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# POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF STATE ADMINISTRATION ACT: A STUDY OF SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES OF THAILAND

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## Abstract

The present study was carried out with three objectives 1) To study the political and economic implications of past state administration acts; 2) To study the political and economic implications of current state administration act; 3) To give suggestions for future state administration act formation. It is observed that Globalization affects Thailand, resulting in the state administration's actions having political and economic implications for the Southern Border Provinces. There is an ongoing effort to propose a constitutional amendment that is expected to impact the state administration model in Thailand. According to the current constitution, any amendment to the constitution must undergo a referendum. According to the respondents, 579 Yala Rajabhat University students and 27 experts, the majority opinion that all three forms of public administration namely Central, Provincial, and local should not be changed. Currently, the existing format is functioning effectively but requires some urgent improvements based on upholding the principle of Thailand as an indivisible kingdom, honoring and treating Thailand's monarchy. The study recommended the government on many issues such as: enhancing law enforcement; Government and officials should focus on preventing and solving deficiencies in duty; expediting the elimination of redundant tasks; distributing responsibilities and budgets more efficiently; ensuring fair access and convenience for the people; and actively combating and eradicating corruption.

**Keywords:** Political & Economic Implications of Administration, State Administration, State Administration Acts, Southern Border Provinces, Thailand

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## **Introduction**

Foreign and Thai scholars, such as Friedman (2012); Hoffmann (2002); Aiyara (2013); Puanghut (2016) and Khunthongchan (2016) offered the same concept that globalization exerts significant effects and influences on various aspects of nations, encompassing politics, economy, society, and culture. Consequently, it leads to rapid changes and dynamic. Thailand has an official name Kingdom of Thailand. It is a nation-state located in Southeast Asia. Formerly known as "Siam", it is located in a land that used to be called Suvarnabhumi, meaning Golden Land. The land on which the country is situated looks like an axe, therefore, it was called the "Thai Golden Ax".

Thailand indeed has a rich history with many ancient kingdoms preceding the establishment of the Kingdom of Siam. These include notable civilizations like Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin. The country officially changed its name from the Kingdom of Siam to the Kingdom of Thailand on June 24, 1939, enshrined in the constitution which affirms Thailand as an indivisible kingdom. Thailand operates under a democratic form of government with the King as the Head of State.

Although Research on the origin of Thai people by Foreign and Thai Scholars, such as Rossabi (2014); Kosakornwichran (1913); Thongthammachat (1991) and Serirangsan (2018), are different but it can be concluded that People with Thai nationality is not only composed of Thai people from all Tai tribes but consists of people of many other races who were born or reside in Thailand. Currently, Thai nationality is by the Nationality Act 1965.

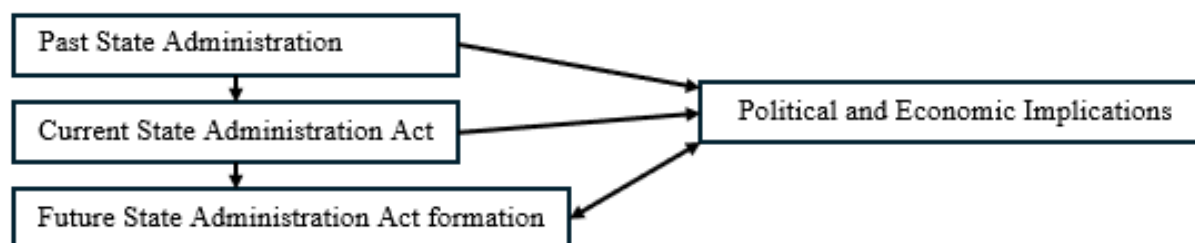
Southern Border Provinces, which comprise Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, are an integral part of Thailand and fall under the jurisdiction of the State Administration Act, just like any other region in the country. There differ significantly from other regions of the country, with a majority Muslim population speaking Malay. This region has faced enduring challenges such as political tensions, economic disparities, terrorism, poverty, and strained relations between local politicians and the central government. These complexities make studying the political and economic impacts of the State Administration Act in this area a compelling research focus. Although it may be suspected that Globalization will affect every country. But globalization is extensive, setting the wrong goals and directions can cause critical events or negative consequences for the country. What factors affect politics and the economy closely and directly, is something that should be researched. If found, it will be taken to solve the problem on the point, which may have many things, but to narrow them down. The study suspects that one that has a closer and more direct effect on politics and economy is state administration. Therefore, there is an interesting research question does state administration affect political and economic implications in Thailand or not and how, especially in Southern Border Provinces (SBPs) included Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, which are three out of the 76 provinces in Thailand. Currently, there is an attempt to propose an amendment to the Constitution, which it will affect the state administration model in Thailand and according to the currently constitution states that the amendment to the constitution requires a referendum.

## **Theoretical Approaches to the Literature Review**

According to foreign Scholars such as Sharma (2009) and Krauss (1974) State Administration Act related to Political and Economic Implications. Foreign and Thai scholars, such as Chaiyotha (2003); Chantawimon (2003); Chutinaranon (2009); Dantrakul (2009); Rajanupap (2010); Berman (2011); Wongtawan (2013); Phawakaraphan (2018) and Kanchanakongka (2023), mentioned that Political and Economic Implications in Thailand are related to the State Administration in every period since Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, Early Rattanakosin Kingdom period, King Rama IV to VII before 1932 A.D. period, The Siamese revolution of 1932 and King Rama VII to VIII periods, King Rama IX period before 1991, and Since 1991 to King Rama X period.

Research is carried out on Social Science Paradigms by Foreign and Thai Scholars such as Kuhn (1970); Mukonza (2014); Bowonwattana (1981); Taweessit (2006) and Kijkuakul (2018). But there has been no study about Thailand State Administration Paradigm. According to Thai Scholars such as Saikaew (2009); Gohwong (2016); Sangsuriyong (2017); Powintara (2019) and Mhuentoei (2020), Globalization has influenced Thailand's state administration, causing impacts on political and economic. Especially today, the advancement of Information Technology has made the impact even more severe. Both foreign and Thai Scholar consider Policy Formation to be one of the important steps in the public policy process. For example, Dye (2016) and Anumanrathon (2010) define Policy Formation as the first step in the public policy process.

From the Literature Review, this research study defined three research objectives: 1) To study the political and economic implications of past state administration acts, 2) To study the political and economic implications of current state administration act, and 3) To give suggestions for future state administration act formation. The research framework has been created as shown.



**Figure 1** Research Framework

This gives rise to two hypotheses: 1) Past State Administration and current State Administration Act affect political and economic Implications, 2) Past State Administration, current State Administration Act and political and economic Implications affect Future State Administration.

The study on the political and economic implications of the State Administration Act in Thailand's southern border provinces highlights significant challenges faced by the state administration in these regions, exacerbated by current legislative frameworks. Efforts are underway to propose a constitutional amendment that could reshape Thailand's governance model, subject to a mandatory referendum under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017. However, there is a notable lack of comprehensive research addressing key aspects of the State Administration Act, including different paradigms, public awareness, political and economic impacts, the relevance of current formats, and the significance of the referendum. The present study aims to fill these gaps in understanding.

## Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to achieve the objectives of the present study. The primary data was collected through conducted field survey using the questionnaire by collected from students at Yala Rajabhat University, specifically from individuals residing in the southern border provinces such as Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, as well as other provinces whose residents currently reside in this area. A sample size based on the data from the year 2022. In total, there were 9,759 students. For this study, 579 students (5.93%) were selected using simple random sampling. To process the data this study has used many statistical techniques such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Moreover, a qualitative approach is employed, including historical document research and in-depth interviews by gathered opinions and suggestions from twenty-seven experts who are familiar with the southern border

provinces, led by Wan Muhammanor Matha, Speaker of the National Assembly, and Krongchai Hattha, Member of the Royal Academy.

## Research Results

The results of the study successfully met the research objectives and aligned with the hypothesis. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1) The State Administration Acts are utilized nationwide in Thailand, encompassing the SBPs located in the southernmost part of Thailand and in the north of Malaysia. This land associated with Thailand or Siam since ancient times. The SBPs have many problems e.g. political, economic, social, cultural, terrorism, or drugs, including state administration.

2) Thailand or Siam state administration can be divided into 5 paradigms as follows: Ancient Suvarnabhumi paradigms, Siam Kingdom paradigms, Reform to Modern European style paradigms, Constitutional monarchy paradigms, and Thailand's new reform paradigms. Thailand state administration at current, the main law used for more than 30 years was the State Administration Act 1991 which had seven additional amendments. But the main structure remains the same such as Thailand is one indivisible kingdom; There was a democratic system of government with a monarchy; The sovereign power belongs to the Thai people, and the King as Head of State exercises that power through the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the courts in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; Central Administration (Office of Prime Minister, Ministries, Departments); Provincial Administration (Provinces, Districts); and Local Administration (Provincial administrative organization, Municipality, Sub-district administrative organization, Special local administration such as Bangkok and Pattaya).

3) The study on the Political and Economic Implications of State Administration Act in the SBPs addressed five significant issues: General data analysis about gender, age, field of study, monthly income, frequency of reading books or news, frequency of listening to or watching the news on radio or television, frequency of reading or listening to or watching online news, forms of state administration, and interest in working with state administration; The respondents' awareness of the overall state administration acts and each of all eight aspects was moderate level; The respondents' opinions of the past state administration act, in each of all six aspects were moderate level; Experts' opinions on the overall past state administrations had a highly positive and moderate effect; The respondents' opinions of the current state administration act, in each of the six format aspects were at a moderate level; The respondents need for the current format of state administration in all six formats to be moderate; On the question about the referendum on the current constitutional amendment in the state administration. The not-to-amend all issues of respondents were at a moderate level.

Some groups of politicians and academics were trying to propose amendments to the constitution on the issue of state administration by cancelling the Provincial administration form and to have an election of a provincial governor. It shows the trend of future state administration act formation. But experts thought that it should not be. Thailand's current state administration act format still works well, no change is needed. But they suggested revision in act as follows: To eliminate redundant work; Decentralize responsibility and budget; Facilitate fairness to people; Serious elimination of corruption among government officials which is an ancient problem in Thai and global society.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Globalization impacts Thailand, influencing the state's administrative actions and having significant political and economic implications for the southern border provinces. Constitutional amendment will affect Thailand's state administration model. According to the

current constitution, any amendment must undergo a referendum. Based on the discussion of data from respondents and interviews with experts, the following suggestions were made:

1) The government should take the following actions:

1.1) It is essential to adhere to the principles outlined in every Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, which are as follows: Thailand is one indivisible kingdom; it has a democratic system of government with the monarchy as the head of state; sovereign power belongs to the Thai people, with the monarch's power. The main state administration structure of Thailand still working well and should not be changed. More change will create confusion and divisions in society. Troubleshooting state administration by focusing on resolving the structure, would not solve the problems. Because Thailand political and economic problems were not caused by state administration structural defects, but it aroused from another problem especially problem of omissions in the performance of official duties and performing beyond their authority.

On the opinion on the need for changes in state administration, on all aspect views for change was moderate. Opinion on issue was high namely Thailand is one indivisible kingdom. So, editing essence or form in Thai Constitution is inconsistent with opinion of most of the public. Therefore, must strongly advocate for the principles provided in every constitution. They emphasize that Thailand is an indivisible kingdom with a democratic system of government and a monarchy as the head of state.

1.2) The form of state administration that some groups of politicians and academics want to change is namely to abolish the administrative center of southern border provinces, abolish the southern border provinces, and elect a provincial governor. In fact, such a present form does not have a negative impact on politics and economy but has good results, especially in the southern border provinces. The abolition of it will affect other forms of public administration at the national level. More urgent than changing the form of state administration is the need for correction of deficiencies in administrative processes. like clear distribution of power, responsibility, and budget, do not leave work when misfortune event happens. All state administrations should focus on solving problems at the point, stopping terrorism, expanding development, emphasizing on psychological of society, strong state power, the problem of drug addiction among youth, and problems with corruption in government agencies.

1.3) The majority population in Southern border provinces was Muslim. Therefore, government officials need to focus on Islamic practices. But at the same time, many original and outside the area Buddhist live. Therefore, Buddhist religious practices should not be overlooked either. Respondents were of early working age and studying undergraduate in many fields. After graduating, they need a job that pays a high income. It requires a lot of reading, listening, watching news or information. But it appeared that frequency of reading, listening, watching news or information on radio or television or online were moderate. Therefore, it should be encouraged and encouraged to increase urgently or change the presentation to an online short topic and short time about 2-5 minutes. The respondents were involved and interested in working with central, provincial, and local administration. But it appeared that frequency of reading, listening, watching news or information on radio or television or online were moderate. Therefore, it should be encouraged and encouraged to increase urgently or change the presentation to an online short topic and short time about 2-5 minutes.

The respondents were involved and interested in working with central, provincial, and local administration. Therefore, increasing the knowledge of these three forms of state administration needs to be done urgently. As the awareness on state administration in every issue was moderate level. Therefore, increasing the knowledge of state administration issues of Thailand needs to be done urgently.

1.4) The results of the study showed that economic in Thai or Siam ancient kingdoms (Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi and Early Rattanakosin) were agricultural economy and trade with foreign countries, whose main products were agriculture, livestock, forest products,

ceramics and some minerals. It transformed into modern Commerce, Industries and Services in the King Rama IX period. Today the Thai economy has been fully integrated into the global economic system. The proportion of goods exports and services to Gross domestic product (GDP) increased a lot and grew rapidly for many decades. But now there were signs everyone must be aware that the key factors driving the economy were weakening, including: The working-age population decreasing; Natural resources being depleted; Thai products cannot compete in the world market; and the public sector that used to play an important role in driving the economy in the past had become less efficient. Besides that, the Thai economy is currently in 4 traps that must be realized and corrected including Middle-income, External Dependency, Debt; and Inequality.

1.5) Economic problems were not caused by state administration structural defects. But they arise from the problem of incompatibility in the use of powers and duties of the public sector agencies that overlap, not responsible for duties, and do more than necessary. The public sector had become less efficient, but the cost of government operations was even higher. Rules and regulations that used to be a tool to enhance wealth and stability in the past economic system had not been modernized and have become an obstacle to economic activities in the modern world. As the problem of corruption had not diminished. All departments expedite a review and explore methods of working having defects as above, should be use the Sufficiency Economy philosophy of King Rama IX aiming to do things that benefit the people as a whole or the nation.

2) This study only considers the Political and Economic Implications of the State Administration Act in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand. However, because the State Administration Act is effective in all provinces throughout Thailand, including Bangkok, research on this matter should be conducted in other areas as well. This will provide suggestions for solving problems and developing Thailand as a whole. Additionally, other impacts should be studied, such as social and cultural trends, religious ideas, environmental changes, and information technology. This will allow us to understand the effects of globalization in other regions.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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