an local ordinance to protect their rights to their land near the forest or community forest.

1) Local citizens must have the authority to control or shape the policy of local administrative organizations, whereas in reality most of these organizations are under the influence of interest groups or local politicians.

2) Local citizens use democratic principles through elections or recall for bargaining power with the local politicians that are executives or members of the councils. The citizens will elect or support the executives that respond to the needs of the people immediately rather under his or her influence.

3) Local politics must be different from national politics. In local politics, the elected representatives must respond to the needs of the locals.

4) In order to have a local governance by the people, the local governance must not be in the form of a bureaucracy or a hierarchical form of organization, but rather be informal where local citizens can access it easily.

5) The freedom principle of local governance must be kept as the flagship of governing the organizations. In the present, most local administrative organizations follow the orders or guidelines of the central government, where some of the policies might not respond to the problems of the area.

Aswin Rakswat and Sint Punpinij conducted research to study and to compare personal factors, such as gender, age, educational background, occupation, income, and social status, which can have an effect on the political participation level of the people in Phun Phin district, Surathani. They found that social status and education background could be the factors affecting the level of participation (Aswin Rakswat & Sint Punpinij, 2007).

An article about the political development and people's participation in Thailand written by Anurak Niyomwech (2011), president of the Commission on Political Development and the People's Participation of the Senate of Thailand, found that there are three main obstacles to the people's participation in politics in Thailand:

1) There is no support from the government or any organizations. The local people are responsible for the budget on gathering the signature for the draft of the ordinance proposal.

2) The powerful influence of the politicians is another obstacle because the initiatives or policy proposals from the people will affect some of the interests of the politicians. Those politicians might delay or deny the initiatives by using their power and sometimes it is related to the security of the group of people that are making the proposal.

3) The political power equality between interest groups and citizens is an obstacle because the policies are mostly made for the interests groups that have political power rather than the citizens, who have a smaller influence.

Krannich, a western scholar that studied the Thai local administration, also suggested that the problems of local politics that affect the people's participation are the structure of the local administration, which has an overlapping of two executives, the mayor and the municipal clerk; this was considered the cause of the problems of local administrations and the involvement of the local people. In the case of the Thai local administration, we have the that are elected by the local people to be the top executives; however, the municipal clerk is the government official that is appointed by the central government. If these two key persons of the local administrative organizations do not cooperatively work together, the local people will be ignored and be far from participation in the local policymaking process (Krannich, 1980).

In the process of law initiatives in Thailand, there is some of empirical evidence from the research from the Law Reform Commission of Thailand carried out by Nitinan Srimek concerning direct democracy: a case study of people's law initiatives. He found that the one of the obstacles to the people's participation is the act of initiative itself. The problem is actually the process of proposing laws to the parliament because the bill must submitted to the prime minister and it depends only

on the prime minister whether he or she will pass the bill to the parliament for a vote or not (Law Reform Commission of Thailand, 2015).

In the view of legal scholars, the Act of Local Ordinance Initiative 1999 is an obstacle to the people's participation in local ordinance creation. Sirada Prasopsup (2002) found that the problems that are obstacles to the initiatives of people enlisting for proposing local ordinances are as follows:

1) The number of people eligible to enlist is inappropriate for large local administrative organizations.

2) The absence of supporting organizations to draft a local ordinance proposed by the people and to provide for the enlistment, hence causing a burden on the people in creating a draft and collecting signatures using their own capacity

3) The absence of a time limit for the collection of people's signatures and a time limit for the examination of applications by the president of the local council

4) During the consideration of the local council, people or their representatives have no right to participate at any stage of the local council session.

5) The absence of criteria for amendment and revocation of local legislation by people, resulting in improper amendments and revocations

Narudom Timprasert, a graduate of the Graduate School of Public administration at the National Institute of Development Administration in Thailand, studied the People's Participation Process Based on Community Rights on Preparation of the Local Ordinances: A Case Study of Tha Sala Sub District Administration Organization, Nakhon Si Thammarat. The situation in Tha Sala was a conflict between the indigenous fishing and the illegal fishing industries. The local people tried to solve the problems by themselves, but it turned out to be a big problem. Although the locals submitted a petition to the government, it was ignored. However, the Tha Sala Sub-district administrative organization prepared a local sea ordinance and the problem was solved. The local people participated in planning, operating, allocating the benefits, and evaluating the ordinance. The factors that led to the success of this local ordinance were: 1) local ordinance preparation; 2) government legislation and policies on the community rights and the participation process; 3) people's awareness and benefits; 4) supporting organizations; 5) strong leaderships; 6)

the learning process; 7) media and information technology; and 8) non-governmental organizations (Narudom Timprasert, 2011).

Pitsanu Poonpetpun and Kamonwan Yoowattana (Poonpetpun & Yoowattana, 2011), professors at Suansunandha Rajabhat University in Thailand, conducted research entitled the Participation of People in the Draft of Local Ordinances Under the Constitution of The Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 Section 286, a case study Bangrakum Saraya Klongyong Nakornpatom, where it was found that the Act of Local Ordinances by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 (1999) had the following problems:

- 1) The process of ordinance consideration by local councils was a problem.
- 2) The number of registered voters by the act was too big.
- 3) The process of gathering public opinions for local ordinances was a problem.
- 4) The power of an election committee to delay the proposed local ordinances by the people's initiative was a problem.
- 5) The understanding and knowledge of the people regarding the right to take initiatives was a problem.
- 6) The participation of the people in the council to discuss the local ordinance was a problem.

Therefore, participatory democracy and the idea of participation are now in the trend of political views. The theory and the design are well set, but the implementation of policy and tradition and the culture of Thai citizens might be an obstacle to the development of the democracy in Thailand.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The objective of this research is to identify the obstacles in the local administration organizations in terms of having political participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi. Nevertheless, there has been little evidence concerning the local ordinances by the people's initiative according to the Act of Initiative of Local Ordinance B.E. 2542 (1999) in local

administrative organizations in Suphanburi. Previous research has suggested three obstacles to this kind of participation: laws, political culture, and socio-economic factors. Therefore, the setting of the hypotheses in this research will follow these three problems (independent variables) that might be the cause of the participation activities (dependent variable). The charts below illustrate the conceptual framework of this research.

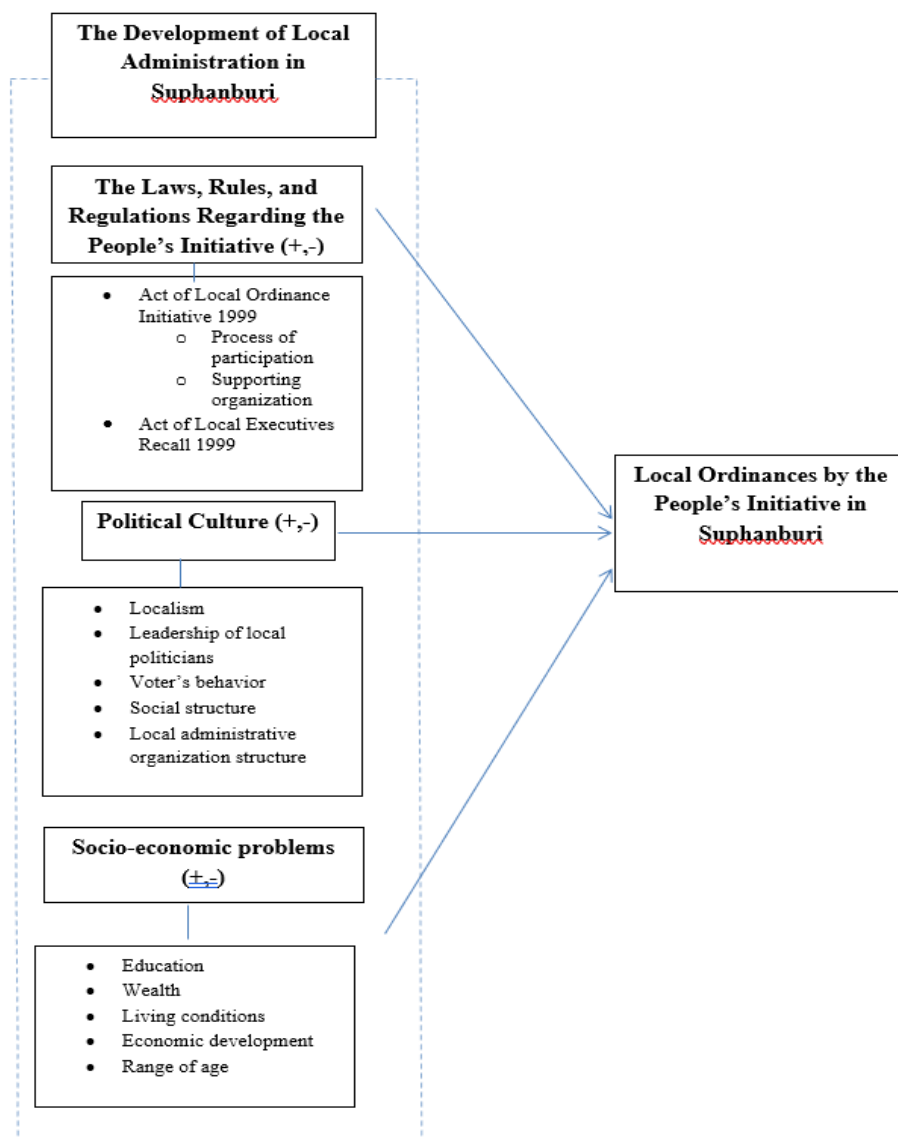


Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework for the People's Participation in the Public Policy Process: Participation in the Ordinance Creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand

2.5.1 Independent Variables

The independent variable set in this research will be categorized into three variables that will have the negative or positive effect on the dependent variable, which are:

1) Laws on people's initiatives: this variable might have a negative or positive effect on the number of ordinances initiated by the people in the area. This is due to the complexity of the rules and regulations that deter the people in the community from participating in or taking initiatives regarding their local ordinances.

2) The political culture factor: this variable might have a negative or positive effect on the number of ordinances initiated by the people in the area. Localism is one major point of Suphanburi that places the province at a high rank of development. The leadership of local politicians such as Mr. Banhaan Silpa-archa, a former prime minister of Thailand, is the key person that makes Suphanburi differ from the other provinces. However, this political culture or localism might have an effect on the level of participation of the people of Suphanburi, as mentioned earlier that the politicians have an influence on the people due to their good living and security.

3) Socio-economic factors: this variable is considered as the independent variable, which might have an effect on the level of participation or the number of ordinances initiated by the people in the area. Because poverty, education, etc. can be factors that make people hesitate to stand for their rights of initiative.

2.5.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this research is the level and number of local ordinances created by the people's initiatives in Suphanburi, and whether they are increased or decreased by the effect of the aforementioned independent variables.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to study the development of local administration in Suphanburi, particularly the local ordinances created by the people's initiative, the obstacles that interfere with direct democracy and the people's participation principle, and the concepts or directions of the local ordinance by the people's initiative by emphasizing the quality and richness of the data from various key informants that are working closely with the local administration in Suphanburi, namely, the Provincial Governor, the Director of the Provincial Office for Local Administration, the Executives of the local administrative organizations, community leaders, and experts in the field. This research employed qualitative research methodology, presented as follows.

3.1 Data and Source of Data

In this research, the researcher obtained the data from two types as follows.

3.1.1 Primary Data

These data could be obtained from surveying the location in Suphanburi in order to understand the basic data about the location, socio-economic problems, and the administration of Suphanburi by observing and questioning the government officers and executives of local administrative organizations that were related to contemporary local ordinances created by the people's initiative and the culture of the administration. In addition, the richness of the data was obtained from in-depth interviews using a semi-structured questioning technique. The chosen key informants with whom the researcher had interviews concerning their general views on the development and problems of the local administration of Suphanburi were 2 provincial executives: the Vice Governor, who

is responsible for local administrations, and the director of the local administration office of Suphanburi province.

Moreover, the selected key informants for finding the problems with the people's participation in local ordinance creation were separated into 2 categories: one was the executives of local administrative organizations, namely, the Chief Executives of the Provincial Administration Organization, Mayors, Chief Executives of sub-district administrative organizations, and two government officials working in the local administrative organizations, namely, the Chief Administrator of the sub-district administrative organization and the municipal clerk. For obtaining richer data on the local people's perspective, the research interviewed the community leaders that were village headmen, heads of community associations, and the head of community housewives. Lastly, the academic views on laws, rules, and regulations were obtained from interviews with university professors and legal experts.

3.1.2 Secondary Data

The data were obtained from documents collected by individuals, groups of people, and organizations from the following sources.

- 1) The data were obtained from the Suphanburi Provincial Office, such as the local ordinances enacted by the local administrative organizations in the last 5 years, the meeting minutes from local administrative organizations about local ordinances, geographic data, demographic data, and the administration structure of Suphanburi province.

- 2) Data were obtained from related academic documents, such as textbooks, laws, rules, legislation, articles, conference papers, journals, and data from the Internet, as well as research papers and other related documents.

3.2 Locations of the Study

This research conducted surveys and interviews in the area of Suphanburi province. The administration of this province can be divided into two sectors: provincial administration and local administration. The provincial administration consists of 10 districts, including Muang Suphanburi, U-thong, Bang Plama,

Songphinong, Danchang, Donchedi, Dermbangnangbuat, Nongyasai, Sriprachan, and Samchuk. The local administration of Suphanburi, which is the main focus of this research, consists of 127 local administration organizations divided into 3 levels, which are the Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organization, the municipality, and the sub-district administrative organization. This research chose the potential local administrative organizations that would encourage the people's participation, such as the Provincial Administrative Organization, Muang Suphanburi municipality, Songphinong municipality, Toongkhok municipality, and others.

Table 3.1 Types and Levels of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi

Level of Local Administrative Organization	Type of Local Administrative Organization
Province	Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organization
District	Town Municipality, Sub-district Municipality, Sub-district Administrative Organization

Table 3.2 List of Study Locations

List of Districts	List of Local Administrative Organizations
Muang Suphanburi	Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organization, Muang Suphanburi Town Municipality, Phophraya sub-district Municipality, Sanamchai Sub-district Administrative Organization
U-thong	Plabplachai Sub-district Administrative Organization
Bang Plama	Banlaem Municipality, Phaigongdin Municipality, Makhamlom sub-district administrative organization
Songphinong	Songphinong town municipality, Toonkhok municipality, Bo-suphan sub-district administrative organization

Table 3.2 (Continued)

List of Districts	List of Local Administrative Organizations
Danchang	Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Nongmakamong sub-district organization
Donchedi	Donchedi Municipality, Donchedi sub-district administrative organization
Dermbangnangbuat	Khaodin municipality, Dermbangnangbuat sub-district administrative organization
Nongyasai	Nongyasai municipality, Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Jangngam sub-district administrative organization
Sriprachan	Sriprachan municipality, Bangrang sub-district administrative organization
Samchuk	Samchuk municipality, Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Nangpaknak sub-district administrative organization

3.3 Key Informants

The key informants were all from Suphanburi. The groups of informants were divided into four different groups of people involved in these organizations' activities, which are shown in table 3.3.

Table 3.3 List of Key Informants

List of Groups of Key Informants	List of Key Informants	Number of Key Informants (Persons)
Group 1 The government officers that are responsible for supervising local administrative organizations	Provincial Governor, Director of Provincial Office for Local Administration, District Chief, Chief of District Office for Local Administration	10
Group 2 The executives in the local administrative organizations	Chief Executives of Provincial Administration Organization, Mayors, Chief Executives of sub-district administrative organizations, Chief Administrator of sub-district administrative organization, Municipal Clerk	40
Group 3 The local people	Residents, Community leaders, Village Headman	10
Group 4 Academicians	University professors, lawyers	5

The size of the sampling was approximately 10 representatives each. This is due to the administration of Suphanburi province having 10 districts and 127 local administration organizations.

3.4 Research Methods

In this research, the researcher employed the following three types of methods.

1) Documentary research: academic documents related to the research topic, such as textbooks, laws, rules, legislations, articles, conference papers, journals, and data from the Internet as well as research papers and other related documents.

2) Observation: observing the general status, geography, socio-economic condition, and culture of Suphanburi administration was employed for analyzing the data. Participant observation was used in this research by participating in the local administration council meetings for ordinance enactment, which would help the researcher understand the local politics and administrations of the local administration in Suphanburi.

3) Interviews: in-depth interviews were used using the semi-structured questioning technique so as not to force the informants and in order to obtain accurate data. The technique for obtaining the data solely depended on the researcher's capability to "dig" up the data. The key informants were informed by the researcher in advance about the objectives of the research. The publishing of names and titles of key informants in the research must be permitted. The key informants are as mentioned in the previous.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher specified the location for the field survey to be the districts where local administrative organizations were located in Suphanburi. There were interviews on the opinions of stakeholders, which were government officers, executives of local administration organizations, residents, community leaders, and experts. The interviews were semi-structured and tested by the researcher's advisor. The tools were as follows:

3.5.1 Questionnaires for the In-depth Interviews

This questionnaire was used for the in-depth interviews with the key informants. The questions were under the supervision of the researcher's advisor for the accuracy of the data that would be collected. The steps in forming the questionnaires included the following:

1) In collecting the data in the field, the researcher created the questionnaire tool through research, related documents, and academic articles to cover the objectives of the research.

2) Once the tool was acquired, that is, the questionnaire, the researcher asked for advice from his advisor to test this in order to see whether it covered every issue and was accurate in terms of the objective of the study.

3) Before engaging in the field research, the researcher followed the recommendations of his advisor in order to obtain accurate data that would be collected with this survey.

The purpose of using in-depth interview was because the set of topics to be discussed in in-depth interviews differ from quantitative research, where only standard questions are considered to be sufficient (Babbie, 2010). In this way, the data collected from the in-depth interviews would be richer than with survey questions. This is due to the observation and skills of the interviewer being able to extract rich data from the interviewee.

3.5.2 Questionnaires for the Focus Groups

This questionnaire was used for the focus group interviews, separated into four groups of key informants involved in local administrative organization activities: 1) government officers, 2) executives of local administrative organizations, 3) citizens, 3) and experts. The questions were under the supervision of the advisor for accuracy and validity; and the reliability of the data would be obtained in the focus group interview. The steps of forming the questionnaires are as the same as in-depth interview.

The number of participants were about 7-8 people in each focus group. The focus group discussion participants were selected in the same category because the mixing up of the categories of participants might have affected the discussion due to

the culture of bureaucracy and social status of each of the persons so that the discussion would be influenced by one person who has higher social status.

The purpose of doing a focus group discussion in this research was to explore the real obstacles and issues in the area that would be extracted from the different groups of stakeholders. Krueger has pointed out five advantages of focus groups: 1) the focus group can capture in-depth and real data rather than quantitative data; 2) flexibility in a doing focus group is an advantage 3) validity is acquired by face-to-face communication 4) it has quick results and 5) it saves money (Krueger, 1988).

3.6 Data Collection

This research used a qualitative method; therefore, the data were collected as follows.

1) Collected data from documentary types, such as textbooks, laws, rules, legislation, articles, conference papers, journals, and data from the Internet as well as research papers and other related documents

2) Data were collected from the field research, which could be divided into two levels. First was a preliminary survey for general data on the locations while observation was used as well. Second was interviews with the key informants for detailed data related to the objectives of the research. The interviews might have affected the interviewees' personal life or security because they involved political issues, and therefore the interviewees' names were kept anonymous. For the accuracy and reliability of the data, as stated in the research objectives, the key informants were requested to provide data through in-depth interviews and focus groups by making an appointment and being informed of the objectives and details of the research by the researcher in advance. Moreover, the use of electronic sound recording and note taking was all under the permission of the interviewees.

(1) In-depth interviews:

Interviews on the opinions of the principle of people's participation, local ordinance initiatives, and obstacles to the creation of local ordinances by the people were mainly from these selected groups of key informants. The in-depth interviews

were employed using the semi-structured questioning technique in order to not force the informants and in order to obtain accurate data.

The questions in the in-depth interviews were separated into 3 issues concerning the problem statement as follows:

a) Questions on the fundamental data of the interviewees regarding the principle of people's participation, local ordinance creation, and the initiative principle in Suphanburi.

b) Why have local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi never been applied? What are the obstacles?

c) What are the solutions regarding the people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for country of Thailand?

Collecting the data for the in-depth interviews had the following steps:

a) After the questionnaires were acquired, the selected key informants were informed in advance about the in-depth interviews and an appointment was made.

b) The interviews were digitally sound recorded under the permission of the informants.

c) The questions were asked in accordance with the research objectives.

The major techniques in collecting the data were as follows:

a) The semi-structured in-depth interview technique was used in this research in order to answer the questions regarding local ordinances, the drafting process, the participation of the people, and their experiences related to policy. The questions were formed in a broad manner in order to be a guideline for the interview. Reflection of thought was emphasized in order to let the interviewees express themselves freely. Note taking and electronic recording were used.

b) Observation was made upon the interviews emphasize the behavior of the interviewees. In order to give freedom to the interviewees for answering the questions, the researcher used his conversation skill.

(2) Focus group:

The group interview was conducted with the stakeholders of four groups separately in order to obtain accurate data. The focus groups were carried out with selected people in each group of key informants. Therefore, the focus groups were done four times for each group separately. The focus groups were carried out using the semi-structured questioning technique in order to not force the informants and to obtain accurate data.

The questions in the focus groups were separated into 3 issues concerning the problem statement as follows:

a) Questions on the fundamental data of the interviewees regarding the principle of people's participation, local ordinance creation, and the initiative principle in Suphanburi

b) Why have local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi never been applied? What are the obstacles?

c) What are the models and directions of the people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for the country of Thailand?

Collecting the data for the focus group interviews had the following steps:

a) Arranging a venue for the group interviews and making an appointment with the key informants in order to ensure that the key informants were comfortable and so that they would not be stressed in order to obtain accurate data

b) The researcher was the moderator of the group discussion. Visual and sound recording were applied under the permission of the informants.

The major technique for collecting the data was similar to the in-depth interviews; however, the moderator had to keep the topic of the discussion in focus and try not to let the group be dominated by one person.

3) Data Collecting Time Plan

In carrying out the data collection for this research, the researcher planned to collect the data by scoping the time frame within 6 months. The plans were as follows:

Table 3.4 Data Collection Time Frame

Time Frame	To Do Lists
August-September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location survey - In-depth interview with provincial executives - In-depth interviews with executives of local administrative organizations
October-November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-depth interviews with community leaders - In-depth interviews with legal experts
December 2017-January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus group of local executives - Focus group of community leaders

3.7 Data Analysis

After the data from in-depth and focus group interviews were collected and arranged in a manner for being analyzed during the next stage, the data analysis followed the stage of the qualitative data analysis framework proposed by Ritchie and Spencer (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). They suggested five stages:

1) The researcher familiarizes him/herself with the data obtained. This can be done by listening to records, reading the transcripts, and reading the notes from the interview. The notes must be summarized immediately after the interview.

2) The researcher identifies the thematic framework. This can be done by writing memos in the form of short phrases, ideas, or concepts and by grouping them into categories. The descriptive statements must be formed and analyzed in accordance with the questionnaires.

3) The data should be screened and put into quotes and running numbers. This stage calls for indexing for comparing the cases.

4) Put the quotes into a chart in order to create an appropriate theme.

5) Mapping and interpretation

In this way, the researcher would interpret and analyze the data by using content analysis for connecting the relationships of the mentioned factors that would

lead to understanding the phenomenons and for making recommendations. The qualitative method has the advantage of richness of the data concerning the thoughts, meanings, and values of the society.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the research results for the present study. The researcher used the qualitative research method by studying related documents, research, academic articles, and textbooks related to the field of political participation. In addition, a field research survey and in-depth interviews were used in this research. The survey and interviews were in the area of Suphanburi province. The administration of this province can be divided into two sectors: provincial administration and local administration. The provincial administration consists of 10 districts: Muang Suphanburi, U-thong, Bang Plama, Songphinong, Danchang, Donchedi, Dermbangnangbuat, Nongyasai, Sriprachan, and Samchuk. The local administration, which is the main focus of this research on Suphanburi, consists of 127 local administration organizations divided into 3 levels: the provincial administration organization (PAO), the municipality, and the sub-district administrative organization (SAO). The key informants were divided into 4 groups:

Group 1: The government officers responsible for supervising local administrative organizations such as the vice-governor, the chief of the district office for local administration, the municipal clerk, and the chief administrator of the sub-district administrative organization

Group 2: The executives in the local administration organization such as the chief executives of the provincial administration organization, mayors, and the chief executives of the sub-district administration organization are interviewed.

Group 3: The residents, citizens, and community leaders

Group 4: Experts, researchers, and university professors in the field of the local administration in Thailand

After the field survey of the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi province, the researcher found that the living environment and population density were vastly different between the local administrative organizations located in urban

areas and the organizations located in rural areas. These conditions have an impact on the people's political behavior, and therefore the researcher had to divide the groups of local administrative organizations into two groups as follows:

Group 1: The local administrative organizations in urban areas such as the Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAO), the Suphanburi city municipality, and other municipalities

Group 2: Local administrative organizations in rural areas such as municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations

Because the biographic and socio-economic conditions of the two groups of local administrative organizations are significantly different, these differences affect the problems and causes of the problems that are obstacles to the people's participation in the policy process and local ordinances in Suphanburi province.

The research results are presented as follows:

4.1 The development and characteristics of the people's participation in the policy process and local ordinances in Suphanburi province

4.1.1 Activities promoting the people's participation

4.1.1.1 Local administrative organizations located in urban areas

4.1.1.2 Local administrative organizations located in rural areas

4.1.2 The process of the enactment of local ordinances

4.1.2.1 The enactment of provincial administrative organization ordinances

4.1.2.2 The enactment of municipality ordinances

4.1.2.3 The enactment of sub-district administrative organizations

Ordinances

4.1.3 The arrangement of public hearings in the development plan creation of the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi

4.1.3.1 The arrangement of public hearings by local administrative organizations in urban areas

4.1.3.2 The arrangement of public hearings by local administrative organizations in rural areas

4.2 Problems and causes of the problems that are obstacles to the people's participation in local ordinance initiatives

4.2.1 Problems of the laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrative organizations

4.2.1.1 The Act of Local Ordinance Initiative B.E. 2542

1) Problems of the process and conditions in local ordinances by the people's initiatives in local administrative organizations

2) Problems with the stakeholders in local ordinances by the people's initiatives in the local administrative organizations

4.2.1.2 Problems with the rules and regulations in local administrative organizations

4.2.2 Local political cultural problems

4.2.2.1 The influence of local politicians

4.2.2.2 Fostering the system and kinship and connections of local politicians

4.2.2.3 Buying votes problem

4.2.3 Socio-economic problems

4.2.3.1 Level of education of Suphanburi citizens

4.2.3.2 Poverty

4.2.3.3 Way of life

4.3 Problems solutions and recommendations from stakeholders

4.1 The Development and the Characteristics of the People's Participation in the Policy Process and Local Ordinances in Suphanburi Province

According to the official website of Suphanburi province, the population is 848,567 people. The local administrative organizations can be divided into 3 levels: The Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), 2 town municipalities, 43 sub-district municipalities, and 81 sub-district administrative organizations (SAO). Most of the population is in the agricultural sector and manufacturing sector and most are related to agricultural products such as rice mills, agricultural product processing manufactures, sugar refinery manufactures, and the like. Due to these conditions, the citizens of Suphanburi reside in the rural areas, but a few are in the urban areas, such as the city municipality. The citizens residing in the city municipality are working in

private companies and are government officials. As mentioned earlier, the people's participation in Suphanburi province regarding voting statistics both at the national and local level is higher than the country's statistical average at 76.3. If studied in detail, the people's participation in local politics is low. Further, there have been no local ordinances in Suphanburi enacted under the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiatives B.E. 2542. Therefore, the researcher conducted field research and a survey to find out why this never occurred. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with related key informants—local executives, government officers, and community leaders. The survey revealed different conditions between the local administrative organizations located in urban and rural areas in terms of the participation activities and behaviors of the citizen of both areas. This made the researcher divide the interviews into 2 groups as follows:

Group 1: Local administrative organizations in urban areas

The level of people's participation in the local administrative administration policy process and local ordinances was low to medium because most of the citizens are business owners, private employees, and government officers. These occupations are secure, with a monthly salary and the individuals need not depend on the support of municipality. Therefore this affects the activities organized by the municipality, which require a lot of participation from the local people, who have to work outside the area during the government office hours and leave only senior citizens or retired government officers staying at home. These senior citizens are not active in political participation, but if there are any problems that impact their lives, the people will directly and immediately contact the municipality and the mayor. The reasons for the low participation rate are that the municipality sufficiently serves and responds to the needs of the local people. After interviewing the local executives and community leaders, it was seen that most of the local people lack knowledge and understanding regarding the limitations of municipality services, where the requests from the people are outside the annual budget or annual development plans. Therefore, the responses are not prompt enough, as expressed by one of the key informants as follows by Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, Chief Executive of the Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organization (2017):

The participation rate in the city is low, due to the way of life and the culture of the local here. The understanding of the rights and duty of the people here is relatively low also. As well as they don't know much about the rules and regulations and it makes them don't know how to participate and being good participants. Whenever they have problems, they would over react and never think about the others. They will come and ask me directly why don't I do this do that. But we come from the election obviously we have to respond immediately to their request. If I don't response, next election would be tough task for me to win the election. In the process of making the plan or policy or any ordinances, we have to do the public hearing. We did a lot of announcements and promotions but the results turned out that there were very few people came to presents their thoughts in the public hearing event. When the request came from the people, we would like to response them quickly but the regulations would not allow us to do that. The people do not understand the regulations and ask why we do not response. They do not blame the regulation but they blame us. If we follow their request we might get into trouble. It is illegal. Anyway, I personally open the way for people to call me or come to see me directly when I attended the ceremony or village visit.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017) stated the following concerning networking in Suphanburi:

I am quite lucky that I could initiate strong people networking such as 16 communities' committee, group of public health volunteers, restaurants and street food association, senior citizen association, sport association, and alike. Due to the city municipality is the downtown of Suphanburi, the people participation is still in medium level. The villagers sometime join sometime not. If the problem does not occur, they would stay calm in their place. The villager does not like to attend the activities organized by the municipality that much they might not have the problems that affect their living. But if there are any problems that have stornng and immediate impact to their life, they would come by next day I personally guarantee that. This is because it is the

downtown area, they can take care of themselves. Until present, the enacted municipality ordinances followed the order from the government and the law such as Act of public health, or Act of severe business that effect the public health. These ordinances have the impact to the villager in the case of paying fee, ordering of the commercial buildings. So, whether they will participate or not, it depends on those enacted ordinance would impact them or not. Those who participate are mostly impacted by the ordinance. It is impossible that the municipality would order them to participate to match the required amount of participants as stated in the law.

The municipal clerk (2017) of the Suphanburi town municipality stated that

People participation rate in town municipality is low. Why it is low? Because here is the downtown and the biggest population density comparing to other district. The people here have variety of occupations, mostly are private business, sellers in the market, and government officers. Moreover, the municipality is working hard and proactive those can response to the problems quickly and immediately. Because of proactive working, the people like to stay in their place do not have much problems and would not active much. But they would participate much, if those problems affect their money in the pocket or livings or business such as enactment of municipality ordinance on business severing the public health. The LPG gas shop would be impact and they would group up and be active and deny the ordinance. But this is very few people, most of them can live their life normally and ignore because the ordinance does not affect them.

Chief of the Muang Suphanburi District Office for Local Administration (2017) in the Suphanburi town municipality stated that

In this district area, the participation rate is not more than 30% because it is the downtown. People who are living here are mostly government officer and other occupations. And whenever the local administrative organizations

organized any events, those events are in the government office hour. Who will attend? They are already gone out for work since early morning. They will return home when it is already dark.

Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality area (2017), stated that

In my community, the participation activities can be done by passing the community leader. The participation rate is good or not, I am not sure. But I can say that it is ok. In my understanding, the participation means that people participate in any activities organized by municipality such as cultural events or Songkran festival. I think people here participate a lot. For example, public hearing on municipality development plan, we participate and proposed many projects. I think municipality is the key organization that must response to the need of the people such as roads, streets, electricity, and tap water. So, whenever some problems happen we would contact municipality immediately. And they responded quickly.

According to the in-depth interview with the key informants, the people's participation in the local policy process and ordinances in the rural areas of Suphanburi is still low according to the view of executives, government officers, and community leaders. This is due to the way of living of the people in the town municipality, where they can take care of themselves and do not need much support from the city municipality. However, if there are any impacts both direct or indirect from the management of the municipality or enactments of local ordinances, the people are ready to come out of their residences to complain or request changes from the municipality. In addition, the people's participation in policy process and local ordinances in rural areas significantly differs from that in the rural areas which can be seen in the following interviews.

Group 2: Local administrative organizations in rural areas:

Chief of the Nongyasai District Office of Local Administration stated that

The people's participation in local policy process and local ordinance in Nongyasai district is in good level. We can see participation from the number of participants in festivals or cooperation in Good Suphanburi citizens' projects or marathon events. The people were active and participated a lot. This is a big change from the past that the participation came from commandeering. But in the local council meeting or public hearing in the local ordinance enactment were lack of announcement to the local people. This makes people did not receive enough information about local administration. The public hearing of the local administrative organizations in this district is normally done by the representatives from each village. In the sum, I would say that participation is good but still in some area is using commandeering participants.

The Chief of the Danchang District Office of Local Administration (2017) stated the following:

In the past the participation came from the commandeering from the head of the village. There were prepared to participate like came out and read from the paper. Moreover, the request from the people were not well responded from the local administrative organizations. However, this has been changed recently. The villagers have learned more and understood more about the role of local administrative organizations. And the people's participation in local administration is better here in Danchang district. I went to visit the villages and observe the public hearing events and saw that there were many people participated. I think this because of the law that requires more than 50% of the number of eligible voters to participate for validity of public hearing. And the law requires that any of local policy must pass the public hearing process. So it becomes better but not that good.

The Chief of the Donchedi District Office of Local Administration (2017) similarly opined that

I think participation rate here is in medium level. The residences here are working outside of the district area. The one who left at home are senior. If you would like to have political active from senior citizens, I think it is difficult. If you like see more political active from the people here, you have to wait for a big trouble. This big trouble is the contrary of the benefits between two local politicians. About the petition from the local people here, it is about the management of executives of the sub-district administrative organizations which has the opponents. The people's participation in the enactment of the local ordinances are mostly came from the enforcement of the chief executives. And most of the enacted local ordinances were enacted under the government order which mostly related to taxation. The taxation is complicated and the villagers don't want to get involved. Moreover, if you need enough participants, you must add on other mission in the public hearing events to attract more participants such as elderly premiums project or free blankets for poor people project.

The Chief Executive of Bo-Supahn Subdistrict Administrative Organizations, Songphinong district (2017), mentioned that

At my SAO, we would arrange the public hearing at the village for annual budget plan. We will vote for each projects in order to ranking the importance of the project. In additions, the budget must also distributed to the government projects and SAO projects such as public disaster prevention project.

The Chief Executive of the Danchang Sub-district Administrative Organization, Danchang District (2017), who could initiate people's networking by using information technology, mentioned that

Here in my SAO, the participation is quite good. I use mobile application LINE to make online group networking. There are so many villagers joined this group and many comments could be shown in the group chat. My policy is to make SAO the main organization to response the need of the people. I think people's participation in my area is about 60%. I gave them the stage for comments and rights to participate. However, we are in the remote area, so the projects are mostly about infrastructure like roads, electricity. We have some other projects that promote extra job support but less response from the villagers.

In the other local administrative organizations that initiate strong people's networking and have been able to earn a large number of participants, the Mayor of Khaodin Sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district (2017), mentioned that

Our area is mostly in agricultural sector. The villagers have low income, so the needs of the people here is unlike the people in the urban area. They mostly like to have infrastructure development policy like roads, electricity, and tap water. We need the support from the nearby urban area to expand the development to our area. We have done public hearing for annual budget plan every year. We have done the public hearing through the zoning that municipality set up. We would not do the big public hearing at once at the municipality office because that would not get any participation. We will get the proposed projects from each zone via the zone's representatives. Moreover, we also receive the petition directly from the villagers. Since we established the municipality, the villagers see us as the first responsible person. Also we see them as the co-owner of the municipality, so we have to initiate a strong people networking via zone that we have set up.

Bang plama district is different from other districts because its area is next to the downtown of Suphanburi, so the view of the key informants is also quite different, as can be seen in the following interviews:

Chief of the Bang plama District Office of Local Administration (2017) stated that

Although Bang plama is in the rural area, the border is next to Muang Suphanburi district. This affects the level of people's participation in this area. Because most of the people are working in the downtown and they left elder at home. So, the participation rate is low relatively. Anyway, the participation and active political people is still happen here. This is due to the fight between two opponents of the local politicians. So, the most petitions are about the management of the executives who fight against the opponents.

In one of the municipalities that has both an agricultural area and a town area, the Mayor of Nongyasai Sub-district Municipality, Nongyasai district (2017), opined that

The level of participation in this area is medium because Nongyasai municipality has mix areas between agricultural areas and market area. The sellers in the market are not so active, while the people outside the city are more active. Because the people in the city, they can take care of themselves, while the outside people thought that the municipality should responsible their livings. The nature of the people in this area is like any remote area where the people have low income and most of them are farmers in the sugar-canned field, rice fields. The good economic moment is during the harvest season. Only the one who work for government that can have a good life because they have monthly salary.

The Sanamchai Sub-district Administrative Organization, Muang Suphanburi district, is another SAO that has mixed areas between the rural and urban. The Chief Executive of the Sanamchai Sub-District Administrative Organization (2017) confirmed a similar condition in Nongyasai, indicating that

Here we have two areas, one is business areas like market and government offices, two is agricultural area. The people's participation characteristics are also different. While people in business area would participate when their lives or business are affected, the farmers participate well because they think the SAO must responsible their lives or business. Especially, today's problem is agricultural product price.

The Mayor of Phopraya Sub-district Municipality, Muang Suphanburi district, similarly mentioned that

We also have two areas which are agricultural area and city area. The level of participation is different. The people in the city are the middle class people who earn secured income and sufficient infrastructure, while the farmers need more support from municipality. So, people in the city tend to participate less than the farmers from agricultural area. So that when we do public hearing, the farmers tend to participate more due to they are lack of support.

However, in some of the sub-district administrative organizations located in agricultural areas, the number of participants, especially in public hearing events, need commandeering in order to meet the required amount by law, as seen in the following interviews with local executives:

The Chief Executive of Nongsadao Sub-district Administrative Organization, Samchuk district (2017) stated that

Low participation here unlike general election was almost 100% voted. People here need commandeering to meet the requirement number. Why? Because they have to stop working, if they stop working they will not earn money. They join the activity and get only free meal. It is not worth for them.

The Chief Executive of the Makhamlom Sub-district Administrative Organization, Bang Plama district (2017) similarly mentioned that

Commandeering only is working here. Why? They are farmers and some are working in the industries. They cannot take leave or stop working. We only can have representatives from each house and most of them are elderly and retired.

After the survey with the local administrative organizations in rural and urban areas, i.e. the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), municipalities, and Sub-district Administrative Organizations (SAO), and the interviews with the executives, government officials, and community leaders, this research found that there was a difference between the rural and urban areas of Suphanburi in terms of the characteristics and level of the people's participation in the local policy process and local ordinance creation. The people in the city tend to participate less than in the countryside. This is because the city residents have various occupations, especially those with regular monthly salaries, such as government officers or employees in stores and businesses, as well as traders in the market, etc. When the local administrative organizations request cooperation from the people to participate in various activities or public hearings, it is very difficult to assemble the people to meet the required amount by law. This is because the time does not match with the people that have to go to work during the daytime, while the activities are running at that time. Therefore, they cannot leave their work and participate. In addition, the city has an adequate infrastructure, i.e. roads, electricity, water, etc. The support from the local administrative organization is not as necessary as in the rural areas, since they can take care of themselves. On the other hand, the people in the rural areas are different from those in the urban areas, where most of them are still farmers earning lower incomes and do not have a regular salary to spend, like the people in the city, which is the main factor affecting the differences in the characteristics of the people's participation in the local policymaking process. In rural areas, people tend to participate more because they think that the local administrative organization is an organization that must respond to their requests. They also think that the executives and the members of the council have been voted into office by them, and therefore they must respond immediately. The general requests from the people in the rural areas concern infrastructure, i.e. roads, electricity, and water. However, a commandeering method is

necessary in some areas in order to meet the number of participants required by law, but it is a minority.

4.1.1 Activities Promoting the People's Participation

According to the interviews with the executives and community leaders about the participation in the activities organized by local administrative organizations, it was found that the people are interested in participating in cultural activities, i.e. the Buddhist lent ceremony, the Loy Kratong festival, ethnic minority group cultural festivals, and others. In addition, the local administrative organizations organize activities related to government campaigns, for example Suphanburi's good young people project, drugs-free village, job training for housewives, and the like. These activities were less participated in. However, there are large numbers of people that do not know about the other activities organized by the local administrative organizations, especially regarding participation in policy and ordinance creation, such as public hearings. These problems were confirmed by the following interviews.

Group 1: Local administrative organizations in urban areas

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, Chief Executive of the Suphanburi Provincial Administrative Organizations (2017), stated that

We usually arrange participation promotion programs such as seminars, job training, and alike. We also do a lot of announcement in every channel, but the responses from the people were not meet target. They would mostly participate in cultural events or when it becomes a sudden impact to their living. If that impact is a personal problem, I sometime support them and it is not affecting the others.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, Mayor of the Suphanburi Town Municipality (2017), stated that

People's participation promotion projects such as cultural activities like Songkran festival, Buddhist holy days, or King Naresuan day. People not only in Suphanburi but also other provinces love to participate in these activities. In

addition, not just cultural activities but the other projects like good health promotion, and municipality community visit. These projects we would get the support from public health volunteers. One of the successful project we have done since year 2000 was garbage separation project.

An interview with Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality area (2017), had a similar answer as the executive:

People here always participate in cultural activities organized by municipality. Since I am a community leader my task is to help municipality announce and inform my community members. But they mostly knew before the announcement because the municipality has good public relations. Some of the activities are Suphanburi annual festival like Chinese New Year festival at the big shrine or Songkran festival.

Group 2: Local administrative organizations in rural areas

The Chief Executive of the Nong Makhamong Sub-district Administrative Organization, Danchang district, gave an interview about the cultural activities the SAO organized:

Most of the people who participate are the community leaders. But if you need a lot of participants, the cultural activities especially Laos ethnic group of people would give good cooperation.

Participant 2, Nong Makhamong, a sub-district community leader (2017), also provided similar information in the following:

Activities organized by SAO are mostly participated by people here especially the Laos ethnic group.

A survey was carried out in other districts and the data from the interviewees were mostly similar, as seen in the following interviews.

The Chief Executive of the Bo-suphan Sub-district Administrative Organization, Songphinong district (2017), stated that

We have arranged people's participation promotion programs. Most of them were not initiated by us but set up by the government. SAO is just the organizer. If that project is about security, we would get the support from Civil Protection Volunteers. If that project is about public health, we would get the support from Public health volunteers. Also, sometime we get support from the village headmen. They participate well when we did a lot of public relations. Moreover, the people tend to participate more in Thai-songdam ethnic group cultural activities and other cultural activities rather than job training or seminar.

The Mayor of the Nongyasai sub-district municipality (2017) opined that

In general, we would co-organize the participation promotion activities with the district office such as Buddhist holy festival, Songkran festival, or children day. People tend to participate in these activities more than official activities like public hearing. One of the successful project is municipality kindergarten school which is not a day care or nursery. People were happy to send their children to the school. This school becomes the center of the municipality.

A Chief Executive of the Danchang Sub-district Administrative Organization, Danchang district (2017), stated that

If the activities like Songkran, Loykratong, singing competition, and children day, the people tend to participate more. The commandeering would use if that project is like job training, public health, and obviously red cross activity. Especially red-cross, we need a lot of we people otherwise....

The Mayor of the Thungkok Sub-District Municipality, Songphinong district (2017), gave an interesting interview, an excerpt of which follows:

People would obviously love to participate in festival. They love entertainment. But most of the projects were infrastructure development. If we arrange the projects like job training or OTOP, these always fail. Why? Everybody produce the same products like Nam prik, bags, clothes but nobody buys these.

Participant 3, a community leader in Makhamlom Sub-district, Bangplama district, (2017) stated the following:

People always participate in cultural activities, but activities like public hearing or annual budgeting; year plan would not be attracted. The villagers do not understand much about these projects. Moreover, they cannot take leave from work. They think that it is waste of time. If you want them to participate in the public hearing, you must include other activities like elderly premiums distribution. Then you open the stage for the Chief to speak to the villagers. Anyway, they always agree with the Chief.

The people's participation promotion activities organized by the local administrative organizations can be separated into 2 types: 1) cultural activities, i.e. Loy Kratong, Songkran, and Buddhist Holy day; and 2) government campaign activities, i.e. public hearings, seminars, and job training. People tend to participate more in cultural activities. In these activities, they not only participate but also are involved in the preparation process. Unlike the government campaign activities, people tend to participate less or participate under commandeering by the organizations because they might not see the importance of the activities or might see that it is a waste of time and they will lose benefits from leaving their job. Even though the agencies have created adequate public relations, the number of participants has not met the target. The information might not have been received by everybody in the area or news distribution channels are still low. Some public channels are not accessible, such as the websites or the Facebook pages of the local administrative organization.

4.1.2 The Process of the Enactment of Local Ordinances

The process of the enactment of local ordinances can be divided into 3 patterns following the category of local administrative organizations: the Provincial Administrative Organization, the municipality, and the Sub-district Administrative Organization. These local administrative organizations' processes in terms of the enactment of local ordinances are similar. There is one small difference in that the ordinance approval person of each type of local administrative organizations is different. The processes of the 3 categories of local administrative organizations are as follows.

4.1.2.1 The Enactment of Provincial Administrative Organizations Ordinances

The Act of Provincial Administrative Organization B.E. 2540 section 53, 3rd amendments B.E. 2546 is as follows:

1) Within 7 days after the draft of the ordinance approved by the council, the chairman of the council shall submit the draft to the provincial governor to consider. The provincial governor shall consider the draft and return it to the chairman of the council within 15 days after receiving it. If the provincial governor cannot consider it within the deadline, it is to be considered that the draft is approved by the provincial governor.

In the case that the provincial governor approves the draft in paragraph one, the draft shall be submitted to the chief executive of the provincial administrative organization to sign and to enact that ordinance. If the provincial governor does not approve it, the draft shall be returned with a reason to the council to reconsider. If the council has a resolution of more than two-thirds of the vote in the council to confirm the previous draft, the chairman of the council shall submit the draft to the chief executive to sign and to enact the ordinance and will inform the provincial governor after that. If the council has not confirmed it within 30 days after the draft-receiving date, or the previous draft confirmation did not get a two-thirds vote in the council, the draft of ordinance will automatically fail.

2) When the council has considered and approved the draft of the ordinance, the chairman of the council shall submit the draft to the chief executive of the provincial administrative organization to sign and submit it to the provincial

governor to consider it within 7 days after the date of approval. In case that the chief executive did not approve the draft submitted by the council, the draft of the ordinance shall be submitted to the governor for approval. If the governor approves the draft, the draft shall be returned to the chief executive to sign and to enact the ordinance within 7 days after the receiving date. If the chief executive did not sign it within the deadline, the draft shall be submitted to the governor to sign and enact. If the governor did not approve the draft, the draft shall be returned to the council for reconsideration within 30 days after the receiving date. If the council confirms the previous draft with two-thirds of the vote of the council, the draft of the local ordinance shall be enacted.

4.1.2.2 The Enactment of Municipality Ordinance

The Act of Municipality B.E. 2496 13th amendments B.E. 2552, Section 60 and 62, is as follows.

1) Within 7 days after the council approves the draft of the municipality ordinance, in the case of the sub-district municipality, the chairman of the council shall submit the draft to the provincial governor via the district's chief officer; in the case of the town and city municipality, the draft shall be submitted to the governor directly for consideration.

2) The provincial governor shall consider and return the draft of the ordinance in paragraph 1 within 15 days after the receiving date. If the provincial governor cannot consider it within the deadline, it is to be considered that draft is approved by the provincial governor.

3) If the provincial governor approves the draft in paragraph one, the draft shall be submitted to the mayor to sign and enact. If the provincial governor does not approve it, the draft shall be returned with the reason to the council to reconsider. If the council has a resolution of more than two-thirds of the vote in the council to confirm the previous draft, the chairman of the council shall submit the draft to the mayor to sign and enact the ordinance and will inform the provincial governor after that. If the council did not confirm it within 30 days after the draft-receiving date or the previous draft confirmation did not get two-thirds of the vote in the council, the draft of ordinance will automatically fail.

4.1.2.3 The Enactment of the Sub-district Administrative Organization Ordinance

The Act of Sub-district Council and Sub-district Administrative Organization B.E. 2537 5th amendment section 71 is as follows;

1) When the council and the district's chief officer approves the draft of the ordinance, the chief executive of sub-district administrative organization shall sign and enact the ordinance.

2) In the case that the district's chief officer did not approve the draft of the ordinance, the draft shall be returned to the council for reconsideration with 15 days after the receiving date. If the district's chief officer has not considered it within the deadline, it is to be considered that draft is approved by the chief.

3) If the council has a resolution of more than two-thirds of the vote in the council to confirm the previous draft, the chief executive shall sign and enact the ordinance without the approval from the district's chief officer. If the council did not confirm it within 30 days after the draft-receiving date or the previous draft confirmation did not get two-thirds of the vote in the council, the draft of the ordinance will automatically fail.

When we acknowledged the 3 different categories of the processes of the local ordinance enactment, it can be seen that the processes are almost similar and set by the government. If we consider these processes carefully, the researcher thinks that it is not a problem for the people's participation in local ordinance initiatives. Moreover, the law opens the possibility to the public to observe the council meetings freely at any time. However, the council observation by the people is quite difficult for them because people in general are not interested in the council meetings unless that meeting results will enact an ordinance that will affect their lives, and then they will participate more in the development of the policymaking process in Suphanburi.

4.1.3 The Arrangement of Public Hearings for the Development Plan Creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi

The public hearings for the people comments in any projects initiated by the local administrative organizations are the best channel opens to the people's participation in both local management and local operation checking. At present, the

decentralization principle has been applied by distributing the authorities to the local administrative organizations, not only delivering basic public service tasks but also covering the people's living quality development tasks, such as education, public health, and so forth. These tasks are under the regulations of the Ministry of Interior, indicating that any of the projects or development plans initiated by the local administrative organizations must be approved by the public hearing events. Therefore, the public hearings in the community are an important channel for the people's participation in local policy processes.

Public hearings for the annual budget plans of the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi have been carried out under government regulation enforcement, such as public hearings for community development plans, public hearings for waste management, and public hearings for businesses that are harmful to the public health. All of the enacted local ordinances in Suphanburi are under the enforcement of government orders.

The characteristics of the people's participation in the public hearing process are vastly different between urban and rural areas. The local administrative organizations in urban areas are facing problems regarding the number of participants in public hearings—they are less keen on participating in public hearing events with the excuse of time limitations or working outside the residential area during the time of the events. They are keen on participating in the public hearings only if the result of the events will affect their living in either a direct or indirect way. Therefore, the numbers of participants tend to be medium to low. Due to the fewer number of participants, the local administrative organizations have to use a commandeering method in order to meet the requirements of the number of participants by the Ministry of Interior's regulations; otherwise, the public hearing will not be valid. On the other hand, local administrative organizations in rural areas have to include other activities to attract the participants, such as elderly premium distributions, free small gifts, free meals, free eggs, free blankets, and so forth. These activities work well and attract more participants, and the public hearings will be carried out at the same time. Evidence was found in the followings interviews.

4.1.3.1 The Arrangement of Public Hearings by Local Administrative Organizations in Urban Areas

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), stated that

Town municipality has emphasized on people's participation principle, however; the people's participation in downtown is so difficult. Due to the majority are the sellers, shop owners in the market, and government officers, they have to work in the office hour. Recently, the municipality has arranged the public hearing in business that harmful to the public health ordinance under the amended Act of public Health B.E. 2535. The regulation requires the municipality to arranging the public hearing with the participants more than 50% of the population. The results were about building public fitness, sport complex and so forth. We informed and invited the people to participate the event. They gave us many comments on this ordinance. The municipality also arranges the ordinance drafting committee by considering the peoples' comments. But the problems occurred when they did not get what they comments. It is impossible to response what they requested, due to the regulations. The other problem is some people did not participate in the public hearing and they did not know that they would be affected by this ordinance. For example, the car garage business did not register as the business to the office before the ordinance was enacted. They would come and complain on the municipality because they did not participate and they were affected by the ordinance. This makes us so distress to help them. We understand them very well about the economic situation right now; they cannot close the office and participate the event in reality. We would do the public hearing via the people networking of 16 communities and other networks like sport clubs, public health volunteers. However, people who participate are the one who participate in every event, the old faces. The new face would come when they got affected by the ordinance only.

The mayor of Donchedi the sub-district municipality (2017) stated as follows:

The big problem of public hearing in our municipality is the number of participants. They could not participate, due to the time constraint. If the problem happens, they will come immediately with full of supporting documents. Generally, they tend not to participate. They cannot close their shops while we are doing public hearing. Whenever we ask for comments, most of the answers were like “ I am busy Chief, do what you think it is good. If it is bad, we will tell you.” As I said, don’t let the problems happen or that ordinance affects their lives and pocket both directly and indirectly, they would come fast and furious. So, we have to consider case by case in order not to make them the trouble. In the case of ordinance, municipality will send the invitation letter to the people who will be affected first. Asking for their comments before the big public hearing in order to sway from the big complains in the event. They like to say that “we don’t know before” the ordinance must be passed by us”. For example, the ordinance that related to business that harmful to the health. I am so worry about this ordinance because this ordinance will effect a lot of people in the market. I can’t change the draft much because it is a format from the government about fee collecting. the fee collecting is very risky for the local politician. I have to carefully inform and make the people understand before enacting this ordinance.

The mayor of the Songphinong town municipality (2017) stated that

Our public hearing process could be separated into 2 levels; one is the community meeting and the solutions shall be sent to the community leaders. Two is the community leaders from 19 communities would have a meeting and consider the proposed projects from each community. Then we prioritize the project following the importance of the project. Which one is easy and less cost would be done first, the other big projects would be put in 3 years 5 years

development plan. After that we announce the development plan with the approval of the governor. The annual budget ordinance would enact after this. The ordinance would be drafted by the 15 community representatives. In sum, we have to consider the impact of the ordinance and that ordinance would not against the higher rank law.

The views of the government officers working with local administrations are similar to those of the executives' concerning people's participation in the public hearing process, as the following interviews indicate.

The municipal clerk of the Suphanburi town municipality, (2017) stated that

All of the public hearing here are following the government regulations and patterns which are annual budget plan, development plan. The public hearing would be done in the community and opening the floor for comments from the villagers. The solutions or proposed projects would be carried by community leaders and consider again in the community leader meeting. In the community leader meeting, they would consider the projects by rank up the importance. After that, the considered projects would be submitted to the council for consideration again. Most of the projects are approved by the council, unless that project is over budget of the municipality. But in reality, people here participate less. The one who always come are the old faces like the retired officers who just stay at home. The reason that would make them participate more must be that ordinances have a big impact to their lives or they would lose the benefits. They would be well prepared with all of the documents and participants to protect their benefits.

The Chief of the Muang Suphanburi District Local Administration Office (2017) stated that

Less number of participants in public hearing, due to their time constraint I think. Most of the residences are the government officers; they could not

participate during the officer hour. Moreover, the government requires more than 50% of eligible voters which is impossible. For example, one village 200,000 baht fund project, the participants were shown up less than the requirement and sometime we have to commandeering them to participate. Another problem is the villagers are bored of the rejection of the proposed projects by public hearing process. They did not get the response from the municipality. But if we check the general voting statistics, the number of participants is way higher than the public hearing. Since the voting has the punishment, if you do not vote. The punishment is like political disqualifying and it makes them scared of the punishment. So, they must vote. Municipal Clerk If you check the budget report here, the investing budget is less than 20% of the whole budget. The other 80% is the officers' salary.

Participant 1, a community leader in a town municipality (2017), also opined that

We must participate in the public hearing process. we always help municipality in developing the 3 years 5 years development plan. 100% participation is impossible. I think they have to go to work during the time of public hearing, so the elderly who only stay at home would participate. The most concrete policy initiated by the people here is the ordinance of the clearing of street dogs which proposed by my community.

4.1.3.2 The Arrangement of Public Hearings by Local Administrative Organizations in Rural Areas

Contrary to the people's participation in public hearings by local administrative organizations in rural areas, the numbers of participants tend to meet or to be beyond the requirement by regulation. However, different problems were found compared to the urban areas, as the following interviews indicate.

The chief executive of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organizations, Samchuk district (2017) stated that

We have enacted so many ordinances, but I cannot remember all of them. Most of the enacted ordinances were under the order of the government and the annual budget ordinances. Anyway we have to give the priority to the request from the people first. The opposition was not much, too. Most of the ordinances went to the investment on infrastructure that related to agricultural sector like roads, electricity, and community hospital. All of the ordinances must pass the public hearing, due to the law and regulations by Ministry of Interior. We are also having problem with the number of participants in the public hearing. We solved the problem by include other projects and activities like elderly premiums distribution when we do public hearing. The participants were about 20% of the population about 4000 people. But the election people voted more than 60%. Due to the small number of participants, we have to include other projects like elderly premiums distribution to attract them. Actually, they do not need free meal or free drinks, but we sometime have to include this to attract them.

The chief executive of the Bo-suphan sub-district administrative organization, Songphinong district (2017), stated that

At our SAO, the public hearing is mandatory because of the law. The proposed projects by the community must be ranked up follow the importance. We don't have much budget. Most of the budget spends by the order of the government policies and by the SAO development plan. Anyway the villagers participated in public hearing, we must response to their requests by the importance of the projects like asphalt roads or gravel roads. But those projects must not exceed our budget. Most of the public hearings have done under the order of the government, but by people initiatives here is almost impossible. Why? We don't have much budget left after we spend the budget to the government policy. In reality, the problem is the government pushes to much burden to local administration. They never think about the real situation. The regulations require 50% of eligible voters. Who will come 50%? The villagers here are farmers and they are hired by the big companies to look after

their rice fields. They cannot stop working for one day because they are receiving day to day wages. So, in order to attract the participants, you must include something else like free meal, elderly premiums distribution, otherwise they would not come.

There are also similar interviews with individuals from other districts, as the interview with the chief executive of the Makhamlom sub-district administrative organization, Bang Plama district (2017) indicates that

The villagers do not participate much here if we do not include other activities. Why? They will lose money if they stop working and join our event. Make a living is very important for them. At least they will lose 400-500 baht that day. If we only do the public hearing and give them small refreshments is not worth it. What we can do is commandeering and tell them this is the law or include free eggs, free rice, or community cooperative dividend payment, then they will come. One more thing that will attract them is infrastructure development project. They tend to participate more if they knew that we have roads building project because they need that.

The interview with Participant 3, a community leader of the Makhamlom sub-district, Bangplama district (2017), was similar to that of the chief executive, as seen in the following excerpt:

When we do public hearing here, you must include other activities like elderly premiums distribution or free meals free drinks, otherwise they will not come. At least they did not just participate and get the premiums, they would meet the chief and listen what is he doing. If we just call for meeting, they will not participate because they have to go to work.

In one of the most remote districts, Danchang district for example, the chief executive of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang

district (2017), also gave an interview that discussed other activities in public hearings:

They think it is waste of time, if we just call them to only participate in the public hearing. The farmers have to go to their fields everyday no holiday like us. They are hired to harvest the sugar canned or tapping the rubber. The most successful public hearing time is during winter because we include the free blanket project I n the public hearing. 100% participated.

The chief executive of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district, (2017) gave a similar opinion:

It is normal here that we include free gift or premiums distribution in the public hearing event.. They already left their work and lose the money, at least they should get something else but not just participate the event. One of the frequently asked questions by the villagers that how long? Half or full day? Can we finish it sooner?

However, some SAOs and municipalities that have good management are able to initiate strong people networking and gather participants to meet the number required by law as the following interviews indicate that

The municipal clerk of the Khaodin sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district (2017), opined as follows:

We emphasize on public hearing process. In the past, there were not many participants. Our population is about 5-6000 people, but they were shown up in the event around 1-200 people. I did the survey with the questionnaires asking why they do not join. The answer was about time and thinking that the event is not important. But the participants were actually the one who benefits or affected from the public hearing. Sometime, they came in a big group led the community leader pressuring the municipality to follow their requests. After that we changed the method from big group public hearing to small

group in the community. It still did not work well. Finally, we set up zoning and in every community, for example, one community has 5 zones. Then each zone do the public hearing and must get the solution. And each zone sends the representative to participate the meeting and rank up the projects by the importance. This zoning method is very successful.

Participant 4, the chief executive of the SAO (2017), stated that

After the recent coup, the people tend to be more active. The public relations have done via the village headmen. We don't have to include other activities like the others did. I think if we include, it will be messy. The focus will be gone to the premiums not the ordinance. In the past, they didn't know what is public hearing, but after we educated and gave more information they understood more. In order to attract them, we don't have to give things but we need to initiate something new unlike volunteer project or good young people project. They are bored of these.

The chief executive of the Nonpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), opined that

I and the Chief admin always went out for public hearing in the villiages. Our areas have two zones one is inside the irrigation area, one is outside. The outiders always face the flooding problem, so the enacted ordinances are mostly related to water sources development, canal clearing, something like this. We have a strong people networking, so we never include other activities when we do public hearing. The residences here are 90% farmers. They do not have to go out of our boundaries. The participation rate is about 70-80%. I think one of the reason is I don't have the opponents.

The chief executive of the Jang-ngarm sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), opined that

My area is countryside. People did not participate much in the past. But I changed my policy to attract more participation. I did a lot of public relations about the rights and duties of the citizens first, and then I used the harder measure that I cut the projects from the village, if the number of the participants in the public hearing is less than the requirement. After that they have learned that if they do not participate what they will lose. The participation rate from that day became higher and higher. But you have to response to their request well too.

The best management award for Suphanburi province was given to the Khaodin sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district. This municipality was also able to successfully initiate strong people's networking. The mayor (2017) gave an interview about how to conduct a successful public hearing in the following interview excerpt:

We used to do one big public hearing that gather all of eligible voters in the municipality. It turned out to be a problem that there was less number of people participated and we couldn't really get the needs of the people. We changed our policy to set up zoning system and do public hearing in that zone. One community consists of 4-5 zones and one zone includes small group of villagers. We do public hearing in each zone and rank up the priority project from each zone. Small group of people could easily attract people to participate and be more active for comments. This strong people networking could get what the people really needs so that we can response them quickly and properly.

In the interviews with the government officers working in the local administrations, such as the chief administration officers, they also provided the same opinions as those of the executives, as seen in the following interviews.

The chief administrator of the Nongmakhamong sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), opined the following:

The public hearing would do when we would have to enact the ordinance that directly affects the peoples' livings such as tax and fees. In order to attract the people to participate by including other activities like premiums distribution, we don't do that. It will be messy I think. So, we use the money transferring to their bank account directly instead. If that ordinance is really affecting their lives, the villagers tend to participate more than just typical ordinance public hearing. The participation rate is depending on the weather and economic conditions also because they would not participate during the raining or harvesting season. They have to go to the fields. Therefore, we changed the time of doing public hearing to evening after work, though it is not office hour but he have to deliver services. then, the villagers could participate more and we could get successful public hearing.

The chief administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated that

The process of public hearing is as same as what the government command us to do like gathering the comments, draft the projects, propose to the council, prioritize the projects, and enact the ordinance. The problem is not about the number of participants but it is the comments and requests of the people. The requests were not really form the villagers but from the community leaders. The villagers tend to be shy to present. So, the proposed projects are mostly what the leader wants which is infrastructure development. The successful way to attract more people to participate in public hearing that we changed the time to be in the evening.

The chief administrator of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated that

The villagers are used to the participation with conditions that the participation rate is higher if you include premiums distribution. So, the Chief has no options, he has to include some other activities in the public hearing.

Anyway, the chief emphasize on participation in public hearing that he would give priority to the one who participate with names checklist. The proposed projects from the high participation village would get approved first. They have learned that and later on the participation rate is automatically high.

The chief of the Songphinong district local administration office (2017) admitted including other activities in public hearings, as can be seen in the following excerpt from an interview:

People are used to give and take method. Participation rate comes with what they are going to get. Most of the SAOs in the district have to include other agenda in the public hearing i.e. elderly premiums or free blankets. Furthermore, the public hearing requires big number of participants like 50% of eligible voters. They lose their time here so that they think they should get something at least. All of the enacted ordinances that passed the public hearing are done by the requirements of the government regulations. So, we tell them it is the law then they would come.

Although the interviews with the executives and government officers working in the local administrative organizations indicated that the number of participants in the public hearings meets the requirements, the vice-provincial governor responsible for local administration admitted that there are some SAOs that falsify the signature of the participants in public hearings due to the inadequate number of participants, as seen in the following: interview excerpt:

Mr. Pipob Boontham, the vice-governor responsible for local administration (2017), stated that

My responsibility is to consider the minute of meetings about the enactment of the local ordinances. The problem of number of participant mostly occurs in the local administrative organization in the urban area. I think this is due to the time of doing public hearing is during the officer hour, so the people have to work in that time. But this problem rarely found in the rural areas. But the big

problem is the falsifying signature of the participants. We had to set up the investigation committee and enforce the punishment measure later on.

In sum, the researcher can conclude concerning the problems in conducting public hearings in Suphanburi that the participation rate is moderately high in the rural areas, while it is low in the urban areas. The reason is that the occupations of the people in the rural areas are not varied—most of them are farmers in rice fields, sugar cane fields, and rubber plantations. Half of the participants were senior citizens that stay at home, which makes it easy for them to assemble. However, the high rate does not mean that there is not a problem. The large numbers of participants in public hearings are essentially from the local administrative organizations, including other agendas in events in order to attract the participants, such as elderly premiums distributions, free meals, free blanket projects in the winter, and so forth. This is due to the socio-economic status of the people in the rural areas; they receive a low income and suffer from poverty. They cannot just leave their work for a day without pay and participate in a public hearing. They believe that they should earn something from the public hearing, which is not just to propose a development project; that is, whether or not it should be approved by the council. Another problem is the people's insufficient knowledge about the rights and duties of the citizens. The rural society in Suphanburi is still a top-down system; the people think that the local executives are their big boss and that they should listen to them even though the executives are voted into office by them. They also believe that the representatives, such as community leaders and local executives, can think better than them. Therefore, they appreciate keeping silent without any comments in the public hearings. For the urban areas of Suphanburi, the reason why the number of participants in public hearings is medium to low is that the city residents have various occupations, especially those that have regular monthly salaries, such as government officers or employees in stores and businesses, as well as traders in the market, etc. Therefore, the schedule of the people and local agencies does not match the people having to go to work during the day time, while their activities are running at that time, and as a result they cannot leave their work and participate in hearings. Further, the downtown of Suphanburi has an adequate infrastructure provided by the government and town municipality, i.e. roads,

electricity, water, etc. The support from the local administrative organization is not necessary, since they can take care of themselves.

Furthermore, most of the public hearings are conducted under the enforcement of the laws and government orders rather than from the people's initiatives. The required numbers of participants in the public hearings must be over 50% of the eligible voters in the areas, which is not consistent with the reality, so it is impossible to assemble all of the voters in the areas at once as with general elections. This leads to the problem of falsifying the signatures of the participants in the public hearings in order to meet the government's requirements.

The cause of the problems in conducting the local public hearings in Suphanburi is from the government policy regarding the promotion of people's participation. The government would like to increase the participation in local administration by making the law force the local administrative organizations to conduct public hearings in any projects by requiring that 50% of the eligible voters participate. The government has not thought about the reality of society—that assembling 50% of the population is almost impossible. This results in the people not perceiving the importance of the public hearing process. The public hearing also does not reflect the needs of the people in reality. The essence of conducting public hearings is to reflect the true needs of the people in the areas, but in reality, public hearings are done because of the law, not the people themselves. Therefore, decentralization will never succeed in Suphanburi if the people's participation in the local policy process and in the creation of ordinances is carried out only under the pressure of the law.

4.2 Problems and Causes of the Problems that Interfere with the People's Participation in Local Ordinance Initiatives

According to the literature reviews, related research, and documents, the people's participation in the local policy process and local ordinance creation revealed that the problems regarding the people's participation include legal problem, local political culture problems, and socio-economic problem, which are the following 3 hypotheses:

1) The laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrative organizations are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H1)

2) The political culture, i.e. the influence of local politicians, the patronage system and personal kinship, and buying votes are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H2)

3) Socio-economic status, i.e. level of education, poverty, and way of life are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H3)

These 3 hypotheses were asked in the in-depth interviews questionnaires to the local executives, government officers, community leaders, and law experts. The research results regarding the 3 main problems are shown as follows.

4.2.1 The Laws, Rules, and Regulations Related to Local Administrative Organization Problems

4.2.1.1 The Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E.

2542

Although the political crisis in Thailand led to a coup in 2006 by the military leaders and the abolition of the constitution, the new constitution in 2007 still retained the decentralization principle by empowering the people to exercise direct democracy. The people's ability to create local ordinances according to their initiative was also still included in the constitution. This means that the government has the aim to decentralize the power to the people to govern the local administration by themselves. According to the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542, more than 50% of eligible voters in the local administrative organization could gather signatures to propose the local ordinance to the local chairman council. As such, the council should consider the proposed draft and enact that ordinance.

The researcher believes that local ordinance initiatives are significant for the people's participation principle under a direct democratic system, and that local ordinances following the people's initiative are a direct reflection of the people's demands in the areas. However, it has been almost 20 years since the enactment of this Act of Initiative, and there has been only a small number of local ordinances

created by people's initiative in Thailand. The researcher observed and checked the report from the provincial office of the local administration of Suphanburi and found that none of the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi had enacted a local ordinance from the people's initiative. Every local ordinance was enacted under the laws that forced the local administrative organization to enact the ordinance consistent with the law, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Tables of Approved Local Ordinances in Suphanburi Province during 2011-2015

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
1)	Nongratchawat Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
2)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
3)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Food Selling and Storage Venue	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
4)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
5)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
6)	Suphanburi Town Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Aug-2014	Public Health

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
7)	Baan Don Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Jan-2015	Public Health
8)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Market	Municipal Council	Jun-2015	Public Health
9)	Nongpho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Market	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2014	Public Health
10)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Pig Farm	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
11)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Seeling Goods on Public Place	Municipal Council	2015	Public Health
12)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Waste and Garbage Management	Municipal Council	Sep-2015	Environment

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
13)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	Environment
14)	Donchedi Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2014	Environment
15)	Talingchan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waste and Garbage Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Feb-2015	Environment
16)	Suantang Subdistrict Administrative Organization Management	Waste Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2015	Environment
17)	Baan Chang Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Water Usage	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2015	Public Utilities

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
18)	Hua Pho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Water Usage	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jan-2015	Public Utilities
19)	Ton Taan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waterworks	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Mar-2014	Public Utilities
20)	Bankong Subdistrict Municipality	Waterworks Management	Municipal Council	2015	Public Utilities
21)	Tarahad Subdistrict Municipality	Waterworks Management	Municipal Council	2015	Public Utilities
22)	Nongpho Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Waterworks Management	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Aug-2014	Public Utilities
23)	Suphanburi Town Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Municipal Council	Aug-2014	Public Health

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
24)	Baan Don Subdistrict Municipality	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jan-2015	Public Health
25)	Nongratchawat Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Sep-2015	Public Health
26)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	Public Health
27)	Donphotong Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Mar-2014	Public Health
28)	Bangtatel Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Nov-2015	Public Health

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
29)	Banglen Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Health Hazardous Business	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2014	Public Health
30)	Chorakhesampan Subdistrict Municipality	Waste Water From Building Management by Installing Grease Trap	Municipal Council	May-2014	Public Health
31)	Ton Taan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Construction Control Area	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Jul-2014	City Planning
32)	Nongkratoom Subdistrict Municipality	Advertisement by Amplifier Control	Municipal Council	2014	City Administration
33)	Toongkog Subdistrict Municipality	Traffic Control	Municipal Council	Aug-2011	Traffic Management
34)	Nernpraprang Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Child Development Center	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Dec-2015	Public Welfare

Table 4.1 (Continued)

No.	List of Organizations	List of Ordinances	Initiated By	Date of Enactment	Category
35)	Sanamkli Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Common House Mosquito Control	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Feb-2014	Public Health
36)	Chorakhesampan Subdistrict Municipality	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	May-2014	Tax
37)	Sriprachan Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	Dec-2009	Tax
38)	Ruayai Subdistrict Administrative Organization	Land Tax Deduction	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council	2015	Tax

Source: Office of Local Administration of Suphanburi Province

The above ordinances were approved by the local executives and council only. From the related documents and in-depth interviews, the researcher found that it is almost impossible in practice to use the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiative. The problems can be listed as follows.

1) Problems with the processes and conditions in local ordinances by the people's initiatives in local administrative organizations

The constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550, article 286, states that "the people have the right to vote in any local administrative organization shall have the right to enlist the chairman of the local council a request for issuance of the local ordinances by the local council. The number of eligible voters, the rules, and procedure for enlisting and examination thereof shall be as provided by law."

Additionally, the Act of People Enlisting the Local Ordinance by Initiative B.E. 2542 has the following procedure.

(1) According to section 4, the representative of enlisted signatures of the eligible voters for local ordinance initiative by people shall submit the request to the chairman of the local council to consider the draft.

(2) The details of the request shall include:

a) Name and address of every person attached with the copies of expired or not expired identification card or any other government identity document that has a picture on it

b) The draft of the ordinance and a summary of the ordinance

c) A list of the representatives of the enlisted persons involved in the drafting process

d) A pledge of the representatives from eligible voters in the local administrative organizations in number 3. The enlisted people cannot withdraw after the official announcement.

(3) The examination of the request of the local ordinance according to section 6

a) After examining all of the names, the list of people enlisted must be posted in front of the local offices and communities.

b) For the person that has his or her name on the enlisted list but was not involved in the enlisting, the person shall request the chairman of the council to cancel the name within 20 days after posting it. In the case of a name missing, the adding of names must be done within 30 days after posting them.

c) After the time of rejection, the enlisted names are finalized and valid. If the number of people enlisted meet the requirements by law, the council will consider the ordinance by the council regulations.

d) The enactment of the local ordinance according to the regulations of the council meeting

The procedure of proposing the ordinance by the people’s initiative according to the act of enlist for a propose local ordinance B.E. 2542 can be summarized as seen in Figure 4.1.

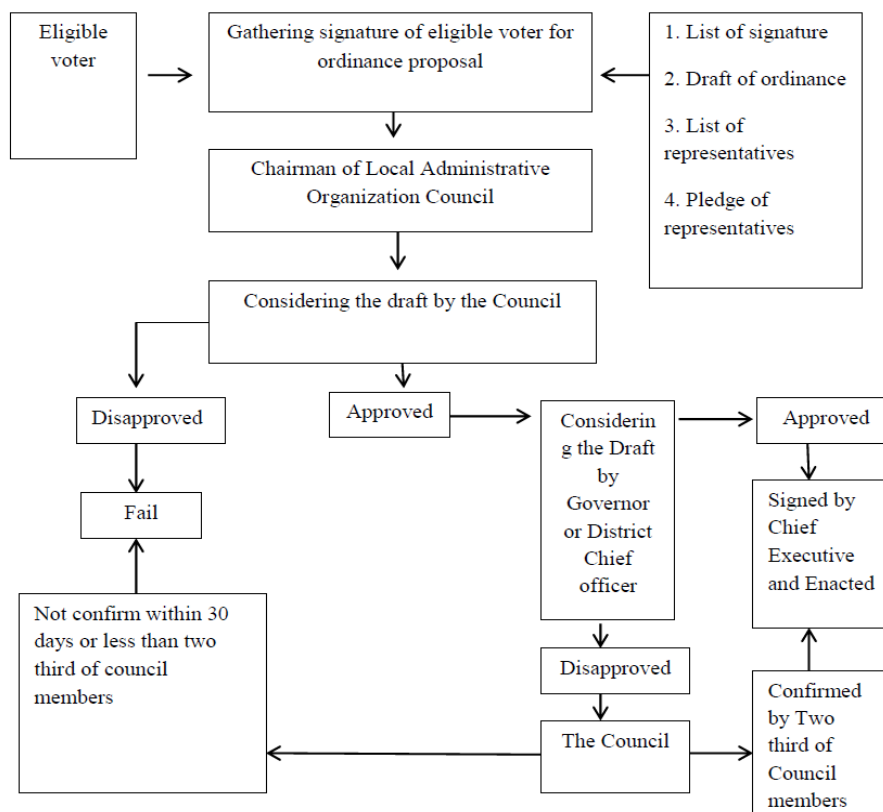


Figure 4.1 The Procedure of Proposing the Ordinance by the People’s Initiative According to the Act of Local Ordinance by People’s Initiative B.E. 2542

The researcher studied the procedure for enlisting for proposing a local ordinance by the people's initiative according to the Act of Initiative B.E. 2542 and searched the local ordinances by the people's initiatives enacted by the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi. The researcher found that there were no local administrative organizations that had enacted any local ordinances by the people's initiative. In this case, the problems related to the details of this act can be described according to 2 problems:

(1) Problems regarding the number of eligible voters enlisting to request a local ordinance

According to the Act of Local Ordinance Initiative B.E. 2542 section 4, more than half of the eligible voters of that local administrative organization could enlist the signatures for a request of the local ordinance by the people's initiative to the chairman of the council. In practice, this is almost impossible because the law refers to the number of people registered in the house registration. If we consider the case of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district, Suphanburi, the number of eligible voters in the chief executive election held on September 6th 2009 was 9,042 people. If we follow the legal requirements, the enlisting for local ordinances by the people's initiative must use 4,522 signatures to be valid. This is a huge number of signatures. The eligible voters in Danchang sub-district work outside of the area and most of the college students are studying in other provinces. Therefore, enlisting for proposing a local ordinance is very difficult in the Suphanburi areas, as the following interview from the chief administrator of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization (2017) indicates:

Local ordinance by people's initiative as the Act of B.E. 2542 is difficult for Danchang areas. The laws require more than half of the eligible voters which is more than 5,000 people. It's impossible. 5,000 people for the general election might be possible because it is mandatory and done on holiday. People are working outside the areas. If you want them to come back and sign for the ordinance, that ordinance must be very important to the whole people of sub-district.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017) argued about the required number of eligible voters to propose the local ordinance as follows:

People initiative is difficult here. The general election with big campaigning and the punishment, the voters turned out to be around 60%. Some people were called back to vote, but the rate was just around 50%. If you really want to initiate the local ordinance, more than half of the people must really be affected by that ordinance which is impossible. I think this condition is so ideal.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice-governor responsible for local administration (2017), argued about the required numbers of eligible voters for proposing the ordinance as follows:

As the act requires more than half of the eligible voters, I think in reality is so difficult. Even for the national level initiative as the constitution requires 20,000 people out of 40-50 million are still almost impossible. Except that local ordinance must be a big impact to their lives and it will really change the situation, then people would sacrifice their time for.

(2) Problems with the proposal process of local ordinances by the people's initiative

Not only is the number of eligible voters a problem, but also the details of the act concerning the procedure are a problem. According to the act's requirements, the process is too complicated and not practical in reality; that is, the act requires that the enlisted names must be attached with the draft of the local ordinance, the list of the signatures, and the reference documents for people's identification. In greater detail, the people that want to sign up for enlisting must attach a copy of their identification card with their signature. Further, the proposed draft of the local ordinance to the council must have clear requirements and it must be under the authority of that local administrative organization. In addition, the name list of the representatives of the people enlisting that have the authority to make a decision on

behalf of the people in the local ordinance consideration process must be attached. This complicated process makes the initiative by ordinary people such as farmers in Suphanburi almost impossible. The following interviews given by legal experts and government officers that is a law practitioner are as follows.

Participant 5, a full-time lecturers in the Public Law Department, Faculty of Law, Assumption University (2017), argued as follows concerning the requirements of the act:

Personally, I used to be involved in the amendment of this Act in the commission of the House of the representatives. They saw the problems of this Act that the assembling of half of the voters' signature together with reference documents is so difficult. In fact, the average of voters turned out in the general election of the local administration of the whole country was around 50%, this is even just voting that use about couple of minutes. The people enlist for local ordinance requires more than voting, so it is difficult in reality. Furthermore, the requirements that people must attach the copies of identification card. If you think about small remote village, where will you find the copy machine? Not just the copies of reference document but also the completed draft of the proposed local ordinance must be attached. This requires a law specialist. I think this reason is the obstacle that the will of the law could not be appreciated. But at least, we enact this act which is the open option for the people to propose their own ordinance.

Participant 6, a legal officer of the local office in Suphanburi (2017), commented that

In fact, following this act is impossible in Suphanburi because the nature of the people here are ordinary farmers. The law is too complicated for them I think. In the local politics situation, Suphanburi does not have two sides of oppositions like red and yellow shirts. so, this is might be the option for the opposition to use this act as a political tools to propose or recall the local ordinance. If we look at the details of the law, the process is so complicated.

The half of population is impossible, if you are a big city. The documents might not be a big problem as the completed draft of the local ordinance. Who will draft for them? I think the law is specific subject. And the government does not send any support staff except the current legal officer.

Participant 7, a legal officer in the law and local regulations office, Department of Local Administration (2017), argued as follows:

This Act is the option for the people to exercise direct democracy and increase people's participation in local administration. This Act will be used or not, I think it depends on the context and political situation of each area. But it is true that the half of eligible voters is impossible. Think about Bangkok, how many signatures you need if you want to propose one ordinance? 5-6 million signatures? The process is also complicated in my opinion.

2) Problems of the stakeholders in local ordinances by the people's initiatives in the local administration organizations

According to the interviews with the stakeholders, i.e. local executives, government officers, and community leaders, they had coherent points of view—that the people lack knowledge about the laws and their rights to propose local ordinances by themselves, as can be seen in the following interviews.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), opined about the obstacle of the people's participation in local ordinance by people's initiative in Suphanburi is the characteristic of the local people as follows:

I think one of the cause of the problem that nobody propose the ordinance is the villagers does not know about the law and the agency never inform them about this law. Especially the people in the downtown, they are not interesting in the local politics. Whenever I do the public hearing, I met so many senior citizens like retired government officers who just stay at home. I asked them about the development. They always says "up to you, if you think it's good. If it is bad, then we tell you". This means that if the local ordinance by people's

initiative is proposed, my way of management would not be appreciated by the people. In order to know what they really need, I always do the public hearing in every project for a good response.

The mayor of the Songphinong town municipality (2017) argued that the local ordinance by people's initiative would not exist in his area because of his strong people's networking as follows:

People's initiative is difficult here. Just call for public hearing is also difficult. But, I think the direct democracy is good. The local ordinance by people's initiative is also good. But coin has two sides. Some people might use this option as a political tool to discredit me. The reason why it doesn't happen here because I created a strong people networking in every community. My team is working hard and trying to do community visit frequently. So, it is sufficient that you just do the public hearing because people can request anything in the public hearing event. The people enlisting is just the option for them to have a channel for direct democracy. Essentially, the public hearing is the best method.

The municipal clerk (2017) of the Suphanburi town municipality supported the comments of the mayor as follows:

Normally, the villagers are not so active here, if it is a big impact then they would be. "They (people in the downtown) can take care of themselves, due to good infrastructure provided and secured salary". Unless there is a big problem that has a significant impact to their way of living, they would be very active. Until now, it has never been a proposed local ordinance by people's initiative. But it was once a big complaint from a group of people that has been affected the enacted municipality ordinance on LPG business controlling. At that time, the people were so active, especially, the gas business and residences surrounding the business. The public hearing was so successful too.

The Chief Executive of Makhamlom Sub-district Administrative Organization, Bang Plama district (2017), opined about the importance of the act of local ordinance by people's initiative as follows:

I knew about this Act, but it will never be used in this area because there is already a command from the government forcing local administrative organizations to do the public hearing in any project. If there is a request or something happening, the villagers would post those in the public hearing. We are also proactively working close to the people and response to their request always. Essentially, the Act is inapplicable in reality. Furthermore, the local villagers are afraid of everything related to law. I think maybe it is too complicated for them. It is all about my workings. If I am not ok, they would not vote for me next time for sure. It must be a very big issue, if you would use this Act.

The chief executive of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), similarly opined that

I partly knew the existence of this Act but not in details. I think that we always do the public hearing and we work closely to the people, this act would not be used. Moreover, I have no opponents so that my management going well. This Act might be the tools for opponents to discredit me.

The chief administrator of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), opined that

Personally, I think we have too many laws related to local administration. Even though I am the officer, I have to still open the book to check what the details are written in the law. So, do not expect that everybody would know this law especially the farmers in Suphanburi. The possibility of using this law I can say that almost zero.

The chief administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), also indicated why the local ordinance by people's initiative would not be happened as follows:

Suphanburi is not a special area or industrial estate area, there are mostly rice fields and sugar canned fields. So, the issues are not that complicated to use this Act.

In summary, the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 would be used in Suphanburi when it has an issue that directly affects the people, whether good or bad. That effect must be something that can change their way of life, health, or life security. The other reason is the current government regulations require any local administrative organization to conduct public hearings in the process of local ordinance creation; therefore the regulations automatically force the local administrative organization to work closely with the people and respond to their requests immediately. Meanwhile, the good management of the local executives can be appreciated by the people so that any issue will not escalate to be a crux that makes the people enlist their names and exercise direct democracy. However, the other factor that could make the people lack knowledge of the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E.2542 is that there are some local executives and community leaders that are not knowledgeable about this act, as the following interviews demonstrate.

The chief executive of the Bo-Supahn subdistrict administrative organization, Songphinong district (2017), admitted that he does not acknowledge about the act as follows:

I don't know about this law. Anyway, I think it is not important as the public hearing. We always do the public hearing here and it works well. Whenever we organized the public hearing, people tend to join. We just listened to them and response what we can do from a limited budget. I think public hearing only is enough for this province. We don't have much complicated issue, unless there is fighting of two oppositions in some area. This Act might be their option. But

here in my area, we have 18 villages and 2 small markets. Most of the people are farmers. So, the public hearing method is sufficient.

The chief executive of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), admitted to the researcher that he does not know this act as well as follows:

I didn't know that this law exists. Practically, we always do the public hearing which is sufficient for this area. The big issue we have here is the smell from one industry, but it turned out that there were not many people complain. The SAO needs there power to enforce the measure on that industry. It was quite disappointed for me that they ignored.

Participant 8, the mayor of Bang Plama district (2017), gave an interview on the act that

I think because I am just elected, so I did not know about this law. From now on, I have to study more.

Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality area (2017), correspondingly stated as the executives as follows:

I never knew that we can initiate our own local ordinance. Is there a law allowing us to do that? I thought it is only in the national level not the local. This law is very useful. I think the unused of this law because lack of public relations. Just like me I did not know it before.

Participant 9, a community leader in the Songphinong town municipality (2017), gave an opinion about the law as follows:

I have known about this Act a little bit, but I can say that not everyone knows. Until now, we use a direct contact to the municipality. It works well with this channel. The municipality is quite proactive working. The mayor is working hard. Once we have a traffic problem in the market. We just send a letter to the municipality. They came and organize a meeting in the market, and then problem has been solved. As you can see, the problem is not complicated and that big issue, this Act would be used when it comes to a really special issue.

Participant 10, assistant to the village headman in U-thong district (2017), also did not know about this act, as stated in the following interview excerpt:

Normally, the chief executive has always done the public hearing. Any local ordinance must pass the public hearing process. I just knew from the researcher about the existing of this Act. The unused of this Act, I think that because of our area is agricultural sector. Suphanburi people are mostly farmers. We depend a lot on the price of rice. If it's high, no worry they can take care themselves. So, the use of this Act must be really special case.

However, there were other interesting interviews from the executives related to the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 as follows.

The mayor of the Donchedi sub-district municipality (2017) interestingly commented on the act in the following:

In fact, this Act is impossible for Suphanburi. But it might be used as political tools from the opponents to discredits or the executives and the member of the councils have big fight. Then both of the sides would assemble the people's signature and initiate the ordinance or recalling some member to sign off.

The mayor of the Thungkok sub-district municipality, Songphinong district (2017), correspondingly commented on the practice of the act as follows:

If there is a big fight between two oppositions in any local politics, this Act would be definitely used as political tools to discredit each other.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, the vice-governor responsible for local administration (2017), gave an interesting comment as to why this act has not been implemented in Suphanburi:

I think that the problem of the unused of this Act is not about the Act itself, but it is the state of society of Suphanburi. The local's problems here are not so complicated to solve like other special areas i.e. Maesai, Maesod. Also, the local political conflicts are not severe. The special areas that need this Act must have a specific case, political active citizens, and the interest of particular ordinance to the people, so the local government must listen to the whole people comments. But here in Suphanburi, the problems are in generals which could be solved by the ordinance that approved in the council only. This is due to the problems have been solved in the other areas before, the solutions are there. The local problems are like garbage, market business, and street shops.

All of the stakeholders have given consistent views—that the Suphanburi people lack knowledge of their political rights, what rights they have, and how and when to exercise those rights. This has led to obstacles in participating in the local policymaking process. There might be communication problems between the local administrative organizations and the local people. Although the government has attempted to publish information about the people's basic rights, the method of publishing might be inefficient. For instance, the published documents are in the form of brochures, which are not of interest to the people. In addition, those that should know about this act, such as local executives or community leaders, do not even know

about its existence. For this reason, it is even more difficult for ordinary people to know about the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiative B.E.2542.

Furthermore, the people in Suphanburi think that ordinance creation, development planning, and public management are the responsibility of the local administrative organizations and executives only. They only know that if they lose benefits from the ordinance's effects, they have the right to veto. Yet they do not know about their rights concerning ordinance initiatives by the people. Moreover, in Suphanburi more than 90% of the population is in the agricultural sector, such as rice fields, sugar cane fields, and rubber plantations. The problems with the local administrations are not so complex comparing to other special areas such as industrial estate areas, coal power plant areas, and etc. The problems in Suphanburi mostly are waste problems, businesses harmful to health, and so forth. There was no apparent necessity for specific local ordinances initiated by the people in the Suphanburi area. Therefore, all of the enacted local ordinances in Suphanburi were enacted in accordance with the higher level of legal requirements, such as the Act of Public Health and by the government's orders. Although some of the local executives believe that the purpose of the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiative B.E.2542 is to create an option for the people to exercise their power in a direct democratic system, they think that this act might be a political tool of opponents to discredit the management of the executives.

From the researcher's point of view, the model of this act was adopted from western countries' models and they do not perfectly suit the Thai society or culture. Thai society has unique people's characteristics, which follows the leaders and relies on community decisions. Unlike the western countries, the people are more individual society where they could make the decision without the influence of community leaders' or officials' guidance. The models of western laws are not able to be perfectly applied to Thai society.

4.2.1.2 Problems with the Rules and Regulations in the Local Administrative Organizations

The main objective of the establishment of local administrative organizations is to promote the political participation of the people to be able to self-govern themselves, to have citizens' consciousness, and to cherish their own domicile

without having to rely solely on the central government. Since the creation of the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540, government policy has always emphasized decentralization to the local administration, including the promotion of the people's participation. Those policies are the laws that force people to participate, such as elections and direct participation in local development plan-making processes.

The constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 was the first constitution of Thailand that emphasized decentralization with the people's participation. Until the current constitution, there have been prescribing clearer about local administration by demanding the government to implement a participation promotion policy as follows: promoting people's participation in public policymaking and economic development planning both at the national and local level; promoting and supporting the people's participation in political decision-making, i.e. referendums, promoting the people's participation in the audit of the use of state power, and promoting education for democracy.

Concerning participation in the local administration, the government was demanded to promote this, i.e. local executive's election, executives and council members recall, and local ordinance initiatives. However, the participation is mostly in the elections, while the other channels are not participated in well.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior has implemented regulations on the people's participation regarding local administration promotion, i.e. people's participation in local development plan-making and council meeting observation.

However, the interviews with the local administration stakeholders demonstrated the opposite of the laws, rules, and regulations concerning participation promotion. The reason is that the rules and regulations limit the freedom of the local administrative organizations, which leads to less participation on the part of the people, as seen in the following interviews.

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, chief executive of the Suphanburi provincial administrative organization (2017), opined about the obstacles in the local administrations are the regulations and the enforce agencies as follows:

The regulations are very details. The audit agencies are especially focused on local administrative organizations. They voted for us, we have to take care of

them, but we cannot not do that because of the regulations that is so obstacle. For instant, there was a request for support from one village. The project was just fixing roads budgeting around 100,000 baht. We could not approve that project, due to the regulations. After that, we call for there participation in the public hearing, they did not come. They said that just 100,000 baht you didn't give us, so don't ask for any support from us. You see? Because of the regulations, we lose the participation. I think the regulations should not be in details. It should be something like in the middle. It is good to have regulations, otherwise it will be messy.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), indicated the obstacle is the law enforcer as follows:

The law itself is not the problem. The problem is the enforcer. We have to admit that the law related to the local administration like Act of municipality is very out of dated. It does not correspondence with the current situation. Also, the law does not give the real freedom to the local executives to response the need s of their people. For example, the municipality tried to set up the tools for flood protection during the flooding crisis in raining season. But the law was not allowed us to use the budget on that until the government announces the disaster areas. Can we wait until it becomes flooding? This is due to the suspicious of the government on the local government. They always think that local government is corrupted. The law is not flexible, so it is hard to implement in the real situation.

The municipal clerk (2017) of the Suphanburi town municipality agreed that the law is the obstacle as follows:

I agree that law is the obstacle. There are so many laws in our country. It is too much. As the officer who is working with the law, we do not brave enough to do something new. Because of the laws, if we did something illegally which

we did not recognize. It is our nightmare I can say that. So, I think too many laws obstacle the innovations of the agency.

The mayor of the Thungkok sub-district municipality, Songphinong district (2017), mentioned about the obstacle which is not the law but the law drafting committee as follows:

The objective of the laws is always good. The government wants us to follow the regulations. The implemented regulations are aimed to increase the participation rate. But the problem is the law drafting committees never check the real conditions outside the meeting room. This would never be working in the implementation. The law drafters are always thinking that the local executives are the corruptors, so the laws try to prevent the corruption. But it is also the obstacle to the people's participation.

The chief of the Songphinong district local administration office (2017) viewed on the complication of laws related to local administrations is the obstacle to the people's participation as follows:

The huge amount of implemented laws in Thailand makes the public management complicated. There should be in one big book like the Act of local administrations B.E. And this act covers all categories and activities of local administrations. But in Thailand, municipality on law, SAO another one, and so forth. The problem is that there is a complexity in working of local administrative organizations. It is that sometime municipality has authority but the SAO not. Even me as the supervisor, I am so confused sometime.

According to the interviews, the researcher found that the rules and regulations enforced by the government to the local administrative organizations have the main objective to promote the people's participation in local administration, such as the requirement of public hearings in local development plan-making, public hearings for annual budget plan-making, and allowing of the observation council

meetings by ordinary people. Significantly, the people's participation in local ordinance creation by the people's initiative in accordance with the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 has problems with the process of enlisting people to propose ordinances, which requires more than half of the eligible voters of the local administrative organization, and problems regarding stakeholders' legal knowledge in terms of the ability to draft ordinances themselves.

However, the opposite side was expressed by the key informants' regarding the rules and regulations—that they are not the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy-making process. The interviews are as follows.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice-governor responsible for local administration (2017), did not agree that the law is the obstacle to the people's participation as follows:

I think the laws are partly the obstacle, but it is not the main obstacle. The objective of the law is to create the order in the public administration, especially the local administration. The laws want them to have freedom in working. When you give them freedom, the corruption problem happens. The complexity of the laws is considered by the government. We have tried to develop and adapt some laws to be more loose. In the present, the government utilizes Information technology in the administration like smart id card or no need to carry id card just remember 13 digits id number, then you can contact any of government agency.

The chief of the Bang Plama district office of local administration (2017), provided the reason for not agreeing that the law is the obstacle:

I don't think the law is the obstacle. We are government officers. We have to follow what the laws require. The enacted laws have good objective. There are always reasons behind the laws. Also, I don't think that amending the law only would help increase the number of participants in public hearing. You need to change something else but not the law.

The chief executive of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), interestingly opined that the laws would be the obstacles if the poverty problem is solved as follows:

The rules and regulations would be the obstacles to the people's participation, if the acknowledgement of the rights of the people problem, level of education problem, and poverty are solved. Why? Because when people acknowledged about the authority of the local agency as well as their rights to do and not to do, or the quality of life is getting better. Though both of the problems are solved, the participation rate is still low. Then we have to amend the laws. The law might be the obstacle to the response to the needs of the people by the local government, if the local government could not response quickly due to the law.

The chief executive of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), commented that

I think the law is not root cause of the problems. Law amendments will not help participation. The villagers do not care what the law said. They do not care if the number of the participants is not more than half or not. If they want to participate, they will participate. I think the government has to help them having a better life then they will participate more.

The chief executive of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk District (2017), similarly stated that

The law is too difficult for the villagers. People are farmers. We need specialist to help them. I don't think that amending the law would help participation rate. The problem of the regulations is that it is the obstacle to the participation promotion activities that local governments try to do but could not.

The chief executive of the Nongmakhamong sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), commented that

The villagers do not know much about the law, even me I don't know much. I think the regulations are not the obstacles, if we are honest in work and uphold the law.

The mayor of the Khaodin sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district, disagreed that the law is an obstacle in the following interview excerpt:

The law is not the obstacle. If we are honest to the people and making them happy and proactive work, the participation will be better. Amending law is not the answer, if the local executives are still day-to-day working. The law is good, but it depends on how we are using it.

The mayor of the Nongyasai sub-district municipality, Nongyasai district (2017), also expressed disagreement in the following statement:

There are some other important problems than the laws. Although you force them by the law to participate, the fake participation would be occurred. I think their economic status problem like money in their pocket is more important. If they have good quality of life then they would look for something else like political participation.

The chief administrator of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization (2017), disagreed that the law is the obstacle as excerpt:

Since constitution 2540, I think people's participation in local politics is getting better. The law itself is not the obstacle. Some regulations might be the obstacle to the management of the local administrative organizations. But it is not an obstacle to people's participation. Actually, the law requires the participation, but in reality is not like the law said. The people participate less in Suphanburi is not because of the law, but Suphanburi culture is like this.

The summary of the problems of the laws, rules, and regulations related to the local administrative organizations is the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiatives B.E. 2542. The law requires more than half of the eligible voters in that local administrative organization, which is not practical in real situations. For instance, if that local administrative organization is the Bangkok metropolitan area, the number of enlisting people must be more than 5-6 million signatures. This is almost impossible if that ordinance is really not that important to the lives of the people. Moreover, the requirement of attaching the documents of the enlisting people and their signature and the procedure of the enlisting are also obstacles. The proposed local ordinance by the people must be completely drafted and enlisting documents must be attached, which requires legal expertise. The absence of an agency to support in this process makes it impossible for the people to draft and propose the ordinance themselves. In the case of the stakeholders problem, the stakeholders have limited knowledge about the law and about their ability to access information that would empower the people to be able to propose their own ordinance. In addition, the Suphanburi people mostly work in the agricultural sector and having a medium level of political activity. This results in their knowledge of their rights regarding direct democracy to be limited. Then people are used to following the leaders of the community, whom they think of as their representatives. Are other rules and regulations related to local administrative organizations the obstacle or not? According to the views of some of the local executives, they admitted that the outdated rules and regulations of the local administration affect local policy implementation, especially in terms of the promotion of the people's participation activities, such as regulations regarding the budget allocations of the local administrative organizations.

According to the interviews of the local executives, government officers, and community leaders in Suphanburi, all of them agreed that the details of the Act of Local Ordinance by People's Initiative B.E. 2542 is not an obstacle to the implementation. Nevertheless, they agreed that there is little possibility to implement this act because Suphanburi is not in a business district or industrial estate, which needs a specific law to manage the orderliness of the province. In addition, local political conflicts are rarely found in the areas. The act might be a good channel for

promoting direct democracy, but it is not suitable for Suphanburi's conditions. The local executives argued that there are only two conditions for implementing this act: if it was to have a strong impact that could change Suphanburi's way of life, or the act is used as a political tool by opponents to discredit local executives. Moreover, some local executives agreed that the rules and regulations are not obstacles to the people's participation in ordinance creation. They thought that the rules and regulations are perfectly enacted, and cover all of the tasks transferring from the central government to the locals, but the problems are in the implementation process and the implementers that the contexts and the conditions of each local administrative organizations are different as mentioned earlier that there is a big different between the rural and the urban areas in which the characteristics of participation of the people in the urban tends to participate less than the rural.

Therefore, the results of this part of the research confirmed that the rules and regulations related to local administration are obstacles to the people's participation in the local policymaking process in the case of local ordinances created by the people's initiative.

4.2.2 Local Political Culture Problems

According to the evolution of Thai politics, from absolute monarchy to the constitutional monarchy regime, as in the present, there has been the development of democracy, giving the right to the people to vote for representatives to be the government of the country. In the meantime, the decentralization principle has also been applied to cherish true democracy in Thailand. Due to the decentralization principle, there has been the establishment of local administrative organizations in order to give freedom to the local people to govern their own territories. However, we have to admit that both national and local politicians have played an important role in public policymaking and the direction of the development of Thai democracy as a consequence of this decentralization. Most of the politicians that have been elected by the people were influential persons in their areas or those that have succeeded in business and are wealthy enough to spend money on winning a general election. Moreover, the people tend to vote for these persons to be their representatives or local executives, and this causes disruptions in the development of Thai democracy.

Because the politicians invest a large amount of money in the elections, they need a return on their investment when they are in the position. Due to this situation, the philosophy of democracy is altered by this political culture. Such is the Thai political culture, which is an obstacle to the people's participation in the policymaking process.

At the local political level of Suphanburi, there is the same political culture in accordance with the national level. Therefore, the researcher set up the second hypothesis of this research, stating that the political culture of Suphanburi is an obstacle to the people's participation in the policymaking process in the case of local ordinance creation.

From the survey of the Suphanburi area, the researcher found 3 problems in the local political culture which are;

- 1) The influence of local politicians
- 2) Patronage system and kinship and the connections of the local politicians
- 3) Buying votes

4.2.2.1 The Influence of Local Politicians

According to the survey of local administrative organizations in Suphanburi, almost 90% have been successful in their business, which is the main income of the local people, i.e. rice mills or the ex-village headsmen of the sub-district that are respected by the local people. The elected local executives in Suphanburi also mostly inherit their power from generation to generation, so the local politicians are from the same group of people or are kin of the local executives. Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa is the 21st prime minister of Thailand and he is the most influential person in Suphanburi politics. Therefore, the researcher was eager to test the hypothesis whether it is true or not that the influence of local politicians is an obstacle to the people's participation in ordinance creation initiatives in Suphanburi.

Due to the differences in the characteristics of participation between urban and rural areas in Suphanburi, the research divided the interviews into two areas: Group 1, local administrative organizations in urban areas; and, Group 2 those are in rural areas. After obtaining the data, the researcher cross-checked the data for both groups for analysis as follows.

Group 1; Local Administrative Organization in Urban Areas

Whether the influence of the local politicians is the obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy making or not, the interviews of the local executives, government officers, and community leaders are as follows;

Chief of the Muang Suphanburi district office for local administration (2017) stated about the influence of Mr. Banharn to the development of Suphanburi as follows:

Suphanburi people are used to Mr. Banharn's style that he arranged everything for them. He thought himself no need for participation. Luckily, what he has done for Suphanburi was all about development. So, they are like spoiled kids. They don't have to be so active. He would help you anyway.

The municipal clerk of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017) stated that

The local politics of Suphanburi is like family business. "They are all in the same team" they have passed this position from generation to generation. There is no challenger. The participation is also low. But you have to admit that people will vote for the one who can support them. The one who has capability. So, the voters would vote for someone that rich. It is normal in Thailand, I think. However, it must be approved by Mr. Banharn.

Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality (2017) stated that

The local executives have changed for some time, but they are all the same team. I don't think local politician is the problem because our city is developing. May be because of Mr. Banharn is looking after. The mayor himself is also working hard and devoted.

Participant 9, a community leader in the Songphinong town municipality (2017) mentioned that

Local politics here in Songphinong has no conflict like other district., although the mayor has been changed. But the successors are from the same team. The municipality still works overall.

Participant 11, a retired government officer that served in Suphanburi for 35 years (2017), provided the following information:

Local politics in Suphanburi does not have a conflict between two rivals, but it is the power inheritance from generation to generation. We have to admit that to get into the position and be elected must be approved or supported by Mr. Banharn. The villagers know who is with Mr. Banharn's team. They would vote for him. In the general election, once Chartthai Party lost to People's power party in Suphanburi but different district. I don't know why. But I can say that Muang Suphanburi is Mr. Banharn's area.

According to the interviews, the researcher found that the local political culture in urban areas in terms of the influence of the local politician depends on one person's decision-making. Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa is the true influential person of Suphanburi, regarding both political thoughts and the decision-making of the people. He is a mastermind that has directed the manner of development of Suphanburi. This might be because of the successful results of the development of Suphanburi, such as infrastructure, tourist attractions, schools, a sports complex, and many more. He also established a development foundation, the Banharn-Jamsai Foundation, to be a fund for developing the province. This makes the people think that Mr. Banharn would always look after everything in the province. There will always be pros and cons of having this person. The positive aspect is that Suphanburi has a good leader that can develop the quality of life and economic status of the province, but the negative aspect is that the local people have gotten used to a one-man decision-making system which does not require active participation and always depends on one-man support.

This is the cause of the slow development of the people's participation in local policymaking and ordinance creation in Suphanburi. Such participation can only be seen during the general elections at both the national and local level.

Group 2: Local Administrative Organizations in Rural Areas

In the rural areas, there are some local political problems concerning the influence of local politicians, but it is not the main problem, as the following interviews indicate.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice-governor responsible for local administration (2017), stated that

The local political culture is partly the obstacle to the development of people's participation. For example, there is a conflict between two rivals in local politics in the remote area of Suphanburi. One side is retired sub-district headman and one side is the current chief executive. They are both influential persons in the areas. One side did not accept the election results. They have been suing each other for couple of years. The administration of the local organizations has stopped. People's participation was zero. The fight escalated to be hiring gunman to kill each other. So, the local political problem would happen when there are two influential persons in the same area.

The chief administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated that the important factor affecting the participation rate is the local political culture factor as follows:

The local political is the factor affecting the people's participation rate because of Suphan culture of thought leader. The culture is the boss and subordinate. This culture is like the subordinate always say yes to the boss. When it comes to the village culture, the villagers would agree or act only when the boss says. So, it is rarely here of seeing the villagers speak out themselves. Their culture is like this.

The chief administrator of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), mentioned that the relationship between the leaders and the villagers is one of the components of local political culture of Suphanburi as follows:

Local political culture is about the leader. The villager respects to the leaders and following what they lead to. If the leaders say yes, then they say yes.

The chief of the Danchang district of the local administration office (2017) mentioned that

Local political culture problem of Danchang district is the big fight between to politicians. They compete in the democracy way but they do not accept the principle. They do not admit the lost in the election. This make the poel bore of them, so the participation has become lower and lower.

According to the above interviews, we can conclude that there is a possibility that the influence of local politicians could delay or deny the people's participation in the local policymaking process. Nevertheless, it would not be the main obstacle to the development of the people's participation in Suphanburi. Although the local executives in the urban areas are from the same group of people and inherit their position from generation to generation, the overall development of the local administration is improving. The conflicts between two influential persons in the remote areas of Suphanburi might also be an obstacle. However, Mr. Banharn is the most powerful and influential person in Suphanburi province. Every local executive respects him. His decisions are final in any projects, but personally he is not a dictator. The Suphan people voted for him and respect him because of what he has done for the province. He has dedicated himself to serving Suphanburi and will do so until the end of his life. As can be seen in the following interviews, how powerful the politician is is not as important as how good a person he/she is. A democracy would judge them in the election.

The chief administrator of the Nongmakhamong sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), opined the following:

I don't think we have local politician influence here. It is old style of politics like mafia or "Jaopor" who can control the people. The influence of the politician is not the main problem obstacle. The people have changed now. They knew better.

The chief administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated the following:

The influence of local politician is none here. Here is like folk society. Chill out. This is rural area with full of rice fields. Nobody is a rich man with the power, unlike Chonburi or Samutprakarn.

The chief administrator of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), argued about the relationship between the chief executive and the villagers in the area as follows:

The chief executive is working so hard to attract people's participation. He also works closely to the villager. So, there is no influence that would force people not to participate here.

The chief administrator of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), argued that

Although the councils and executives are kinship, there is no influence over the thought of the villager. This is democracy. If the executives are bad, the people will not vote him again. Therefore, there is no influence to delay the participation of the people here.

The chief of the Donchedi district of local administration office (2017), opined that

Nobody is influence as Mr. Banharn. He is taking care of everything. They all respect him. The problems occur when there is a conflict between two leaders. The leaders will form a mob in front of the office. This is about leaders and followers problem. it is the culture of Suphanburi people that they always follow the leader, but if leader is bad it would reflect in the next election

The chief of the Nongyasai district of local administration office (2017), opined that

There are some influences of the election canvassers. I think it depends on the local executives whether he is good or not. If he is working hard and the villager saw that, he would be elected back again and again. The participation rate would be better too.

According to the interviews with the stakeholders, the results of the hypothesis testing indicated that the influence of the local politicians is partly an obstacle to the people's participation in the local policymaking process. Why it is only partly an obstacle? First of all, we have to admit that the local politicians are the "thought leaders" of the local community. These individuals can lead the people concerning whether to participate or not in the policymaking process or in any political activities. However, in the case of Suphanburi, there is only one thought leader, Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archar. He is both a local political leader and a national political leader. Moreover, he was a prime minister of Thailand. Therefore, the development direction of the local administration of Suphanburi would be under his supervision. Although he passed away recently, he has left a lot of his work heritage for the Suphanburi people. His philosophy was democratic, so he believed in the people's participation principle. The local political culture of Suphanburi is also democracy based. This makes the local politicians care a lot about the quality of life of their people. Because of the good example of Mr. Banharn, the people also expect

their representatives to be as good as him. It is a big burden for politicians; otherwise they would not be reelected in an election. Secondly, the conflicts between the influential persons in Suphanburi are not as severe as in the other provinces. This makes the local political condition in Suphanburi stable. Finally, the online social networking also helps to prevent the people from the influence of the local politicians. If the politician is working illegally or doing something inappropriately, the online social networking would revile his or her bad action to the public. Therefore, the use of the influence to delay the people's participation in Suphanburi is quite difficult.

4.2.2.2 The Patronage System, Kinship, and the Connections of the Local Politicians

The foster system has been rooted in the Thai society for centuries as well as in local governance. This system is an obstacle to the development of democratic regimes in which the system is supporting the people in the same partisans, while democracy promotes the equality of the people. The people that benefit from this system would have greater privilege than others, especially in utilizing of public services where the local administrative organization unequally serves the people. There are interdependencies between the local executives and the local people.

When interpersonal relationships are considered, we can find that the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi have adopted the patronage system through the kinship of local council members and local executives. Therefore, the researcher asked for information from the local government officers, such as the chief administrator of sub-district administrative organizations and chief of district of local administrations office. The interviews were as follows.

The chief of Muang Suphanburi district of local administration office (2017) argued that Thai local society has unique characteristic as follows:

Thai society is a patronage society. It has been rooted for centuries before the revolution of the political regime. We had feudal system like boss and subordinates or clansman, unlike western society which is like more individualism. We have a problem on the standard of the law enforcement that giving the self-benefits first, or a partisan first. Whatever you want to do in

Thai society, you have to check who has the authority, which person you must contact to, or who can make the order. Why we have to do that? The public service should be delivered equally and by the law. For example, the case of Suphanburi, the one who belongs to the chief's partisan they will get everything first. They have talked before entering the meeting room. You will never find it in the minutes of meeting.

The municipal clerk of the Muang Suphanburi town municipality (2017) opined that

This town municipality also a kinship governance. All of the members of the council are kinship and partisans. The mayor could compromise everything in the council. They have talked before entering the council meeting. There is no opponants in the area. However, the judgement must be judged by the election. If the mayor is bad, he would not be reelected.

The Chief Administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated regarding the local political condition in Suphanburi that

In this area, the big family is the advantage in local politics. The members of the big family would be elected to be the representatives. It is like this in rural areas.

The chief of the U-thong district of local administration office (2017) stated regarding the local political condition in U-thong area as follows:

Here in U-thong, from the national representatives until local executives are from the same family. This family owns big business in this district. But the people never complaint on their governance, I think because of good management and easy access to the local executives

The chief of the Songphinong district of local administration office (2017) mentioned regarding the local political culture in Songphinong as follows:

It is normal in democracy way that would be the conflict between the executive and the opponents. The executives come from one village, but the opponents come from another village. Which village is going to get the project approval first? It must be the chief's first. However, they have cleared the problems before the approval.

The chief of the Bang Plama district of local administration office (2017) admitted that Thai culture has involved patronage system as follows:

It is normal in Thai society and the patronage system. You must have connections. Especially rural areas like Suphanburi, who work closely to the boss you get the benefits first. We cannot escape from this system, but you should use it in the right way with fairness.

The focus group of community leaders revealed important points of view as follows:

Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality (2017), argued that

The executives and the members are relatives. They are in the same team. But I don't think it's bad as long as the mayor is working hard.

Participant 9, a community leader in the Songphinong town municipality (2017) argued that

We have to admit that it has pros and cons. its pros is we can use this system to make people networking, but you use this network for your own benefits then it would lead to corruption. We cannot take this system out of thai society.

Participant 12, a community leader in the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), argued that

As long as the response to our requests and work hard, I don't think this system is a problem.

Participant 13, a community leader in the sub-district administrative organization (2017), stated that

There is no opponent in my SAO. We are in the same side. I think we have a good leader, he knows how to manage well. He gives the priority to the village that need help first. Sometime my village had to wait in the queue, but I understood that.

The patronage system is rooted in Suphanburi society. We can observe this in many ceremonies in areas such as funerals, weddings, and ordination ceremonies in which the local executives and community leaders often participate even though the host is not their relative. This kind of participation is to help to retain networks for the next elections. Moreover, if the events organized by one local government could invite the governor, that local executive who organized the events would earn big credit and respect from the people.

According to the interviews with the community leaders, the researcher could observe an interdependent relationship between the local executives and the community leaders. The community leaders usually answered the questions by giving credit to the local executives. In addition, the government officers working for local administrations confirmed that we cannot separate the foster system and the local administration in rural areas such as Suphanburi.

Another issue related to the patronage system and local administration that causes obstacles to the people's participation is that the local executives give priority to their partisans, which leads to the boredom of the people regarding local politics, as can be seen in the following interviews.

The chief of the Songphinong district of local administration office (2017) admitted regarding the relationship between executives and their partisans that affected the participation rate as follows:

The villagers are boring of this public hearing, though they often participated. Why? They get nothing from the public hearing. Anyway, the chief would give the priority to his voters first.

The chief of the Bang Plama district of local administration office (2017) mentioned that

You have to understand both sides the villagers and the executives. The villagers are boring of doing public hearing. They don't get what they requested. They thought that the executive would pro his voters. However, you have to understand the budget situation, the SAO does not have the budget to serve the requests.

The chief of the Danchang district of local administration office (2017) opined that

The executives would approve the projects from his partisans first. This is normal here. But it could make people bored of the foster system.

Participant 14, the chief administrator of sub-district administrative organization (2017), mentioned that

The people are boring of public hearing because of the executives networking. The chief would give the projects to his village first.

The patronage system cannot be separated from the Thai society. It is used when someone does not want to sacrifice or lose his or her benefits, and it is also a "give and take" between the authorities and benefit losers. In Suphanburi's local

administrations, the foster system is unavoidable. There are benefit exchanges via the foster system between local politicians and the provincial government officers. This leads to obstacles in the development of local administrations in Suphanburi because the foster system supports low-quality local politicians. Moreover, the community leaders that benefit from the executives would not protect the benefits of the community.

4.2.2.3 The Problem of “Buying Votes”

Buying votes is a significant problem in Thai elections both in at the national and local levels, and this can have an impact on the people and the candidates. The impact on the people is that buying votes will make the people lack understanding of the importance of elections in a democracy. This is an obstacle to the development of democracy in national and local politics. When candidates have authority from buying votes, they will not work or respond to the needs of the people because they (the people) have sacrificed their rights by receiving that money. This is the cause of the “cycle of evil” in an election where the candidates that buy votes will always win the election and where the local development budget will return to the candidates instead of the locals. In addition, the impact on other candidates that have good will and passion to develop their hometowns but less budget is that they will not be able to win the election. Therefore, the representatives and the local executives will be the same group of people.

Although Suphanburi has only one dominating political party, which is the Charthaipattana party led by Mr. Banharn Silpa-archa, the influencer on the people’s decision-making, the buying votes are still existing. The high competition in local politics of Suphanburi province causes buying vote problems. The local politicians use this option to win elections. This political cultural problem might be an obstacle to the people’s participation in local policymaking as well.

Some stakeholders admitted that there is a buying vote problem in Suphanburi, as can be seen in the following interviews.

The chief of the Songphinong district of local administration office (2017) mentioned regarding buying vote problem in Suphanburi as follows:

“No money No vote” is true in Songphinong district. The villagers once told me that one of the executives have to sell the land for winning the election. We did survey in the district and found that the villagers used get the money from the candidates in the headman election. They thought that if there is an election they should get the money. So, when it comes to the local executive’s election, they also should get it from the candidate. However, the recent election results was not following the amount money that spent to the voters. This is the development.

The chief of the Bangplama district of local administration office (2017) mentioned that

I think because of the economic problems that cause the buying vote. We have asked the villagers why you accepted the money? They told me that this is what we should get because every candidate hope for the benefits, if they were elected. They are boring of the unresponsive of the local administrative organization. They think that participation would not change anything; at least they earn something from the election. I heard that some people received a thousand baht.

The chief of the Donchedi district of the local administration office (2017) argued that

Personally, I never get offered. I think because they knew who I am. But my neighbors were talking about buy vote in the last election. The rate was like 1000-1200 baht each. We did investigate but found nothing.

The chief of Danchang district of the local administration office (2017) argued that

The villagers are used to receiving the money and they also expecting that too. If that local administrative organization has big competition, there would be

higher rate of buying vote. The campaigning for election like proposing a good policy from the candidates does not guarantee the winning in the election because there will be no change in local administration due to the limited budget of the local government. So, whoever win the elections it would be no change.

Participant 4, the chief executive of the sub-district administrative organization (2017), admitted regarding buying votes in his area as follows:

People are used to the buying vote in the local politics of Suphanburi. “No money, No Vote” is true. It is rooted. However, the buying vote would not guarantee the winning in the election like in the past.

Participant 16, the municipal clerk in Bang Plama district (2017), stated that

The conflict between the executive and the council member is the main problem of the municipality. The mayor has invested a lot to win the election. The mayor is facing the problem in the council because he has less number of supporting members. Now, any project that proposed by the mayor would be never approved by the council. This problem escalated to the governor to investigate about the buying vote of the mayor.

Participant 17, the chief administrator of sub-district administrative organization, Muang Suphanburi district (2017), admitted regarding buying votes in Suphanburi local elections as follows:

Frankly speaking, they paid a lot for the votes. The opponents of the chief are investing a lot. The chief has to counter offer. What the villagers get from this but the money? Nothing. They invested a lot in the election. The public hearing just do follow the requirement of the law. What the people request would less responded. It is not priority as the executive’s project.

Participant 18, a community leader, stated that

I heard about buying vote in my community, but they would buy me because I am a community leader.

Participants 19, a retired government officer in Songphinong district (2017), mentioned that

I think no buying vote in the market and in the city, but I am not sure about remote area like the SAOs. A big competition over there. They are paying a lot I heard that.. 500-1000 baht.

Participant 20, the chief administrator of the sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), argued that

In the general election, there is no high competition and also no competitors. People are still love the Chartthai party and their representatives. But in the local politics, all of the candidates are local Suphan people. They have to fight against each other themselves. The campaigning policy would not help much in the local election because the SAO has limited budget to develop a big change. What the villagers would earn during the election is the money, but we only heard about eh news no evidences.

According to the collected data, the researcher concluded that the buying vote problem does not occur at the national election level, for example with members of the parliamentary elections because Chartthaipattana, under Mr. Banharn Silpa-archa, who is the mastermind of Suphanburi development, is the only dominant party. This party has a secured bastion, which helps the party to always win an election. On the other hand, the buying vote problem tends to be in the local elections because of the high competitions of the local leaders. Although the buying vote evidence cannot be detected in these areas, the local government officers have admitted that votes are bought, especially in the rural areas of Suphanburi. The cause of the buying vote

problem is the socio-economic conditions of Suphanburi, where most of the people are in the agricultural sector and have a lower income than those in the metropolitan areas. People are thinking that receiving money from the politicians is easier way for getting benefits rather than participating or involving in other local political activities such as voting or public hearings because they think that whoever in the positions would be the same. Because of the socio-economic conditions of the locals, the local administrative organizations have limited development budgets; that is, 80% of the budget is allocated for organization routine management and officers' salaries. Only 20% remains for development in the areas, which cannot cover mega projects that could make a big difference to the communities. In addition, the local executive's position is limited to only local influential persons. Therefore, the buying vote problem might not be the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy ordinance creation, but the root cause of the problem is the socio-economic conditions, i.e. poverty and the people's way of life.

4.2.3 Socio-economic Problems

According to the literature reviews, documents, and research about the factors affecting the level of people's participation in local politics, it has been found that socio-economic problems significantly affect the level of people's participation in both national and local politics. The socio-economic problems can be categorized into level of education, poverty, and local way of life. According to the level of education, the previous research revealed that the people holding a higher level of education tend to have more political participation than those with a lower level of education. Moreover, poverty affects the level of political participation, where people need to spend their time working to make a living and pay for their families' expenses. This prevents the lower income people from being active in participating in the local policy decision-making process. In addition, the local way of life is an obstacle to the people's participation in local politics because the Thai way of life and culture are not based on the consciousness of citizenship or consciousness of land ownership but it is a relationship between the ruler and the ruled, where the ruled follows and the ruler leads. In this case, the ruler is the local executives that are successful in business or in their work and have better social status. Furthermore, the way of life of the urban and

rural people is different due to living conditions and accessibility to information. The people in urban areas tend to be more active than those in the rural areas.

According to a field survey in Suphanburi province, 90% of the area is in the agricultural sector, i.e. rice fields, sugar cane fields, and livestock farms. Therefore, the occupations are mainly farmers, some in manufacturing, and some are civil servants. Since the majority of the population is farmers and laborers, the level of education of the locals is mostly at the mandatory education level, which is the elementary school level of the 6th grade. In addition, Suphanburi's gross income per capita per year is at the bottom rank of the country's overall ranking. According to the office of the provincial finance reports in 2015, the gross provincial product per capita was 72,691 baht, where the highest was Rayong province, which was more 1,000,000 baht. We can conclude that Suphanburi people are in the lower income bracket. Lastly, the local way of life is the belief in the ruler and ruled system. The local people tend to follow the leader's advice. Therefore, field research was conducted for the present study using the in-depth interview method in order to test hypothesis 3 (H3), which can be divided into 3 subject matters, which are as follows:

- 1) Level of education
- 2) Poverty
- 3) Way of life

4.2.3.1 Level of Education

The researcher categorized the local administrative organizations into 2 categories: one is the local administrative organizations in urban areas, and the other is the local administrative organizations in rural areas. This is due to the differences in the level of the education of the people in urban and rural areas, which affect the characteristics of their participation in local policy and ordinance creation. The key informants were local executives, local government officers, and community leaders.

The hypothesis of the study (H3) was that the level of education is a factor affecting the people's participation in local policy and in the ordinance creation process, where the level of education would affect the recognition and expression of rights and duties of the citizen. The collected interviews were as follows.

Group 1: local administrative organization in urban areas

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, chief executive of the Suphanburi provincial administrative organization (2017), stated that

People are thinking that politics is something far from their life. So, they don't want to be involved much. They only think about their own benefits more than the public benefits. I think the level of education is partly obstacle to the people's participation. the problem is what we teach our children. Some people with higher level of education but they cannot apply in the real world. The government wants the people to have higher level of education, but the government never looks into the curriculum and the detail of what we are teaching them. We force our children to go to school to study a lot. But it doesn't mean that those children would grow with confidence and actively participate in the local politics.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), stated that

Education is important but level of education is not the obstacle to the people's participation. I don't think people participate less because of lower level of education. In my opinion, we should not focus only on the level of education but also the consciousness of citizenship in terms of rights and duties.

The municipality clerk of the Muang Suphanburi town municipality (2017) argued that

The problem is the recognition of their basic rights and duties. They do not acknowledge about what to do or not to do. The level of education is not the main problem but the quality of education is. Good quality of education should include the teaching of the rights and duties of citizenship for the next generations. I think education is root cause of the problems on people's participation because if the people are well educated, they must protect and

preserve their rights from the influential groups. When you are well educated, you would have a better socio-economic status which you have more opportunities for making a living and would not be exploited by the capitalist groups.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice governor responsible for local administration (2017), argued that

Education problem is very hard to solve. In order to solve this problem you need to reform the whole structure. What we can do now is to attach the education on people's participation for the next gens. I think the level of education is not the main problem because as least the people know what their rights in election and voting for are. Anyhow the local executives must be from the election and they need the voted from the people. But the problem is the rights is limited to be just voting and election. The direct democracy like in the developed countries are too advanced for the ordinary villagers.

Participant 1, a community leader in the town municipality area (2017), correspondingly stated regarding the level of education which is not the factor affecting the participation as follows:

I don't think that the level of education is the problem for the people in my areas. They all went to school. In my opinion, they do not participate in the public hearing not because of the education or they don't understand about the importance, but it is because of they have other thing more important for their living. The economic condition is so bad now, they have to work so hard for making a living rather than participate on what is not urgent to their life.

Participant 9, a community leader in the Songphinong town municipality (2017), argued that

The people are well educated here, due to the physical of this municipality is downtown. I think the problem is not the level of education but the response to the needs of the people by the municipality is the problem. they are boring of the response from the municipality that the responsive is quite slow to the needs of the people.

According to the collected data, the researcher found that the people in the urban areas of Suphanburi seemed to be well educated in terms of understanding their basic rights and duties, but the factor affecting the level of the people's participation tended to be their awareness of citizenship as they were quite selfish—if there was a direct impact on them from the ordinance, they would participate more. In addition, the factors of time and other important tasks were more in the focus of the people than participation in the municipality activities.

Group 2: local administrative organization in rural areas

The people in rural areas have a lower level of education than those in the urban areas, so their knowledge of the rights and duties of citizens is also less. Nevertheless, the interviewees' points of view disagreed. They indicated that the level of education alone is not an obstacle to the level of the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process, as stated below.

Participant 16, the chief administrator of sub-district administrative organization in Muang district (2017), argued that

I did surveyed about the level of education of the people here and found that most of them could read and write but only graduated from elementary school. Grade 6th. I think that there is a relationship between level of education and political participation. They think that they know lesser than the leaders. They should agree what the leader said. If that leader is a wise person, it would be great for that local. But if it is not, then..... However, it is not the main problem. I think poverty is the problem that it makes focus more on earning

enough money for their families' livings rather than involving in the local politics.

The chief executive of the Bo-Suphan sub-district administrative organization, Songphinong district (2017), argued that

I don't think that level of education is an obstacle. Some educated people are ignorance, while uneducated people are more active. For example, my father is 4th grade graduated, but he is the most participated person. So, I think the way of life of Suphan people is the obstacle, they rely too much on government and the leaders.

The chief executive of the Makhamlom sub-district administrative organization, Bang Plama district (2017), argued that

I don't think level of education is the main problem. Well educated but in active people in the city could be seen like Bangkok. So, I think it depends on individual and the way of life like in farmers in Suphanburi. You can't expect them much about active participation. it is possible to have more participation, but they have to work for their livings more than participate in what they don't think that worth.

The chief executive of Nonpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), also argued that

I don't think level of education is the obstacle. The elderlies in my SAO can read and write well enough. They don't need to do thumbs finger stamp anymore. The laws may be too difficult for them I understood this situation, even me I don't know neither. However, we can study and share the knowledge to each other via many channels. The main problem is they have to work to making a living. Low income is the problem which we cannot do anything but only the central government. If we solved this problem, they would think about

participation more. Now they think that this is the responsibility of the representatives and the SAO.

Participant 4, the chief executive of sub-district administrative organization (2017), argued that

The villagers know about the rights quite well, but it depends on the interests of the people. They would participate if that matters to their life. There are some other factors like poverty.

The chief executive of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), argued that

There is a relationship between the level of education and level of participation, but it is not as significant as how good the local leaders are. If they have a good and working hard leader, the villagers tend to be more active. They can learn about the rights, it does not need to graduate with high degree. If we work closely to the people, try to understand their way of life, these would help develop the participation.

The chief executive of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), stated that

I think the people are well educated enough, but the problem is the understanding of their right and duties of the citizens. When we launched the taxing policy, try to collect the tax from, they always complaint at me. I think they don't understand what is the SAO's authority and their duties as well. They think that I voted for you, you must take care of me. I collect 20 baht for waste management. They were all complaining. This means that they are quite active, if it's a direct impact. We have limited budget but we try our best to respond to their requests. However, they should know what their duties are.

The chief administrator of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), indicated that

I don't think that level of education is the obstacle. The world has changed, we have plenty of channels for them to access to the information like online social network, and internet. But some of the matters are too complicated for them, so it depends on the leader and good communication and public relation in order to make them understand. The most important obstacle problem to the people's participation in Suphanburi is the problem of the money in their pocket.

The chief of the Danchang district of local administration office (2017) gave an interesting comment as can be seen in the following excerpt from the interviews:

The learning process does not reach to the people yet. The people have insufficient knowledge about the importance of local administrations. In sum, the villagers don't know about the local administrations' structures, authorities, and duties so that they don't know their rights, too. The people in the city are well educated but ignorance, whereas the rural people are poor and need more supports. They think that the SAOs and municipalities must help them. They rely a lot on the agencies. Therefore, the leaders are important. If those leaders are bad, the participation would be never happened.

According to the interviews, the researcher found that the people lack knowledge and understanding of their rights and the duties of citizenship. How can they exercise their rights in accordance with the law? Nevertheless, the level of education might not be the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process because good public relations and thorough information accessibility could make the people have better knowledge about the rights and duties of citizenship. Some of the key informants argued that the level of education might not be the obstacle because a high level of participation could be found in the rural areas of Suphanburi, where the people are working in the

agricultural sector. This is due to the local executives' vision and capability in managing the increase of the people's participation. On the other hand, the people in the urban areas of Suphanburi that have a higher level of education participate less in the local policy creation process. The local executives in the urban areas admitted that the less participation in this area is due to the characteristics of the urban society—that they are looking for personal benefits and a highly-individualized lifestyle. If there is not a big impact on their lives from the acts of the local government, they will not participate in the events because they can take care of themselves with a secure living and sufficient infrastructures.

4.2.3.2 Poverty

The poverty is one of important problems which Thailand has been facing for decades. The local people in Suphanburi are also facing this problem. They have fewer job opportunities for better living conditions. As they are working in the agricultural sector, they have to rely on the weather conditions and fluctuating agricultural product prices. They have to spend most of their time making a living rather than sharing time for participation in local politics. Therefore, poverty tends to be an obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process, as confirmed by the following interview excerpts from the stakeholders.

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, chief executive of the Suphanburi provincial administrative organization (2017), stated that

The villagers have to work. Surviving is important. Most of the people are farmers with low income. Sending children to school is a burden for family expenses. When we ask for participation, I understood if they could not come. They cannot take leave or stop working. But I think the rural area suffer more than urban.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice governor responsible for local administration (2017), stated that

In the downtown of Suphanburi, poverty is not a big problem. the poverty might be the factor affecting the participation rate, but it is not the mainstream. Some people in the urban are not active as farmers in the rural. Some SAO

could initiate a strong networking. People are more active, but they are earning lower income than the urban people.

The mayor of the Khaodin sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district (2017), stated that

We were facing the problems of way of life and poverty that are the obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy making. They are the farmers who are having low income. They think that they should not involve in the local politics. They are not qualified to participate. Whenever we asked for the participation, they would hide with the excuse that "I have other things to do." We changed our strategy. It was successful by changing their attitude to the municipality that we work closely to them and providing them more information about the duty and authority of the municipality. We set up the zoning system which makes them easy access to the municipality. From that strategy, we were trusted more by the villagers.

The chief executive of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), indicated that

There way of life is not suit for an active citizen to participate in the local administrations. They have told me when we called them for public hearing meeting that "the meeting is waste of time, we lose our time to make a living." The villagers here are the employees in the sugar canned and rice fields. They cannot take a leave like office people. One day taking leave means a lot to them. So, I have to adapt my strategy of doing public hearing that we change the time to be after work or we work closely to them like arranging the council meeting in the temple. They seem to see the importance of the participation.

The chief executive of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017) argued that

I think that issue about making a living is the main obstacle problem to the people's participation in local administrations. Because they have lower income in a higher cost of living society and they must survive, you cannot expect them much to participate more. It is not worth for them to participate but do not have enough money to survive. In Suphanburi, the participation rate is depending on the weather and season. During the rainy season, you will not see the people participation, they would be in the fields. Yet the dry season, they have nothing to do then they would join the SAO's activities. Therefore, the issue of making a living is so important to the ordinary farmers. They cannot take leave for one day unlike us who have monthly salary.

The chief administrator of the Nongmakhamong sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), opined that

The main problem obstacle is money in the pocket. They are farmers earning low income. They have to rely on agricultural product price whether it's high or low. The participation rate is consistent with the weather conditions. When it is raining season, you will not see any people. They will be in their rice fields and rubber plantations. The number of population is quite big here at about 14,000 people. You cannot expect them to participate more than 50%. One more thing, they do not think that local development plan is their responsibility. They think "It is the SAO's job".

Participant 4, the chief executive of the sub-district administrative organization (2017), mentioned that

The poverty is the cause of buying votes. It is true that "no money, no vote." The root cause of buying vote is poverty. After they sold their vote, they must be under the influence of the local politicians. It's a vicious circle.

The chief executive of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), argued that

The villagers are suffering from poverty. They are earning low income. They have to work in the rice fields which they are not the owner of the fields. They are employed by a company. Everybody like 100% participate in the public hearing is what we expected, but it would never happen if they are still poor. They have to work for make a living. They could not just take leave like us and participate. Taking leave means losing money. Sending representatives is possible. However, the problems here are not so complicated; the SAO could handle that. Only if the government requires number of participants, it is a big task for us.

The chief administrator of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), argued that

People have to make a living first. They are mostly hired by a company to take care of the fields. They are living with a day-to-day life. They cannot take a leave from their work to participate in the event we organized. If they are taking leave, they would not get pay on that day. Then who will be responsible for their family expenses. Therefore, they are expecting that the SAO must give something back to them for a better quality of life such as roads, electricity, and alike.

The chief executive of the Makhamlom sub-district administrative organization, Bang Plama district (2017), mentioned that

I have been working in the local administration for more than 20 years. The local politics are indirect democracy. For direct democracy in Suphanburi, I think it is difficult. The people always pass their thoughts via the representatives. The real problem to the people's participation is economic problem. Due to low income, they have to make a living. They always think

about give and take. In the past, you don't have to include something else in order to attract the participation. You would just call from neighbor to neighbor. They would join easily. But now it is different. The agricultural price is going down. They have to shift their focus to be more on earning for living. Instead of participation, they have to work harder for their living.

The chief executive of the Nonpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), argued that

First of all is the villagers' life. They have to work for their living. Taking leave is a big trouble for them. And they might think public hearing for local development plan is not important as their money in their pockets. If they have enough money for living, they would look for something else. Therefore, our duty is to work closely to them in order to understand what they need, so that we can help support them for a better life.

The chief executive of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), correspondingly stated as earlier local executives that

There are many problem obstacles to the people's participation in local policy and ordinance making process. I think the main problem is about people's living. If they can live their life happily, they would not come and request for supports. But we are farmers who have low income; they do not have much time for other activities. They must go to the fields every day. So, you cannot expect a big number of participants in public hearing.

The chief executive of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), mentioned that

We have to admit that people are suffering with the low income. They have to work so hard for such a small income. The most important problem is quality

of life. Due to the living constraint, they do not have much time for participation in local political activities. They think that when they participate is equal to losing time, so they should get something back. Then, we have to include some other activities like free gift or alike. This means that the economic conditions and money in the pocket are not quite well enough. If they could live their life with good quality, why they want to get something back like small gift? They should think more about rights and duties as a citizen.

The mayor of the Nongyasai sub-district municipality, Nongyasai district (2017), argued that

Economic condition and poverty are the problem obstacle to people's participation. The earning opportunity in Nongyasai is so narrow. The market is very small. The people cannot survive, if they are working in this area. Therefore, they have to find the opportunity outside this district. The people who are residing in this area are almost elderly, retired, and sellers in the market that you cannot expect them to be active in political participation.

According to the interviews, all of the stakeholders agreed that poverty is the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance-making process. This is because the majority of the people in Suphanburi are working in the agricultural sector and are earning a low income—all of their income depends on the price of the agricultural products: rice, sugar cane, and raw rubber. This results in the local people relying solely on the government price subsidizing policy. In addition, the local administrative organizations where these people are residing cannot collect sufficient local taxes for the annual budget for local development due to the local economic status of the area, which is not a business district but basically rice fields. This situation forces them to rely a lot on government-subsidized budgets as well. Moreover, the government demands that the local administrative organizations organize the public hearings for every development plan, budget plan, and other policymaking processes in order to promote the people's participation in local

administrations, but the results have turned out to be low to medium in terms of their participation in Suphanburi local administrations. This is because of the poverty problems, which distort the people's attention from seeing the importance of participation and not spending all of their time working to make a living. According to the interviews with the key informants, the main reason why people are not interesting in being involved in the public hearing process is that they have to be absent from their work and will lose their income from their employers, who own the plantations and the fields. They think that participation in public hearings is not as important as their work and making a living. Furthermore, they think that even if they participated in public hearings on local development budget plans, it would not make a big change in their life because the overall local budget, including government subsidization, is too small for the development of their hometown.

Therefore, the recommendations from the key informants for solving the participation problem are to solve the economic status of the local people in order to increase the participation rate in the local ordinance and policymaking process. The good quality of life and good living of the local people must be fulfilled before requiring participation and cooperation from the lower-income residents, who represent the major population of Suphanburi. Moreover, economic status is an obstacle to the people in terms of sacrificing their time for participating in hearings, and so the benefits of participation are not attractive enough for them.

4.2.3.3 Way of Life

The people's way of life is another obstacle to the development of democracy in Thailand. The nature of the Thai local people, especially people in the rural areas like Suphanburi, is to be humble and less confident in expressing their opinion in public. This is not the characteristic of the people in a democratic regime, which requires a lot of participation and opinion expression in public. Therefore, the hypothesis 3 (H3) of this research set the way of life of the local people of Suphanburi as another obstacle to the people's participation in local policy and ordinance creating by the people's initiative. This argument was confirmed by the following 2 groups of key informants: the local administrative organizations in urban and rural areas. The interviews were as follows.

Group 1: local administrative organizations in urban areas

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, the chief executive of the Suphanburi provincial administrative organization (2017), stated that

The main problem is the way of life and culture that has rooted to the people of Suphanburi. Suphanburi's society does not give many options to live their life. The society depresses the capacity, capability, and confidence of the people. the people's participation was impact by this reason. So, my policy is to support the new generations to get more chance to participate with confidence but in the regulations framework.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), stated that

I think Suphan people were spoiled by the leader too much. Their way of life is too easy and chilled out because there will be a person who do everything for them. Therefore, the public consciousness as a citizen and participation rate is low. They focus only on their own benefits that whether they should get it or not. For instance, we have once called them for public hearing on the ordinance of public parking fees. They were not participating in the public hearing much, but when the ordinance enacted they complained a lot.

The chief of the Muang Suphanburi district of local administration office (2017) argued that

Suphanburi's ways of life in rural and urban are not accommodated with people's participation principle. They are inactive and always be a receiver. They are used to what Mr. Banharn always did for them. This led to the problems that people do not acknowledge about their rights and duties as the citizens.

Group 2: local administrative organizations in rural areas

The mayor of the Donchedi sub-district municipality, Donchedi district (2017), argued that

Suphanburi's way of life is the main obstacle to the people's participation in local policy making and ordinance making process because of the following reasons which are;

1) There two different groups of people, one is people in the city where they have secured job and income so they can survive without much participation. Two is people in the remote areas who need to rely on the support from the government so they participate more.

2) The well educated people have better job opportunity, so they tend to work outside their residential areas. This is the difficulty of the local administrative organizations to assemble these people to participate in public hearing for collecting quality comments. Moreover, the one who left in the areas are the senior citizens who are inactive.

3) The foundation of this municipality was not from the people initiative but from the order of the central government. So, the public conscious is not about the owner of the owner of the organization, but it is the ruler and the ruled system. The villagers see the municipality as the ruler so they would follow what municipality demand instead of being participants as a co-owner.

Participant 4, the chief executive of the sub-district administrative organization (2017), opined that

The most important problem is the villagers are working outside of the district. Only the elderly and shop owners in the market are staying in the area. They would return home when it is during the election because the election has the punishment. Due to this way of life, they don't think that participation is important.

The chief executive of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), mentioned that

The way of life of the people of Suphanburi is the culture that is always waiting for the support from the central government. Because of the populist government policy, the people are looking forward to get more support from the government rather than developing themselves to be more competitive in the market. So, the way of life is the obstacle to the participation.

The chief administrator of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), stated that

I have been working here for almost 20 years. I see a little of development of people's participation. The people here are farmers. Their way of life is to wake up in the morning and go to the fields, then come back home in the evening. The people are used to be supported by the central government. They will not be more active or initiative, if the central government is so supportive. Moreover, the transferred missions from the central government are not consistent with the rural society context.

The chief administrator of the Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), opined that

The villagers' way of life depresses them to be not confidence. They would rely on the leaders. They do not have their own initiative. They do not care about the regulations. Economic status is one of the factor but not the main. I think the main problem is the way of life. You see? People here are all the farmers. Their daily life is just morning go to work in the fields and evening return to home for sleeping. It is the life cycle. Expecting them to be more active in politics is so difficult. But the election is the best way for them to

reflect their thoughts. They just vote for the good man, if that man is bad, next time vote for someone else.

The chief executive of the Bo-Suphan sub-district administrative organization, Songphinong district (2017), argued that

The economic status is important, but I think because of the way of life of Suphanburi is the problem. They are living in the remote area where the daily life is to work in the fields. The expectation of the government to see the political active is difficult. Moreover, the problems are not a big issue that affects their quality of life. So, they see that not participating in the policy making process is a big deal for them, but it is a big deal for us as a local administrative organization.

The chief administrator of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), argued that

Suphanburi people way of life is about believing in the leader. They do not brave enough to express their thought in the public. So, the leader is the key person which local administrative organizations should have a strong networking of leaders in order to call for participation in this area.

In summary, the way of life of the local people of Suphanburi province might be an obstacle to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances because the local Suphanburi citizens are facing problems with the young generation working outside their hometown. The majority of the population, who are staying in the local administrative organizations' areas, is the elderly and the lower income people; therefore, the participants in the public hearing events are not politically-active persons—they tend to follow what the local executives and community leaders propose for the local development plans. Moreover, the local ordinances as well are mostly a result of the demands of central government policy, which requires that the local administrative organizations enact ordinances in accordance with higher-level

laws. For example, the act of public health requires the local administrative organizations to enact the ordinance in accordance with the act. In addition, the different participation characteristics between the people in the urban and rural areas of Suphanburi are an obstacle to the participation in the ordinance creation process. This is because the way of life of the people in urban areas is better than that of the people in the rural areas in terms of infrastructure, education, and occupation. The people in the urban areas have secure jobs and receive regular monthly salaries, while the rural people are farmers whose income relies on the weather conditions and the price of agricultural products. Therefore, the new generation with a better education level in the rural areas who could be the future of their hometown tends to seek better jobs in the Bangkok area rather staying at home and continuing what their parents are doing. This affects the participation level and quality of the outcome of the people's participation in local policy creation; the participants are mostly the elderly and farmers, who are always waiting for support from the government.

4.3 Problem Solutions and Recommendations from Stakeholders

According to the collected data on the obstacles to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process in Suphanburi's local administrative organizations, the stakeholders, i.e. local executives, provincial executives, government officers in local administrations, community leaders, and experts, have recommended the solutions to problems as follows.

The solutions to problems and recommendations from the local executives, provincial executives, government officers in local administrations, community leaders, and experts include the following:

- 1) Problems with laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrative organizations
- 2) Problems with the local political culture, the patronage system, and buying votes
- 3) Problems with the society and economy, poverty, the level of education, and the local way of life

The stakeholders' recommendations are as follows.

Participant 4, a full-time professor in public law, Faculty of Law, Assumption University (2017), recommended that

I agree on laying a good foundation about democracy like educating people on their rights and duties of the citizen for the future of Thai's democracy. But in the context of Thailand, we need the measure that forcing them to participate like law and regulations. Thai government has enacted many rules regulations for promoting the people's participation in local politics and policy making process that commanding the local administrative organizations to arrange the participation promotion activities such as public hearing in the local policy making. We could see that there is the development of public participation after launching this measure. Therefore, I recommend amending the rules and regulations to be fewer conditions in order to open for the people's initiative. Moreover, there should be the supporting agencies or government fund for people enlist for local ordinance initiative.

Mr. Ekapan Injai-eau, mayor of the Suphanburi town municipality (2017), recommended that

If we trust the in democracy that the elected politician is the one people supporting, we should give them more freedom to work for local development. Do not be suspicious that they must be corrupted because we already have anti-corruption agencies to investigate this. And if they are very corrupted, I guarantee that nobody will vote him back again even though how much money you buy the votes. Do you know about statistic of local election in Thailand that 53% of the local executives are not elected again for the second terms? This means that they knew and learned who is good or bad? Especially current situation, we have online social networking which it is so fast for information distribution. In the case of the regulations, they should have one general regulation that cover all the local missions which is not so detail like the fees, taxing, and alike. You should be more flexible for the

local administrative organizations to adapt the regulations for their social context. The most important is to solve the people's problems that the government should promote the consciousness of citizenship on participation. Reform the education like curriculum to be consistent to the reality and each local context. The cause of not participating is about the self-benefits which means that they are too selfish.

The mayor of the Donchedi sub-district municipality, Donchedi district (2017), recommended that

The government should amend all of the laws related to the local administrations to be consistent to the real context. I think our country need some measure that really could enforce the people like putting the punishment if you do not participate as same as in the general election. People will be scared of the punishment and they would participate more. After that, they would get used to participate automatically.

Mr. Pipob Boontham, vice governor responsible for local administration (2017), recommended that

I think we should develop the local leaders to have good leadership and good local executives. They should not have double standard in working and be favoritism that give the favor for their partisans first. You are elected to be representatives and executives of the whole sub-district or municipality. You cannot only take of your own village or supporters. Because we cannot change the local way of life that they always follow the leaders' choice, so we should develop the leaders to have more capability and capacity to promote the transparent working then I believe that the followers would give more participation because they are not boring of bad management. Even though the government issued more regulations and criteria of management, if that leaders are bad the implementation would not work.

The chief of the Bang Plama district of local administration office (2017) recommended the same as the vice governor in the following interview excerpt:

You should see the good example of the successful in participation in the SAOs where they have good and strong leaders. The villagers would vote for him without using any money but only using your effort in working for the villagers. For example, one of the SAO in this district is using the garbage truck to serve the needs of their people by load the garbage to dump in the other areas and bring back rocks to fix the small streets in the SAO. The other activities that show the good effort in working of the chief executive is arranging many projects for community development like canal clearing. This would make the people to be more active and they would not see the SAO is useless. My suggestion is you must have a strong and good leader that does not care much about local politics.

The mayor of the Khaodin sub-district municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district, suggested that

We should not push the burden to the people to solve the participation problems. They would not initiate the participation themselves. In my opinion, I think the main person who could solve this problem is the municipality. We should work proactively and closely to the people. We can do public relations that give them the information about the advantages of participation. We can open the floor for the people to express their thoughts and comments. Give them more confidence and feel that they own the municipality. They also will give us trust and positive attitude to the participation rather than commandeering or forcing them by the laws which you will only get negative feedback and not to participate.

Participant 8, the mayor of the Bang Plama district (2017), suggested that

Good leaders could lead to have higher participation. the leaders must be sincere to their people. Although we have the best laws in the world, the corrupted person would be able to find the gap that they benefit from. The government launches the best policy but the leaders would not implement, it would be useless. If the people have good leaders with sincere management, then they would not be boring to participate and see the advantage of participation because they have good leaders.

Mr. Boonchoo Chansuwan, chief executive of the Suphanburi provincial administrative organization (2017), suggested that

You must embed this thought to the next generations about what is important of participation. Meanwhile, you must teach them how to think and be more creative, not just force them to remember and take the exam. Creative kids would have confidence to participate and express their thoughts in the local administrations. Thai society never is opening minded for the change and new generations. We always block them with the complaints. We must give them chance to express and understand the rights with respecting others' rights also.

The chief of the Muang Suphanburi district office for local administration(2017) recommended that:

I think we should reboot the whole system. We have to build up the new generations with full of public consciousness, and education about the rights and duties. Therefore, the education reform is important for the building new generations to solve the old Thai society problem that always follow what the leaders say that might be the obstacle to the people's participation.

The chief executive of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), suggested that:

I think we need new gens. We can't change anything for the current gens. What I can see in my areas is the new gens about 24-25 year old; they participate more and active more. The laws in no need to change much, but we must change the people.

The chief administrator of the Danchang sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district, (2017), supported the comments from previous executives as follows:

The offhand solution is to create strong people's networking in the areas. We should build from the base that the ordinary villagers change their thought that we are not their boss but the servants. We are the one who will serve them and help them solve the problem. In additions, we must make them see the advantages of the participation. You must not just do follows what the orders or the laws forces to do, then they would not see the reasons or the importance of participations. Here we changed our strategy for making them see the importance of participation in municipality activities. Finally, the participation rate would increase and you will be trusted by the villagers and the boss and subordinates relationship would be gone.

The chief executive of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), suggested regarding the future development of people's participation as follows:

The development of participation is getting better and better in my SAO. This is due to the change of SAO policy to be proactive working with the local people. We could create the people networking and acknowledged of the rights and participation of the people. The council and the members are more active and having close relationship to the local people. We change the meeting

venue to the temple hall and it had a very good feedback. They could see the results of their tax that we are working from their tax.

The chief administrator of the Plabplachai sub-district administrative organization, U-thong district (2017), interestingly suggested regarding the central government policy on local administration as follows:

I think problem of level and quality of education of the people is hard to solve, but we can solve participation problem by good public relations or giving simple and easy understanding information to the people. The government should not launch the one size fits all of the local administrative organizations subsidize budget policy which giving the budget by the population density, but it should arrange by the necessity of each local administrative organization. For instance, the city or town municipalities would get more budget, though they could collect more tax than the small SAOs. Meanwhile, all of the local administrative organizations are having similar responsible tasks, the small SAOs have to utilize most of the budget to day to day jobs and not much money left for local development with the small amount of the government subsidize budget. Therefore, I suggest the government should change this policy in order to boost up the capabilities and capacity of the SAOs. This might change the people's mindset of boring to participate because they would get nothing to be more active because they could see something more tangible than before if they participate. The second phase for my suggestion is to reconsider the status of each local administrative organization that which one should be merged or reorganization to cope with the current situation. I think the local administrative organizations should be established based on populations and economic status not just by the government order; otherwise it would be messy again as the SAOs.

The chief administrator of the Nongmakhamong sub-district administrative organization, Danchang district (2017), suggested on the development of local political participation as follows:

Create learning process for villagers. We may have to set up a special budget to educate villagers for the acknowledgment of rights and duties. And the local administrative organizations must work proactively and approach the public to create a sense of sincerity to develop and create a sense of citizenship and ownership of the area.

The chief executive of the Nongyasai sub-district administrative organization, Nongyasai district (2017), suggested the solutions on participation in Suphanburi as follows:

I suggest two phase solutions which are short and long term policy. Short term is to force the local administrative organizations to be proactive working closely to the people by changing the leaders' policy and visions. The organizations should open more space for expression and providing more information for the locals. The long term is about reforming the whole local administrations structure and education system in order to grooming the new gens with good education and understanding of rights and duties of citizen. However, the urgent problem that we should solve first is agricultural products price because the villagers rely on the price very much. If the living problems cannot solve, I think the other problem could not be solved too.

The chief of the Donchedi district of local administration office (2017), suggested on economic policy as follows:

I think we must solve the economic problem first. There are so many poor people. The farmers are full of dept. they would not be able to think about doing something else. If they have enough money for basic livings then we develop the education to help them to have more opportunity and knowledge about rights and duties of citizenship. Moreover, the local government officers should be more active not just finish the day-to-day jobs. The most important is the decentralization problem that the government should really decentralize the power to the local administrative organizations.

The chief executive of the Bo-Suphan sub-district administrative organization, Songphinong district (2017), suggested on how to bring back the young generation in his area to work in their hometown in order to increase the participation rate as follows:

We have tried so hard on public relations and giving more information to the villagers. But the problem is the economic statuses of the locals are not attractive for the new gens to stay at their homeland and develop the local participation. They are all working outside the areas because there are better job opportunities. Although you try so hard to attract them for participate in the public hearing for the local ordinance making, the new gens who are good educated are working outside the areas and would not come back to participate in this events. So, I think we should solve the roots problem of local economic to be more attractive and opportunities for the new gens to stay at their homeland.

The chief executive of the Nongsadao sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), suggested as follows:

We have to build the new generations with reforming the education and local economic in order to be more attractive for the new gens to stay and help develop the future of their homes. Otherwise, they are all gone out for better life in the downtown. Therefore, we should have such a good government policy on supporting more to the local administrations. The government should afraid of the local politicians' corruptions because we are the one who are elected by the local people.

The Chief executive of Nongpaknak sub-district administrative organization, Samchuk district (2017), suggested on government economic policy for lifting up quality of life as follows:

The government should solve the economic problem by supporting the people for job opportunity, supporting the farmers by subsidize the agricultural product price like corns, rice, or pumpkins. Promoting other jobs opportunity to attract the people to stay at their homeland. Make them see the value of their homeland so that they would not leave their home for better job in Bangkok and left only elderly at home for us to take care of. It is very difficult to develop if you only have the elderly.

The chief executive of the Makhamlom sub-district administrative organization, Bang Plama district (2017), suggested on economic policy as follows:

I don't think people's participation rely on education development only. We should solve the economic problem first. The money in the pocket could change their life. If they don't have money, they must be working too hard to fulfill their living of the families. We will not be able to ask for their participation, if they still have to work a lot for making a living. The government should think about how to make the new generations staying at their homeland rather going in the city for better job, otherwise the local participation would be left only for senior citizens.

The municipal clerk (2017) of the Suphanburi town municipality recommended that

I think we should solve whole 3 problems with step by step policy. Firstly, we should solve the poverty by creating job opportunity and increasing income. Secondly, they have sufficient money and economic status, and then they have more chance to have good education. If you only provide them good education but not developing the locals economic and job opportunity, they would migrate to the metropolitans for better life. You will not get quality people's participation. finally, both problems are solved but the participation is still low then we have to consider the laws that might be the obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy making process.

The recommendations from the local executives' focus group (2017) were as follows.

We agreed that government should truly decentralize the authority to the local government. We must reform the local administrations structure. The freedom should be given to the local agencies. And give them trust that they are able to manage their own locals. But in the present, the government always prohibits everything with one size fits all budget policy. The people are boring of the local administrations because we cannot help them for a better life. If the government really decentralize the authority with good supportive budget, the people would see the benefits of participation because we can allocate more budget for development rather than spending all the budget to officers salary and day-to-day missions.

The community leaders' focus groups results (2017) suggested as follows:

Firstly, the change of participation should start from the people. We should embed the understanding and the knowledge of rights and duties of citizenship to the new generations. They should aware of their ownership of the homeland. Secondly, the change of mindset to participation principle of the current generation is too difficult. What we could do now is just help them understand the basic rights and the advantages of participation. for long term change, you must embed the knowledge to the new generations. In order to do this, the government should solve economic problems, income distribution problems, and social inequality. If these problems have been solved, the people would not be suffered from poverty and inequality so that they could see the advantages of the participation in local ordinance and policy making. Otherwise, they would not see the importance of local politics but focusing only on making a living as priority tasks.

According to above interviews, the researcher can summarize the recommendations from the stakeholders as follows.

1) Recommendations on laws, rules, and regulations related to the local administrations

The government should reconsider the laws, rules, and regulations related to the people's participation in local administration promotion. The Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E.2542 should be amended by decrease the minimum required number of signatures of the eligible voters or eliminate the procedure of ordinance proposing to the council for consideration, and the arrangement of supporting agencies to the local people for ordinance drafting process. In addition, there should be a middle person or agency to the local politics that can support the people with fairness. In the case of regulations that are obstacles to the people's participation in the local policymaking process, the government should reconsider the regulations in order to eliminate some of the conditions and to give more freedom to the local administrative organizations regarding budget allocation for participation activity promotion. Lastly, the government should issue regulations that force both the people and the local administrative organizations to be more knowledgeable about the advantages of the participation principle, such as requiring the people's participation in council meetings or public hearings on the local development plan-making.

2) Recommendations on bureaucratic structure, decentralization, local leadership, and initiatives regarding the people's networking

The decentralization to the local administration should be reformed. The central government should truly decentralize authority to the local administrations and provide more freedom regarding local policymaking and policy decision-making, while the central government's supervision shall remain in order to retain the orderliness and legitimacy of local administrative organizations. The supervision of the central government should provide more freedom in local budget allocations. In the case of task transference to the local administrative organizations, it is obvious that it should be done in order to decrease the workload of the central government, but the transferring must include sufficient budget for supporting those tasks. Moreover, the subsidized budget from the central government should be reconsidered in order to

cope with each local condition because the government budget allocation for local administration subsidizing has been allocated considering the size of the population of that local administrative organization. However, the transferred tasks from the central government are similar. With the small amount of subsidized budget, the small local administrative organizations would not have sufficient budget for local development. Therefore, the government should allocate more money to small local administrative organizations instead of large local administrative organizations.

The local leadership is one of the keys points for promoting people's participation. The government should promote knowledge sharing and the organization learning method in local administrations by sharing the experience of successful management and participation in local administrative organizations—from successful local leaders to new local leaders. In addition, the government should encourage local leaders to work proactively and closely with the local people in order to respond to the request of the people immediately. The proactive manner of working could increase trust and participation rather than boredom on the part of the local people because they would understand more about the importance of local administrations and their responsibility. Moreover, the local people could access to a greater extent the local executives, whom they elected to serve them rather than the traditional management style, which was a relationship between the boss and subordinates or between those of a higher and lower social status, which discourages them from participation. The local leaders must not use the advantages of this system for their personal benefits, which could favored their partisans and unfairly respond to the needs of the people, which would decrease the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process.

Furthermore, the local administrative organizations should promote the initiative of strong local people networking in the areas via representatives or community leaders that could distribute information thoroughly and could ask for cooperation in every activity from the local people. When they can initiate such strong people's networking, the people's participation rate would be higher due to their knowledge of the information from the leaders and local administrative organizations. This would create a closer relationship between the local executives and the local people.

3) Recommendations on socio-economic problems, i.e. level of education and poverty

The government should educate the people so that they understand the local political system in order to understand the local political structure, and the authority and responsibilities of local administrative organizations by emphasizing educating the people—from small communities to the nation itself. This would help change their mindset and attitude toward the local administrations and democracy. Furthermore, the government should emphasize the education of new generations, where democratic principles and a democratic political culture must be embedded in the curricula in order to get them used to participation in local administration and be knowledgeable of their responsibility as citizens. This would be the foundation of democracy in Thailand.

Furthermore, the solutions to socio-economic problems and poverty could be accomplished at two levels of policy, the national level and the local level. At the national level, the inequality of income could be solved by short-term policy on agricultural product price subsidizing by the government, with long-term policy on skill training and finding job opportunities for the people. These policies would help the people live better lives and make a living for their families. Because the majority of the population in Suphanburi province are in the agricultural sector and suffer from poverty because of the effects of the crisis of the low prices of agricultural products, the government should subsidize the prices but only for a short period of time. For the sustainability of agricultural prices, the government should encourage agricultural agencies to employ innovations for developing the quality and quantity of agricultural products. At the local policy level, the local administrative organizations should be policy implementers that help support job training centers in the communities and be alternative market finders for the farmers in the areas, who do not always rely on government subsidization. Lastly, if the local people have a better quality of life, economic status, and sufficient income for making a living, they would be able to change their way of living, from relying on government subsidizing to self-reliance. In addition, they also could support their children in obtaining a better education, and better local economic conditions could attract more newly-educated young people to work and stay in and develop their local areas.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the research results derived from the qualitative research methods, which employed in-depth interviews and the focus group technique in order to obtain information on the people's participation in the ordinance creation in local administrative organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand. The research aimed to study the problems regarding the people's participation and their initiatives. The research results, which will answer the research objectives, will be discussed and described in this chapter. Moreover, policy recommendations and recommendations for future research will be presented.

This research studied the problems regarding the people's participation in local ordinance initiatives with the following research objectives: 1) to study the development of local administrations in Suphanburi, emphasizing people's participation in the policy creation process, i.e. local ordinances; 2) to study and identify the obstacles to the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiatives in the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi; and 3) to provide solutions to the problems regarding the people's participation in local administrations in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for the country of Thailand as a whole. In addition, the research objectives have been covered and answered through the qualitative research method by collecting data from related documents, in-depth interviews, and the focus group technique. The key informants were the persons responsible for the local administrations of Suphanburi. For example, the executives of provincial offices, the executives of local administrative organizations, community leaders, and legal experts were interviewed. The first research objective could be answered using documentary research and in-depth interviews. In addition, the data from the in-depth interviews and focus groups could be used to answer the second and third research objectives. The findings of this research mainly derived from the data collected from the in-depth interviews with the

key informants, which were consistent with the research hypotheses, indicating that three problems—laws, the political culture, and socio-economics problems—were obstacles to the people’s initiative in the local ordinance creation process. The conclusions regarding the research results can be described as follows.

5.1 Research Conclusions

5.1.1 The Development and the Characteristics of the People’s Participation in the Local Policy Process and Ordinances in Suphanburi Province

The researcher employed field survey research in the Suphanburi area in 10 different districts and found that the physical conditions of the location could be divided into 2 types: urban and rural. This is because the characteristics of the participation and ways of living of the local people are different between the two groups of people. The urban areas consist of the town municipality in Muang district, and the other local administrative organizations are located in the rural areas. In the data collection, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with two groups of local administrative organizations: group 1 was the local administrative organizations located in the urban areas and group 2 was the local administrative organizations located in the rural areas. In addition, because Suphanburi province’s main income is from the agricultural products, such as rice, sugar cane, and rubber, the majority of the population is in the agricultural sector and are working as farmers, employees in agricultural product manufacturing, and rubber plantations. After the survey with the local administrative organizations in the urban and rural areas, this research found that the overall participation rates in any activities organized by the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi were a medium to low level. In addition, there was a difference between rural and urban areas in terms of the characteristics and level of the people’s participation in local policy and ordinance creation. In Group 1, the people in the city tend to participate less than in the countryside. This is due to the city residents having various occupations, especially those with regular monthly salaries, such as government officers or employees in stores and businesses, as well as traders in the market, etc. Due to the variety of local people’s occupations and time

constraints, as discussed earlier, it is very difficult to assemble the people to meet the required number of signatures when the local administrative organizations request cooperation from the people to participate in various activities or public hearings organized by agencies. This is because the time of the meetings often does not match the time when the people have to go to work during the day time. In addition, the downtown of Suphanburi has adequate infrastructure provided by the government and town municipality, i.e. roads, electricity, water, etc., and therefore it is considered that the support from the local administrative organization is not necessary since the people think that they can take care of themselves.

On the other hand, Group 2, the people in the rural areas, are different from those in the urban areas; most of them are still farmers earning lower incomes and they do not have a regular salary like the people in the city, which is the main factor affecting the difference in the characteristics of the people's participation in the local policymaking process. In the rural areas, people tend to participate more because they think that the local administrative organization must respond to their requests. They also think that the executives and the members of the council have been voted into office by them and therefore they must respond immediately. The general requests from the people in the rural areas concern infrastructure, i.e. roads, electricity, and water. However, a commandeering method is necessary in some areas in order to meet the number of participants required by law, but it is a minority.

5.1.1.1 Activities Promoting the People's Participation

The people's participation promotion activities organized by the local administrative organizations can be separated into 2 types: 1) cultural activities, i.e. Loy Kratong, Songkran, and Buddhist Holy day; and 2) government campaign activities, i.e. public hearing, seminars, job training, Suphanburi's good young people project, and the drugs free village project. People are interested in participating in cultural activities more than government campaign activities.

The people do not see the importance of some activities organized by the local administrative organizations, such as seminars on drugs, laws, or job training, although these activities are useful to them. They tend not to participate in these activities; however, they tend to participate more in cultural activities where they will not only participate but also become involved in the preparation process and be more

active in hosting ceremonies. This is because the people think that the government campaign activities are not important to their lives, which forces the local administrative organizations to use commandeering practices or giving small gifts to attract more people to participate in those activities.

Most of the activities that promote the people's participation were seen to be organized by the local administrative organizations under the order of the central government and provincial office. These activities, such as public hearings, drugs free villages, good young people projects, and others, are mostly co-organized by the district office or provincial office. Moreover, the characteristics of participation of the people from Group 1 and Group 2 are not so different. Furthermore, some of the local administrative organizations can obtain cooperation from volunteer networking, such as public health volunteers or civil protection volunteers.

In sum, the cause of the low participation in government campaign activities is that the local people might not see the importance of the activities or might see them as a waste of time and causing them to lose benefits from leaving their jobs. Even though the agencies have carried out adequate public relations, the number of participants has not met the target. The information might not be received by everybody in the area or news distribution channels are still limited. Some public channels are not accessible, such as the official websites, or the Facebook page of the local administrative organizations. The most attractive events are elderly premiums distributions, small gifts, or some intensive in order to attract the locals.

5.1.1.2 The Process of the Enactment of Local Ordinances

The process of the enactment of local ordinances can be divided into 3 patterns following the category of local administrative organizations, which are the provincial administrative organization, the municipality, and the sub-district administrative organization. The local administrative organization processes of the enactment of local ordinances are similar in terms of the number of days for council considerations and the supervisor's consideration. There is one small difference—the ordinance approval person of each type of local administrative organization is different. The provincial administrative organization and municipality ordinance approval person is the provincial governor, while that for the sub-district administrative organization is the chief of the district.

However, the current process of the local ordinance enactment is not a problem regarding the people's participation in local ordinance initiatives. Furthermore, the law is open to the public to observe council meetings freely at any time, but, as mentioned earlier, the people tend not to do this unless that meeting results enacting the ordinance will affect their lives; then they will participate more.

5.1.1.3 The Arrangement of Public Hearings in the Development Plan Creation of the Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi

The public hearings for people's comments on any projects initiated by the local administrative organizations are the best channel that is open for the people's participation in terms of both local management and local operation checking. The regulations of the Ministry of Interior require that any of the projects or development plans initiated by the local administrative organizations be approved by the public hearing events. In the case of Suphanburi, all of the public hearings are organized using the annual budget plan of the local administrative organizations under government regulation enforcement, such as public hearings for community development plans, public hearings for waste management, and public hearings for businesses that are harmful to the public health. There is a difference between the characteristics of the participation in public hearings of the people in the urban and rural areas of Suphanburi. The participation rate is moderately high in the rural areas, while it is low in the urban areas. The reason is that the occupations of the people in the rural areas are not varied—most of them are farmers in rice fields, sugar cane fields, and rubber plantations. Half of the participants were senior citizens that stayed at home, which is easy for assembling them. However, the large numbers of participants in public hearings were essentially from the local administrative organizations, including other agendas in the events in order to attract the participants, such as elderly premium distributions, free meals, free blanket projects in winter, and so forth. Furthermore, the problem of falsifying the signatures of the participants in the public hearings in order to meet the government's requirement was found in some local administrative organizations. On the other hand, the local administrative organizations in the urban areas are facing problems concerning the number of participants in public hearings—the people tend not to participate in the public

hearing events. The number of participants would be higher if the public hearing was very important to their living or would have a strong impact on their lives. One of key informants stated that the local development projects always serve the executives' benefits, not those of the people, so they tend not to participate.

The cause of the problems in conducting the local public hearings in Suphanburi is from government policy regarding the people's participation promotion. The government would like to increase the participation in local administration by enforcing the law to force the local administrative organizations to conduct public hearings for any projects. Although public hearings are an important process, the people are often bored, as stated earlier in the dissertation, in participating in every project and this makes the people not see the importance of the public hearing process.

5.1.2 Problems and Causes of the Problems that are Obstacles to the People's Participation in Local Ordinance Initiatives

In this research, the hypotheses were as follows:

1) The laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrative organizations are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H1)

2) The political culture, i.e. the influence of local politicians, the patronage system and personal kinship, and buying votes are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H2)

3) Socio-economic status, i.e. level of education, poverty, and way of life are obstacles to the people's participation in the creation of local ordinances by the people's initiative. (H3)

Therefore, the research results were as follows.

5.1.2.1 Problems Regarding the Laws, Rules, and Regulations Related to Local Administrative Organizations

1) The Act of Local Ordinance Initiative B.E. 2542

In this case, the problems related to the details of this Act can be described according to two.

(1) Problems concerning the processes and conditions of local ordinances by the people's initiatives

In the processes and conditions of local ordinances by the people's initiatives in accordance with the Act of Local Ordinance Initiative B.E. 2542, the study revealed two obstacles: 1) problems regarding the number of eligible voters to enlist for a request for a local ordinance; and 2) problems with the proposal process for a local ordinance by the people's initiative.

The study found that the required number of eligible voters' signatures gathering for proposing the draft of local ordinance by people's initiative is an obstacle. In practical terms, the enlistment for proposing a local ordinance is very difficult in the Suphanburi areas because the conditions require more than 50% of the registered residents of the local administrative organization. As it is well known that the registered residents do not always reside in the area. There might be some people that have to work in the downtown area or are students in a different province. In the case of one local administrative organization as indicated earlier, therefore the proposal of an ordinance must be attached with more than 5,000 signatures. This is impossible in reality.

One of the problems with the proposing process of the local ordinance by the people's initiative is that the act requires that a list of the enlisting people must be attached with the draft of the local ordinance, a list of the signatures, and the reference documents for the people's identification. In greater detail, the people that want to sign up for enlisting must attach a copy of their identification card with their signature. Additionally, the proposed draft of the local ordinance to the council must have clear requirements and it must be under the authority of that local administrative organization. Further, the name list of the representatives of the people enlisting that have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the people in the local ordinance consideration process must be attached.

(2) Problems concerning the stakeholders in local ordinances by the people's initiatives

According to the interviews with the stakeholders, i.e. local executives, government officers, and community leaders, they had coherent points of view on the knowledge about the law. Indeed, some local executives and community

leaders were seen to not be knowledgeable of this act. Furthermore, the people in Suphanburi thought that the ordinance creation, development planning, and public management were the responsibility of only the local administrative organizations and the executives—they only knew that if they lost benefits from the ordinance, they had the right to veto, yet they did not know about their rights concerning the creation of ordinances. Lastly, some of the local executives thought that this act might be a political tool of opponents to discredit the management of the executives.

2) Problems with the Rules and Regulations Regarding Local Administrative Organizations

The researcher found that the rules and regulations enforced by the government on the local administrative organizations had the main objective of promoting the people's participation in local administration, such as the requirement of public hearings in local development plan creation and public hearings for annual budget plan making. Some of the local executives admitted that the outdated rules and regulations of the local administration affected the local policy implementation, especially in terms of the people's participation promotion activities, such as regulations concerning the budget allocations of the local administrative organizations.

In summary, the details of the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E.2542 might not be the main obstacle to the implementation of this act. In the case of Suphanburi, the act is not suitable for the local administration conditions because it is not in a business district or industrial estate, which requires specific laws to manage the orderliness of the province; on the contrary, it is in an agricultural area with abundant rice and sugar cane fields. In addition, local political conflicts are rarely found in the areas, either. Therefore, the local problems are not so complicated in terms of finding solutions. The act might be a good channel for promoting direct democracy, but it is not suitable for Suphanburi's conditions. There are only two conditions for implementing this act, which are: 1) if it had a strong impact on Suphanburi's way of life, or 2) if the act is used as a political tool by opponents to discredit the local executives.

5.1.2.2 Local Political Culture Problems

There are 3 problems in the local political culture of Suphanburi: 1) the influence of local politicians, and 2) the foster system and kinship and connections of the local politicians and, 3) buying votes.

1) Influence of local politicians

Almost 90% of the local executives have been successful in their business, which is the main income of the local people, i.e. rice mills. The elected local executives in Suphanburi also mostly inherit their from generation to generation, so the local politicians are from the same group of people or have a kinship relationship with the local executives. Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa was the 21st prime minister of Thailand and he is the most influential person in Suphanburi politics. He is a truly influential person of Suphanburi, both in terms of political thought and the decision-making of the people. This is one of the causes of the slow development of the people's participation in local policymaking and ordinance creation in Suphanburi. The participation could only be seen during the general election both national and local level.

Lastly, the influence of the local politicians is partly an obstacle to the people's participation in the local policymaking process. Why it is only partly an obstacle? In the case of Suphanburi, there is only one "thought leader," who is Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archar. His philosophy is democratic, so he believes in the people's participation principle. The local political culture of Suphanburi is what Mr. Banharn has done for all of his life to be an example for all local executives. Moreover, the local people will always vote for a person that is working like him, forcing the local executives to follow his political path. Finally, online social networking also helps to prevent the people from the influence of the local politicians.

2) Patronage system and kinship and the connections of the local politicians

The local administrative organizations in Suphanburi have adopted a foster system through the kinship of local council members and local executives. This is rooted in Suphanburi society. We can observe this in many ceremonies in the areas, such as funerals, weddings, and ordination ceremonies, in which the local executives and community leaders often participate even though the

host is not their relatives. One of the obstacle's to the people's participation is that the local executives give priority to their partisans, which leads to the boredom of the people regarding the local politics. There is an interdependent relationship between the local executives and community leaders in the rural areas of Suphanburi. The community leaders usually answer questions by giving credit to the local executives.

The Patronage systems is used when someone does not want to sacrifice or lose his or her benefits. It can also be a give and take between the authorities and benefit losers. In Suphanburi's local administrations, the foster system is unavoidable. There are benefit exchanges via the foster system between local politicians and the provincial government officers, and this leads to obstacles in the development of local administrations in Suphanburi because the foster system supports low quality local politicians.

3) Buying votes

The problem of buying votes is an obstacle to the development of democracy both at the national and local level. Although Suphanburi has only one dominating political party, which is the Charthaipattana party led by Mr. Banharn Silpa-archa, the influencer on the people's decision-making, local politics has revealed that the buying vote problem still exists. The high competition in local politics of Suphanburi province causes buying vote problems. However, in Suphanburi, the buying vote problem does not occur at the national election level, as for example with elections of the members of the parliament, because the Chartthaipattana party has a secure bastion which helps the party always win the election.

On the other hand, the buying vote problem tends to occur in local elections because of the high competition of local leaders. The local government officers have admitted that there votes are bought, especially in the rural areas of Suphanburi. The cause of the buying vote problem is the socio-economic conditions of Suphanburi, where most of the people are suffering in poverty. Buying votes is an easier way for the people to earn something from their political participation activities than participating in local policy and ordinance creation.

5.1.2.3 Socio-economic Problems

According to the field survey in Suphanburi province, 90% of the areas are in the agricultural sector, i.e. rice fields, sugar cane fields, and livestock farms. The majority of the population is farmers. The level of education of these people is at the mandatory education level, which is the elementary school level of 6th grade. In addition, Suphanburi's gross income per capita per year is in the lower rank of the country's overall ranking. The Suphanburi people are suffering from poverty because of the agricultural product pricing crisis. Lastly, the local way of life includes the belief in a ruler and in a system of being ruled. People tend to follow the leader's advice. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (H3) can be divided into 3 subject matters: 1) level of education, 2) poverty and, 3) way of life.

1) Level of education

In the case of Suphanburi, there is a difference in terms of the level of education between two groups of people, those in the urban and those in the rural areas. The people in the urban areas of Suphanburi seem to be well educated in terms of understanding their basic rights and duties, but the factor affecting the level of the people's participation tends to be the consciousness of citizenship, as the people seem to be quite selfish—if they see that something has a direct impact on them from an ordinance for example, they will participate in its creation to a greater extent. On the other hand, the people in the rural areas have a lower level of education than those in the urban areas, so their knowledge of their rights and duties as citizens is also less. They do not recognize their rights, such as what their basic rights and duties as a citizen are. How can they exercise their rights in accordance with the law? However, a high level of participation can be found in the rural areas of Suphanburi where the people are working in the agricultural sector. This is due to the local executives' vision and capability in managing the increase in the people's participation rate.

Therefore, the level of education might not be the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance making process because good public relations and thorough information accessibility can provide the people with better knowledge about their rights and duties as citizens.

2) Poverty

Poverty is the main obstacle to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process. The majority of the population of Suphanburi work in the agricultural sector, and this results in their income per head per year being low, and it also means that they have fewer job opportunities for better living conditions. As they are working in the agricultural sector, their incomes depend on the price of the agricultural products, as indicated earlier, and these agricultural products are rice, sugar cane, and raw rubber, which are struggling with a low price crisis that makes the people rely solely on government price subsidization.

Furthermore, and as indicated earlier again, the poverty problem draws the people's attention away from seeing the importance of participation in local politics; they feel that they need to spend all of their time working to make a living. The main reason why people are not interested in being involved in the public hearing process is that they have to be absent from their work and they will lose their income from the employers, who own the plantations and the fields. They think that the participation in the public hearings is not as important as their work making their living. They also think that even if they participated in public hearings on local development budget plans, it would not make a big change to their life because overall the local budget, including government subsidization, is too small for the development of their hometown.

3) Way of life

The people's way of life is another obstacle to the development of democracy in Thailand. The nature of the Thai local people, especially people in the rural areas like Suphanburi, is to be humble and less confident in expressing their opinion in the public. Suphanburi's way of life in rural and urban areas does not accommodate the people's participation principle. Suphanburi's society does not give many options for people to live their life; the society depresses the capacity, capability, and confidence of the people. In addition, the people of Suphanburi are used to what the leader, Mr. Banharn, has always arranged for them. For this reason, they are inactive and always act as receivers. In the rural areas, the daily life of the people is to work in the fields. Their daily life is just in the morning go to work in the

fields and in the evening return home for sleeping. It is their life cycle. Expecting them to be more active in politics is so difficult.

Furthermore, the way of life of Suphanburi's local citizens is facing problems with the young generation people working outside their hometown. The majority of the population that are staying in the local administrative organizations areas is the elderly and the lower income people; therefore, the participants in the public hearing events are not the politically- active persons. The new generations with a better education level in the rural areas who will be the future of their hometown tend to seek better jobs in the downtown areas of Suphanburi rather staying at home and continuing what their parents are doing.

4) The Recommendations from Stakeholders

(1) Recommendations on laws, rules, and regulations related to the local administrations

a) The Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 should be amended in terms of the number of eligible voters enlisted, and the procedures to propose ordinances to the council.

b) The government should provide supporting agencies to the local people for the ordinance drafting process or middle persons or agencies that can support the people with fairness.

c) The government should reconsider the regulations to eliminate some conditions and give more freedom to the local administrative organizations in terms of budget allocation for participation activity promotion.

d) The government should issue regulations that force both the people and the local administrative organizations to be more knowledgeable of the advantages of the participation principle.

(2) Recommendations on the structure of bureaucracy, decentralization, local leadership, and the initiative of people's networking

a) The government should truly decentralize authority to the local administrations and provide more freedom regarding local policy-making and policy decision-making, while the central government's supervision should remain in order to retain orderliness and the legitimacy of the local administrative organizations.

b) The subsidized budget from government to the local administrative organizations should be reconsidered in order to cope with each local condition.

c) The government should promote knowledge sharing and organization learning methods in local administration by sharing the experience of successful local leaders and new local leaders in terms of management and participation in local administrative organizations.

d) The government should encourage the local leaders to work proactively and closely with the local people in order to respond to the requests of the people immediately.

e) The local people should be able to access the local executives, whom they elected to serve them, with greater ease.

f) The local leaders must not use the advantages of the system for their personal benefit, which could be favorable to their partisans and unfairly respond to the needs of the people

g) The local administrative organizations should promote the initiative of strong local people networking in the areas via representatives or community leaders,

(3) Recommendations on socio-economic problems, i.e. level of education and poverty

a) The government should educate the people so that they understand the local political system in order to be knowledgeable of the local political structure, and the authority and responsibilities of local administrative organizations.

b) The government should emphasize the education of the new generations, which must embed the democratic principle and a democratic political culture into their school curricula in order to make them get used to participation in local administration and to be aware of their responsibilities as citizens.

c) The government should solve the poverty problems of the rural areas people by using sustainable development policy.

5.1.3 Conclusions Regarding the People's Participation in The Public Policy Process in Terms of Local Ordinance Creation in Suphanburi, Thailand

The government has promoted the decentralization principle in accordance with the constitution of Thailand since B.E. 2540, 2550, and 2560. The main concepts of the intention of the constitution are to give more freedom to the local administrative organizations and to encourage the local people to participate in and be responsible for their own hometown. Moreover, the laws related to the local administrations also provide more channels for the people to exercise their rights through a direct democracy way, for example *via* ordinance initiatives. This is due to the lack of public relations, the level of education, poverty, and the local way of life. It might be that the people are not seeing the importance of local administrations.

According to the research results, the laws are not the main obstacles to the promotion of the people's participation in ordinance creation. The details of the act or related regulations are not the problems, but the people themselves are the problem, especially the local executives that they do not recognize the laws that are promoting direct democracy. The local people also lack of accessibility information and education about the laws. The main problems are the local political culture and socio-economic problems, where poverty significantly affects the people's participation in ordinance creation. Since the majority of the population in Suphanburi are in the agricultural sector, they tend to be lower income and suffer from agricultural product price crises. The people's participation requires a great deal of sacrifice of time; however, the lower income people tend not to participate because they have to be absent from their work, which will make them lose their daily income. Therefore, it is not the intention of the constitutions or the act to encourage the local people's participation.

In the case of Suphanburi, the recommendations are the solution to the problem of poverty and educating the local people to understand the importance of the rights and duties of citizens. Additionally, the right to participate in local administrations as the "owner" of their homeland, which is not the current situation, must always be a relationship between the central government and local executives.

According to the data collections both from the primary and secondary data, the researcher can make the following conclusions, as seen in the following tables.

Table 5.1 Table on the frequency of the key words regarding the obstacles to the people’s participation in ordinance creation in Suphanburi

Research Questions	Obstacles	Key Words from Interviews	Frequency of Answers
1. How does the development of local administrations in Suphanburi emphasize the people’s participation in the policymaking process and ordinance creation?	- The differences in the characteristics of participation between rural and urban areas of Suphanburi	- People in the urban areas tend to participate less than in the rural areas	15
	- The variety of occupations of people in the urban areas of Suphanburi	- The urban areas have better infrastructure than the rural areas, so they do not require much participation	10
	- The time constraints in conducting the public hearings of the local administrative organizations	- The people in urban areas have more secure jobs than the farmers in the rural areas	20
		- The people cannot leave their work for attending the public hearings organized by the local administrative organizations	35

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Research Questions	Obstacles	Key Words from Interviews	Frequency of Answers
2. Why have the local ordinances by the people's initiatives in Suphanburi never been enforced? What are the obstacles?	– The laws, rules, and regulations related to the promotion of the people's participation principle	– The requirements of the act of the local ordinance by people's initiative B.E. 2542 are too complicated.	20
		– The procedures of proposing an ordinance are too complicated.	20
	– The political culture, i.e. the influence of local politicians, the foster system, and buying votes	– No supporting agency from the government	25
		– There is no freedom in budget allocation in local administrative organizations.	30
		– The local leaders are the masterminds of the development of Suphanburi.	30
	– Socio-economic problems, i.e. poverty and level of education	– Mr. Banharn is the key person.	10
		– The local people are used to being the receivers and always need support from the government.	13
		– The foster system is unavoidable.	15
		– Local executives will always give benefits to their partisans.	27

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Research Questions	Obstacles	Key Words from Interviews	Frequency of Answers
		- The local people are bored with local administrations.	33
		- The majority of the population is farmers, who are poor.	41
		- The low income people cannot leave their work and sacrifice their time for participation.	37
		- The lack of knowledge of the rights and duties of citizenship	27
		- The lack of public relations on laws and regulations	28

Table 5.2 Table on the Conclusions and Recommendations from the Key Informants

Key Informants	Laws, Rules, And Regulation Problems	Local Political Culture Problems	Socio-Economic Problems	Recommendations
The provincial executives	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Strongly Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend the laws that are obstacles to the people's participation. - Develop the local leaders to have good leadership and good local executives. - Get rid of the foster system and favoritism to partisans. - Solve income inequality. - Improve the quality of life of the poor.
The executives of local administrative organizations	Not Agreed	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reform the decentralization. - Amend the laws that are obstacles to the people's participation. - Trust in local administrations. - Good leadership is needed. - Good public relations for information about rules and regulations

Table 5.2 (Continued)

Key Informants	Laws, Rules, And Regulation Problems	Local Political Culture Problems	Socio-Economic Problems	Recommendations
The chiefs of local administration offices	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Very strongly Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive working for the people in the local organization - Solve income inequality. - Improve quality of life. - Educate the local people. - Develop the economic status of the rural area in order to attract the new generations. - Innovations with agricultural products - Improve the quality of life. - Amend the laws that are obstacles to the people's participation. - Solve income inequality. - Improve the rural economic status. - Educate the local people.

Table 5.2 (Continued)

Key Informants	Laws, Rules, And Regulation Problems	Local Political Culture Problems	Socio-Economic Problems	Recommendations
Legal experts	Agreed	Agreed	Not Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measure forcing them to participate such as laws and regulations - Amend the rules and regulations so that there are fewer conditions in order to encourage the people’s initiatives.

5.2 Discussion

From the qualitative analysis of data, it was found that most of the obtained data were consistent with the research conceptual framework and the research hypotheses. The data collection focused on the confirmation of the three main hypotheses concerning the laws, the local political culture, and socio-economic problems. Moreover, the qualitative method used open-ended questions in order to obtain rich data that could describe the problems and causes of the problems mentioned earlier in the research questions. In this discussion, the data derived from the in-depth interviews and focus groups will be presented in order to answer the research questions and objectives as follows.

1) What is the development of local administration in Suphanburi emphasizing people's participation in policy making process and ordinance making?

According to the interviews with the provincial executives, local executives, and community leaders, the research results answered the questions—that Suphanburi has developed the local administrations following the central government policy on decentralization. The people's participation rate is medium to low in the urban areas, whereas the people in the rural areas exhibit higher participation. The reason why the people's participation rate in local administrations in the urban areas is lower is that the physical conditions and socio-economic status of the people in the downtown of Suphanburi area is adequate in terms of level of education, job security, and infrastructure provided by government. Therefore, the local people tend not be active or participate in the events organized by the local administrative organizations because they need no support from the government agencies. On the other hand, the rural areas of Suphanburi are covered by rice fields, sugar cane fields, and rubber plantations where the local people are farmers and laborers working in the fields and as agricultural product manufacturers. Obviously, the local people lack good infrastructures, good education, and sufficient income for making a living, so they tend to participate more in the local administrations, which would support and secure their lives.

According to the interviews, the best channel for promoting the participation in local ordinance creation is the public hearing events organized by the

local administrative organizations. However, the participation rate overall is medium to low in the Suphanburi areas. The Ministry of Interior requires all of the local administrative organizations to arrange public hearings for all policy creation, so the problems continue to occur. The requirements require that the number of participants be higher than 50% of the overall populations. In reality, not all people reside in their hometown but work and live in other provinces. Some of the local administrative organizations falsify the signatures in order to meet the requirements. Some of them have to include other agendas in order to attract more people to participate, such as elderly premium distributions.

2) Why have the local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi never been enforced? What have been the obstacles?

This research set three main hypotheses that are obstacles to the people's participation in local ordinance creation:

(1) Laws, rules, and regulations related to the promotion of the people's participation principle

(2) The political culture in Suphanburi, i.e. local politicians' influence, the foster system, and buying votes

(3) Socio-economic problems, i.e. the level of education and poverty and the local way of life

The research results revealed that all three main hypotheses were confirmed and consistent with the interviews with the key informants. However, the levels of agreement on the obstacles were different. According to Hypothesis 1, the laws, rules, and regulations are obstacles to the people's participation, which was agreed with by all of the key informants, but they were not considered to be the main obstacles. This is because although the conditions and requirements have been adjusted to be less strict, the key informants do not believe that the local people would participate more than in the current situation. They on the contrary think that poverty (Hypothesis 3) is the main obstacle to the people's participation in local ordinance creation. Hypothesis 2, the political culture, was seen to have the least weight as an obstacle to the participation rate. Therefore, the research results confirmed that all three hypotheses are obstacles to the people's participation in local ordinance creation by the people's initiative.

3) What are the solutions regarding the people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for Thailand?

The recommendations on the people's participation in the local administration are as follows.

(1) Laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrations should be amended because the current ones are not practical and are impossible to follow.

(2) Local leaders should be improved to proactively work closely with the local people in order to increase their participation.

(3) Educating the local people via advanced channels of online social media on the importance of local administrations and participation as well as the rights and duties of citizen

(4) Improving the economic status of the people in the rural areas and solving income inequality problems in order to increase the attention of the people to the local administrations.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

According to the recommendations of the stakeholders and the research results, the research analyzed and proposed policy recommendations according to two levels of policies: 1) government policy recommendations and, 2) local administrative organization policy recommendations as follows.

5.3.1 Government Policy Recommendations

1) Recommendations on the laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrations

The government of Thailand should promote amendments to the laws related to the people's participation in the local policy and ordinance creation process to be consistent with the current situation of Thai local administrations. The Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative B.E. 2542 should be amended in the process of ordinance initiatives and the number of eligible voters to enlist for local

ordinance initiatives. The number of eligible voters should decrease to 20 or 30% of all of the number of voters. In addition, the process of ordinance initiatives, for example, the submission of the complete draft of the proposed ordinance, submission of the pledge of eligible voters, and the announcement of the name listed in the ordinance initiative were complicated. These processes must be rethought and redesigned in order to be shorter and easier for the ordinary people to understand and not to be an obstacle for the people to participate in the proposing of an ordinance to the local council. Furthermore, a recommendation is the establishment of a special agency for assisting the local people in drafting ordinances and guidance for them to propose them to the local administrative organization councils. Lastly, the government should issue regulations that force both the people and the local administrative organizations to be more knowledgeable of the advantages of the participation principle, such as requiring the people's participation in council meetings or public hearings for local development plan-making processes and punishment for not voting without a reasonable excuse in general elections by taking away their political rights to enlist for legal initiatives or the eligibility to hold political positions.

2) Recommendations on socio-economic policy

The Thai government should consider its short-term and long-term policy on the solutions to the problems surrounding poverty. In terms of short-term policy, the government should launch agricultural product price subsidizing policies, especially for rice, sugar cane, and rubber. In addition, low interest rate loans from the government for the farmers to invest in the next harvesting seasons must be included. In terms of long-term policy, the government should promote innovations in the agricultural sector in order to increase product value, such as high quality rice for a higher selling price, advanced technology for producing raw rubber, or organic agricultural products as alternatives for farmers' extra income. When the quality of life and economic status are better, the agricultural sector will attract the new generations to get involved in the market and they will not tend to leave their hometown for a better income, jobs, and life in the downtown areas such as Bangkok, which is very crowded and cannot expand anymore.

3) Recommendations on education policy

The government should promote the understanding of the citizens' rights and freedom to express their opinions and initiatives in local administrations through national education policy. This is a long-term policy that could be embedded in the consciousness of the citizens regarding their notions of citizenship and the rights of the new generations. The government should adjust the national basic education curriculum for promoting democracy and local administrations in order to encourage understanding and knowledge about the importance of democracy and local administrations—from elementary school to higher education, such as universities. The curricula should include the structure of Thai governance from the national level to the local administration level, as well as the relationship between these two. Moreover, the elementary school is the most important level that will “groom” the next generation with the understanding of democracy and citizenship rights and duties. For example, the basic education level must include activities that promote democracy, such as the election of a school student president as well as the promotion of the expression of the students' opinions in public.

4) Recommendations on local administration policy

The decentralization to the local administration should be reformed. According to the current constitution of Thailand, the promotion of decentralization is demanded and the financial support for potential local administrative organizations. In addition, the central government should truly decentralize authority to the local administrations and allow them more freedom in local policymaking and policy decision-making, while the central government's supervision should be retained in order to keep the orderliness and legitimacy of local administrative organizations. The supervision of the central government should not be too suspicious of local administrations, so that there will be more freedom for local budget allocations. The task transference from the central government to local administrative organizations must be reconsidered so that those tasks will not be overloaded for the local administrative organizations and for the budget. Moreover, the subsidizing budget from the central government to the local administrations must also be reconsidered. The budget subsidizing must be consistent with each local administrative organization, which is different from the current budget allocation that is based on the

size of the population for each local administrative organization. For example, the town municipality has the potential to collect more taxes and fees than the sub-district administrative organizations, where the size of economic status is different, but the population in a town municipality is bigger than in a sub-district administrative organization. Therefore, the subsidized budget goes to the town municipality rather than to the sub-district administrative organization. This makes the sub-district administrative organizations have smaller budgets for development plans. Therefore, the government should allocate budgets by considering the situations case by case in order to allocate appropriate budgets for the smaller local administrative organizations for local development plans.

5.3.2 Local Administrative Organization Policy

1) Recommendations on local leadership

According to the study on the local way of life in Suphanburi, the research found that the local leader is the key person that is the “thought influencer” of the local community. Therefore, the executives of the local administrative organizations should be more proactive and work closely with the local community. For example, the executive committee should arrange meetings in community venues and not just stay in the council. The knowledge sharing of successful management in increasing the participation rate from successful local administrative organizations to other local administrative organizations should be promoted. Further, the foster system and favoritism of the local executives vis-à-vis their partisans must be eliminated from the local administrations in order to improve the image of organizational management. In addition, the local executives should improve their capabilities and performance in working in the local administrations in order to demonstrate responsibility and integrity to the voters so that the voters could see the benefits of participation and the value of their vote for local representatives.

2) Recommendations on local people’s networking initiation

The local administrative organizations should initiate people’s networking in every community via advanced online social networking, which is faster and more accurate in distributing the information of the local administrative organizations to all local people. This could initiate two-way communications

between the organizations and the local people, which would encourage more participation in every policymaking process.

Furthermore, the model of zoning of local communities, which has been successful in the Khaodin municipality, Dermbangnangbuat district, should be expanded and shared with other local administrative organizations in Suphanburi. This model is working well in terms of creating people's networking regarding communication between the organizations and the local community.

3) Recommendations on the development of public relations

The local administrative organizations should provide and improve their public relations regarding the knowledge of the people's participation in local administrations and knowledge of the importance of the local administrations for the local people. Public relations should consider the efficiency and capabilities of the dissemination of information to all of the people in the areas using a variety of media channels, i.e. print media, community radio, local cable television, the Internet, and online social network. This dissemination of information should include good management, supporting budgets, and evaluation of the results for future improvement.

In the case of the laws, rules, and regulations related to local administrations, the local administrative organizations should disseminate information that the ordinary people can understand more easily than technical legal terms.

Furthermore, the local council meetings should be broadcast live on community radio in order to demonstrate the transparency of local governance and in order to attract more participation from all communities in the areas.

4) Recommendations on changes in the public hearing procedure

Public hearings are the best channel for allowing the local people to participate in direct democracy in the local administrations. Moreover, the Ministry of Interior requires that all of the local administrative organization arrange public hearings on every local policy planning process. The researcher also supports this policy of arranging public hearings. However, in the case of the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi, the problems of time constraints between the time of the public hearing events and the free time of the local people do not match so that the local people cannot participate in meetings; and the number of participants do not

meet the required amount demanded by the regulations of the Ministry of Interior. This is because most of the local people have to work during the time when the meetings are held. Therefore, the local administrative organizations should change the time of the public hearing events to evening sessions or on weekends so that the local people can participate more when they return to their homes after work. In addition, the local administrative organizations should not arrange public hearings at the same time but should distribute the size of the events to every small community. For the larger local administrative organizations, there should be surveys or questionnaires sent to every house in the area instead of requiring all local people to participate at one time in the public hearing. This is to avoid the insufficient number of participants in the public hearing events. Lastly, the local administrative organizations should inform the people about the importance of public hearings and not include extra agendas, such as elderly premium distributions. In this way, the outcomes of the public hearing could be achieved without distraction by other agendas.

5) Recommendations on local education policy

In the case of the local education policy of Supahnburi, the researcher recommends that the local schools supervised by local administrative organizations insert the education of local administrations and democracy principle into the curricula so that the young new generation individuals will be more knowledgeable about the importance of local administrations and their rights and duties as citizens under a constitutional monarchy regime. In addition, the local administrative organizations should arrange projects or activities promoting the people's participation in local administrations, such as seminars on the rights and duties of citizens, seminars on successful public hearings, and other such matters.

Furthermore, the local administrative organizations should provide special projects on educating the people about local administrations and the benefits of direct democracy for the local people. This would encourage the people to understand more about the importance of citizens' rights, how to exercise one's rights, the scope of local administrations' responsibilities, and the channels for exercising a direct democracy.

In concluding the policy recommendations, the researcher would like to argue that the increase of the people's participation in the local ordinance creation process

must be done by the local people themselves with the full support of a “real” democratic government. The government should launch policy that will raise the quality of life of the people, their education, and give them opportunity for making a living so that the people will not be overly concerned about their survival and be distracted from their focus on their participation in local politics. At the same time, the local people should know more about their rights and their duties as citizens, which will make them more responsible for their own hometown. This will create a difference from the past, when the people tended to always rely solely on central government support.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

1) This research was conducted in Suphanburi province, which is a rural area of Thailand. The characteristics of the people’s participation in Suphanburi may differ from other provinces or the Bangkok metropolitan area. The results and recommendations might be applied to similar conditions in the other provinces, but they cannot be applied to the more advanced development in other provinces, such as Chiang Mai or Chonburi. Therefore, future research should study the increase in the people’s participation in local ordinance creation by the people’s initiative. Such study should compare small local administrative organizations such as the provincial administrative organization and the Bangkok metropolitan area.

2) This research found that public hearings are the best channels for creating direct democracy in local administrative organizations, but the current situations turned out to be not useful and the local people did not seem to be interested. Moreover, the government demands that local administrative organizations arrange public hearings for every policy creation process; however, the local administrative organizations in Suphanburi are facing low participation rates in public hearings. Therefore, future research should study on how to improve the capabilities and efficiency of conducting the public hearings of local administrative organizations in order to increase the number of participants in the events in other areas in Thailand.

3) According to the research results, it was found that poverty is the main obstacle to the people’s participation in ordinance creation by the people’s initiative in

local administrative organizations in Suphanburi province. Therefore, future research should study different areas that are more advanced in terms of the economic status and level of education of the local people. This research should include the discussion of three main problems—laws, the local political culture, and socio-economic problems—as research questions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Form for Government Officers and Local Administrative Executives

Appendix A

Interview Form for Government Officers and Local Administrative Executives

People's Participation in the Public Policy Process: Participation in the Ordinance Creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand

*This interview form is used for collecting data on the problems of the people's participation in the ordinance creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand.

Personal Data of Interviewee

Name:.....

Age:.....

Job/Position:.....

Education:.....

Address:.....

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Tel.:.....

1. Fundamental data on the interviewees regarding the principle of the people's participation, local ordinance creation, and the initiative principle in Suphanburi, Thailand

1.1 What is your understanding of the principle of people's participation in Thailand?

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1.2 Do you think that Local Administrative Organizations are mechanisms for promoting people's participation under a democratic regime? Do you agree or not? Why?

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1.3 Are there any actions carried out by organizations to promote people's participation in Suphanburi? If yes, how was it?

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1.4 What is your understanding of local ordinances?

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1.5 Do you agree that local ordinances are important mechanisms for promoting people's participation and the self-awareness of the people?

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1.6 Do you know about the Act of Local Ordinance by the People's Initiative? What is your opinion on this act?

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1.7 Are there any local ordinances from the people's initiative that have been enacted by the council?

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2. Obstacles in local administration organizations in terms of having political participation in local ordinances by the people's initiative

2.1 What are the obstacles to having local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi?

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2.2 Do you think that the law itself is an obstacle to the people's participation? Why?

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2.3 Do you think that the political culture of Supahnburi is an obstacle to the people's participation? Why?

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2.4 Do you think that the socio-economic status of the people in Suphanburi is an obstacle to the people's participation? Why?

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3. Concepts and directions of people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for the entire country of Thailand.

3.1 In your opinion, what are the future directions of the people's participation in the local administration of Suphanburi?

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3.2 What do you think about local ordinances by people's initiative in Suphanburi? Are they possible? Why?

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3.3 How can we overcome the obstacles to promoting the people's participation in Suphanburi?

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3.4 What are your suggestions concerning local ordinances through the people's initiative in Suphanburi and countrywide?

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Thank you for your contributions and suggestions.

Appendix B

Interview Form for Residents and Community Leaders

Appendix B

Interview Form for Residents and Community Leaders

People's Participation in the Public Policy Process: Participation in the Ordinance Creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand

*This interview form is used for collecting data on the problems of the people's participation in the ordinance creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand.

Personal Data of Interviewee

Name:.....

Age:.....

Job/Position:.....

Education:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Tel.:.....

1. Fundamental data on the interviewees regarding the principle of the people's participation, local ordinance creation, and the initiative principle in Suphanburi, Thailand

1.1 What do you think about the people's participation principle?

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1.2 Is it important for Suphanburi or your community? Why?

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1.3 Do you know that there is a law that allows people to initiate their own ordinance?

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1.4 Do you think that it is possible in your community to initiate your own ordinance? Why?

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2. Obstacles in local administration organizations in terms of having political participation in local ordinances by the people's initiative

2.1 What are the obstacles to local administration organizations having political participation in local ordinances by the people's initiative?

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2.2 Is the law itself an obstacle? Why?

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2.3 Is the political culture of Suphanburi an obstacle?

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2.4 Is socio-economic status, i.e. education, wealth, welfare, an obstacle?

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3. Concepts and directions of people’s participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people’s initiative in Suphanburi and for the entire country of Thailand.

3.1 What are your suggestions regarding the people’s participation principle in your community and in Thailand?

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3.2 Does Suphanburi need local ordinances from the people’s initiative? Why?

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3.3 What are the directions of the initiatives in your community and in Thailand? Why?

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Thank you for your contributions.

Appendix C

Interview Form for Experts and University Professors

Appendix C

Interview Form for Experts and University Professors

People's Participation in the Public Policy Process: Participation in the Ordinance Creation of the Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand

*This interview form is used for collecting data on the problems of the people's participation in the ordinance creation of Local Administrative Organizations in Suphanburi, Thailand.

Personal Data of Interviewee

Name:.....

Age:.....

Job/Position:.....

Education:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Tel.:.....

1. Fundamental data on the interviewees regarding the principle of the people's participation, local ordinance creation, and the initiative principle in Suphanburi, Thailand

1.1 How is the development of the local administration in Thailand and the people's participation principle?

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1.2 Do you think that the people's participation is applicable in Thailand?
Why?

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1.3 What do you think about local ordinances by the people's initiative?

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1.4 Do you think that the people of Suphanburi have the potential to initiate ordinances? Why?

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2. Obstacles in local administration organizations in terms of having political participation in local ordinances by the people's initiative.

2.1 If local ordinances by the people's initiative are difficult to achieve in Thailand, what are the obstacles?

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2.2 Is the law an obstacle? Why?

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2.3 Is the political culture an obstacle? Why?

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2.4 Is socio-economic status an obstacle? Why?

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3. Concepts and directions of people's participation in the local administration in the case of local ordinances by the people's initiative in Suphanburi and for the entire country of Thailand.

3.1 What are your suggestions regarding the direction of the development of the people's participation in Thailand, especially in terms of local ordinances created by the people's initiative?

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Thank you for your contributions.

BIOGRAPHY

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