

**CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS IN THE
THAI CIVIL BUREAUCRACY: A MIXED
METHODS RESEARCH INQUIRY**

Brian Hunt

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigated attributes of national and organizational culture and their influence on the culture and administrative behaviours in the Thai civil bureaucracy. This thesis posits that important influences on the organizational culture in the Thai civil bureaucracy derive from historical provenance. One strand of research inquiry has been genealogical in order to understand this organization's past and its influence on the present-day organization. A second strand of inquiry investigated the organization's ideological foundations.

Primary data collection used a mixed methods approach to generate both qualitative and quantitative data sets. Qualitative data were gathered through exploratory interviews conducted face-to-face with twenty-four senior officials representing various parts of the Thai bureaucratic infrastructure. Interviews were conducted using a Delphi methodology and, with respondents' permission, were video-recorded by a professional cameraman. The interview data were used to design an attitude survey questionnaire. The attitude survey questionnaire was administered to a mixed population of ministry officials.

This research study has uncovered three key findings each of which has a powerful influence on the workplace culture and administrative behaviour in a bureaucracy. The first key finding is that the quality and conduct of leadership greatly influences public management by shaping the organizational cultures. Effective styles of leadership set the 'tone' of the workplace climate and increase employee motivation. Leadership styles which employees perceive to be 'too authoritarian' diminish employee motivation and work effectiveness. The second key finding is that

employees at all levels of the Thai public bureaucracy have an innate sense of belonging to their organization and strive to provide a supportive environment for their work colleagues. This finding suggests that public bureaucracies have features of a cadre organisation (Rothstein, 1996; 1998). A key motivational factor for public service employees includes a sense of duty to serve their nation, especially in national economic development. The third key finding is that public service employees at all ranks have a high level of concurrence about their organization's cultural attributes. This is a further feature denoting a cadre organization and contributes to a positive work environment and high levels of employee motivation. National cultural concepts such as the spirit of compromise and the preservation of harmony at work also exert a positive influence on workplace behaviour. Findings from this research support a view that a public bureaucracy functions effectively through the unity of officials at all ranks.

The thesis identified and examined critical features of a civil bureaucracy which influence governance and the public administration. The research findings have significant relevance for politicians, key decision makers in government, and civil administrators. Furthermore, the findings make important contributions to current knowledge about the management and work of public administration.

NOTES

Calendar

In this thesis dates are given in the Roman (Gregorian) calendar. The Thai calendar, designated Buddhist Era (BE), begins from the death of Lord Buddha in 543BC. To convert the Roman calendar to the Buddhist calendar add 543 (e.g. 2007AD+543 = BE2550). To convert the Buddhist calendar to the Roman calendar subtract 543 (e.g. BE2511-543 = 1968AD).

Citations

In Thailand it is customary to cite references using an author's given (first) name. To avoid confusion with the current use of Thai and foreign authors, all citations in the text and bibliography are referenced using the author's family name.

Spelling of Thai Names

The spelling of Thai names and words can be complex as transliteration and approximations of phonics are often mixed giving different spellings in the English script. To avoid confusion the spelling in this thesis uses official spellings for names using the Thai Royal Institute system.