

## Thai bureaucracy system

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### Abstract

Administration of each country has long history and different influence factors. The situation of country is one of factor that leads changing and development of bureaucracy. In Thailand, the bureaucracy system appears more than one thousand year ago. The Thai bureaucracy can divide to two periods; absolute monarchy and democracy. In absolute monarchy period, the king is the highest administrator. The king can provide the rules, regulations, and laws. In term of democracy period, according to all the constitutions of the Kingdoms of Thailand; chapter one section two; Thailand adopts a democratic regime of government with the King as Head of State. Section three; The sovereign power belongs to the Thai people. The King as Head of State shall exercise such power through the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the Courts in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. The performance of duties of the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, the Courts, the Constitutional organizations and State agencies shall be in accordance with the rule of laws. Base on the constitution, the head of administration of Thailand is the Prime Minister that come from choose one of member of the house of representative. The member of house of representative come from election.

In the paper, the writer does not explain the Prime Minister, member of the house of representative and senator. The purpose of this paper is to present an integrative review of the literature to explore the Thai bureaucracy system by describing Thai Bureaucracy with the bureaucratic system of Weber. The finding of the paper shows Thai bureaucracy includes the permanent structure as central level, provincial level, and local government. The three administration principles structure run as the parallel structure that include centralization, deconcentration and decentralization. In difference King era, the structure of Thai bureaucracy system was adjusted by establishing of new bureaus or sometimes, some bureau was merged, however, adjusting structure cannot confirm that there are no duplication jobs.

**Keywords:** *Thai bureaucracy, Thai administration principle, absolute monarchy, democracy*

### The Bureaucratic theory of Weber

Max Weber was a German sociologist, who was a pioneer in the field of bureaucratic theory, he proposed five principles; 1)

hierarchy, 2) hierarchy of authority and responsibility, 3) rule, regulation and responsibility, 4) division of labour, specialization and merit system, and 5) professional. Firstly, the hierarchy is the

power of authorizes people for management formally and to make decision for management and using organizational resources. Bureaucratic officers spend full time for working, get salary and other perquisites base on position, tenure period in the organization is determined by the ruled and regulations of the organizations, there are no any proprietary interest for administration, and recruitment for competence of examination of candidates. Secondly, hierarchy of authority and responsibility means the structure of command in an organization that consist with many ties for command and control. It is benefit for officer who can understand ranking of position in an organization and the way of report. Usually, the hierarchy is the top-down system that the upper level is higher rank. The basement level is the highest of number of officers, it gradually to reduce in the upper level as the pyramid. Thirdly, rule, regulation and responsibility mean formulate standard of procedures and administration to control behavior in an organization. Rules provide the stability and continuity within organization. Fourthly, division of labour, specialization and merit system mean in an organization consists with various of positions base on the specialization of a person and ensure that an organization has clear job description and is under correct position and function. Fifthly, professional means working without personal involvement, emotions and sentiments. Decision run by rational issue rather than personal factors (Daniel, A. & Arthur, 2009).

### **Thai Bureaucracy system history**

#### **1) Absolute monarchy period**

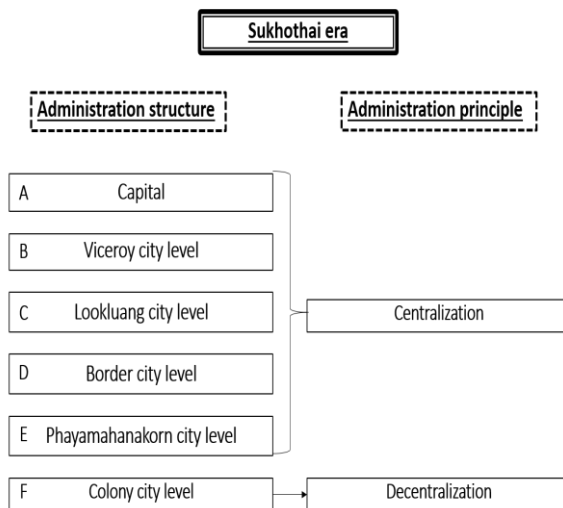
Bureaucratic system context of Thailand, the bureaucratic system appears since 12<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, there are clear section in bureaucratic system, but it is uncomplex.

The revolution of Thai Government; in the King Rama V is the basement of administration. The King RAMA V developed administration structure. The King RAMA VII set merit system of Thai bureaucratic that includes competence, equity, security, and political neutrality. Next, General of Chadchai government brought Max Weber principles to Thai Bureaucratic during the first national economic and social development plan. Then the eighth national economic and social development plan Thailand followed the New Public Management and good governance concept. The present period focus on digital era that bring information technology in Thai bureaucratic. Thai bureaucracy can divide to two parts. The first is absolute monarchy. The second is democracy. The first part consists three eras; Sukhothai era, Ayutthaya era and Ratthanakosin era before revolution. The second period is after revolution in 1932 in King Rama VII era. In this paper, the writer will describe administration base on these periods.

**Sukhothai era** 1219-1438, the king presented his position as father. The daily life of citizen and administration seemed like a big family. The structure of administration be divided to capital (A) – viceroy city level (B) – Lookluang city level (C) – border city level (D) Phayamahanakorn city level (E) and colony city level (F). In capital (A), the king was the highest leader. The king commanded and controls all administration and administration worker. The Viceroy city level (B), there was only one city. The king appoints Viceroy to be leader in this level. The Lookluang city level (C), the king appoints prince or his relatives to be leader. The border city level (D), the king appoints nobility to be leader. There were many cities in this level. The function of this city level was to protect enemy. The Phayamahanakorn city level (E) was located far from capital.

The leader came from ex-ruler family or the king appoints one of nobilities. The leader of A, B, C, D and E cities level operate everything base on the King's order or policy, and colony city level (F), the leader came from ex-ruler family. The king allowed ruler to govern by himself, but the ruler must to send tribute and must to send provision and troop when kingdom faces with war. The number of this city level unstable depended on strengthen power of the king. The administration principle appears two; centralization and decentralization. The centralization in A, B, C, D and E cities level. The decentralization in F cities level. The summarize as figure below.

**Figure 1** Administration structure and administration principle in Sukhothai era

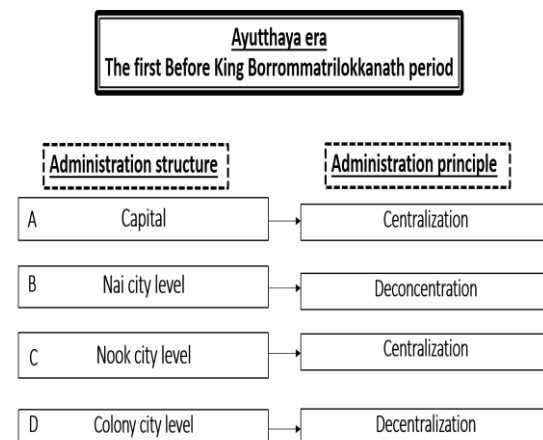


Source: Author

**In Ayutthaya era**, there are two sub-eras. Before King Borrommatrilokkanath period and King Borrommatrilokkanath period. In the first sub-era before King Borrommatrilokkanath. The administration structure be divided to four; capital (A), Nai city level (B), Nook city level (C) and colony city level (D). in capital, the king governs by use "Jatusadom system". It was influenced from India through The Khmer Empire. It

consisted with four departments. The first was "Wieng", the authority seemed like police and army. The second was "Wung", the authority was bureau of Thai royal and administration of justice. The third was "Klang", the authority was financial, tax and income. The fourth was "Na", the authority was storage provision and issue the land's right. There was leader of each department. B city level, it was B, C, D city level of previous era. The king appointed one of nobility to be leader for three years period. C city level was E city level of previous era but in this era, there was three types of C city level; big city, middle city and small city base on economic growth, side and authority. The king appointed member of Royal family representative to be leader. He could solve problem and could judge some cases by himself. D city level (colony city) still the same as previous. There were three administration in A, B city level still used centralization. C city level was deconcentration. D city level was decentralization. The summarize as figure below.

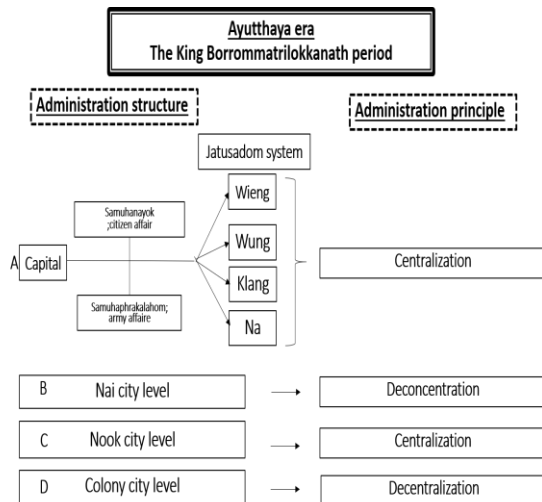
**Figure 2** Administration structure and administration principle in Ayutthaya era, the first sub-era Before King Borrommatrilokkanath period



Source: Author

**In King Borrommatrilokkanath sub-era,** the administration structure was divided to four that same as the first sub-era. The difference was in capital (A) There were two more positions, the first position called “Samuhanayok” (1) To took care of citizen affair. The second position called “Samuhaphrakalahom” (2) To took care of military affair. The rest of city level operated same as the first sub-era. The summarize as figure below.

**Figure 3** Administration structure and administration principle in Ayutthaya era, the second sub-era in King Borrommatrilokkanath period

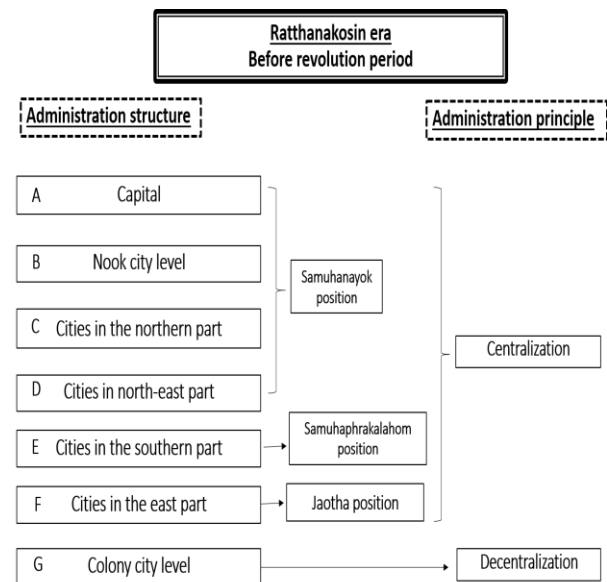


Source: Author

**In Ratthanakisin era before revolution,** the administration structure was divided to seven; capital (A), “Nook” city level that locate surround the capital (B), cities in the northern part (C), cities in north-east part (D), cities in the southern part (E), cities in the east part (F) and colony city level (G). The “Samuhanayok” (1) was changed to take care of A, B, C and D. The “Samuhaphrakalahom” (2) was changed to take care of E. There was new one department; marine department. It took care of F. In term of colony city level still the same as previous. In King Rama V,

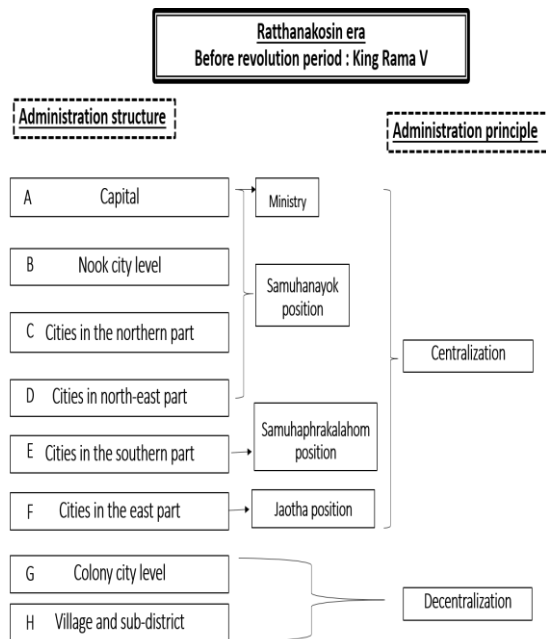
the king rose up all bureau to ministry in 1892 and the village leader and sub-district level (H) came from election in Ayutthaya province. It was the first time in Thailand that citizen can elect leader by themselves. The summarize as figure below.

**Figure 4** Administration structure and administration principle in Ratthanakosin era, before revolution period



Source: Author

**Figure 5** Administration structure and administration principle in Ratthanakosin era, before revolution period in King Rama V

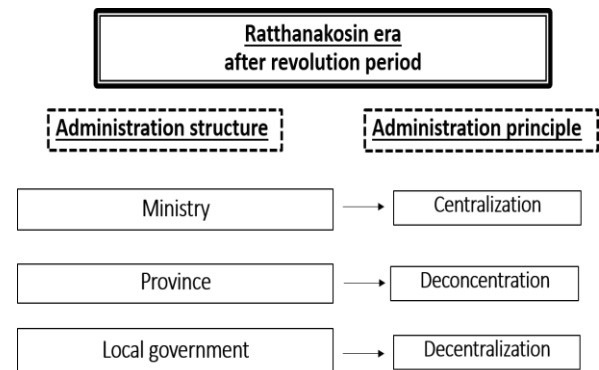


Source: Author

## 2) Democracy system

**In Ratthanakosin era** after revolution, Thailand has the first prime minister. The administration structure consists state and then ministry, province and local government. There were three types of provincial administrative organization, and local government. The sub districts and villages were under Local Government Act B.E.2457 (1914). The summarize as figure below.

**Figure 6** Administration structure and administration principle in Ratthanakosin era, after revolution period



Source: Author

In present, Thai bureaucratic system can be divided to three parts; the central level, the provincial level and the local level. The central level as the ministry that include 19 ministries and 1 office; office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and sports, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Industry. In this level, it was the central of administration, formulation policy, control and command base on the government administrative act B.E.2534 (1991). The office of the Prime Minister response for The Prime Minister work, recommend about planning of social, economic, political security, and budget, the Prime Minister as the administrator. The Ministry was an operational level but in the same time, the ministry could enact ministry

regulation. The structure of a ministry includes one office of the minister, one office of the permanent secretary ministry, and departments.

### Provincial level

It means administration in 76 provincial and districts. The governor as the highest administrator. The structure of provincial includes governor, vice governor, provincial administration office, and others provincial office and branches of central level offices. The district administration includes sheriff as the highest administrator, district administration office, and other administration offices. Governor was assigned, working period for four years in a provincial.

In term of sub-district, village administration under the local administration act B.E 2457 (1914). The sub-district leader as the highest administrator, the head of villager as the highest of administrator.

The local level can be divided for two types; general type and special type. The general type consists with provincial administration organization, municipality, and subdistrict administration organization. The special type includes Bangkok and Pattaya. The structure of local level divide to two; administration and legislative. The administration section, the administration and legislative come from election. The administrator can choose vice administrators, secretary and supervisor from outside. The legislative member chooses one of them to be the head of legislative. The number of legislative members of local level.

**Table 1** Number of council member of local government

Local level	Number of local government council member
Provincial	$\geq$ 500,000

administrative office	= 24 $\leq$ 500,000 - 1,000,000 = 30 $\leq$ 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 = 36 $\leq$ 1,500.000 - 2,000,000 = 42 $\leq$ 2,000,000 = 48
<b>Municipality</b>	
1.Township municipality	24
2.Town municipality	18
3.City municipality	14
<b>Local level</b>	<b>Number of local government council member</b>
Subdistrict administrative office	One village = 6 Two villages = 3 persons per village Three villages = 2 persons per village

Source: Author

Municipality is the first type of local administration in Thailand after 1932 Thailand revolution the administration system from absolute monarchy to democracy. The areas outside municipality are under the Subdistrict Administration Organization in 1955. The municipality of Thailand divide to three types base on the population and economic. The smallest is city municipality, town municipality, and township municipality. The principle for establish city municipality, firstly the population is more than 7,000 persons and the net income that does not include support budget is twelve million baths. The principle for establish town municipality; be town hall location and the population are more than 10,000 persons. The principle for establishment township

municipality; the population are more than 50,000 persons.

Bangkok and Pattaya are in special type of local administration. Firstly, Bangkok is the capital of Thailand. Bangkok administrative in special type was establish in 1975 that consists with fifty districts. Every district includes district council and district office. The administrative structure includes Bangkok council and governor. Every district of Bangkok has district council, the member come from election. The member is at least seven persons, plus one person every 100,000 persons. The governor of Bangkok comes from election that is only one in provincial level.

Pattaya is one of district in Chonburi Province. It was established in special type of local administration in 1978 because of economic reason. The administration structure includes two parts; Pattaya council and administrator. Pattaya council as the legislative that consists with 17 members for four years, nine persons come from election, and eight persons were assigned. The Pattaya major was assigned from one of Pattaya council for four years period. The main budget of Pattaya come from tax that Pattaya provide by itself and support from central administration.

Administration principle in Thai bureaucracy includes centralization, deconcentration, and decentralization. Centralization appears in central level as ministries that can legislate law in ministry level. Centralization as the highest level to make a final decision, top-down command. Deconcentration appear in provincial level by getting authorize from the central level to decision, making final decision, and command but no assigning and need to assessment from central level. Provincial administrative organization responses for cooperation local

administration development plan and support big projects of municipality and subdistrict administrative organization. All local governments were monitored by provincial level and ministry level. Development of Thai bureaucracy, the government attempts to improve administration by adapt NPM and good governance principle in Thai bureaucracy. The NPM implementation begin with arrangement duty of ministries. Moreover, the government provide clearly duty and set new ministry for support new duty. The aim to reduce time in service procedure, increase new channel of service for example taxation drive thru, one stop service, outside counter service, e-service and so on. In term of good governance be wrote in some section of constitution, National Government Organization Act, B.E. 2545(2002) and good governance decree B.E. 2546 (2003).

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The characteristic of Thai bureaucracy since in the past until the present appear all the bureaucratic system theory of Max Weber. Hierarchy in Thai bureaucracy as many ties that leads huge size of structure and complex. It affects to inflexible and too strict in rule. In addition, development Thai bureaucracy does not realize about the detail of description job hence, sometimes new department was established in the similar responsibility. In term of rules, regulations show that some of them do not consensus with each other that provide difficult to operation. Some of them do not develop for long time that leads the rules and regulations do not match with present situation. Division of labour in Thai bureaucratic, in the present the basement of hierarchy is the highest number and more work in flat organization. Flat organizations were used widely as cooperation among departments or bureaus that are in the same tie. Merit system in Thai bureaucracy appears

since the first step of recruitment, promote the position, and evaluation operational. Even the merit system run in Thai bureaucracy, but the spoil system still appear cause in the past Thai the nobleman motivates other people to work with and then give the position therefore the people who work with a nobleman seems the nobleman group. The patronage system seems like one characteristic within Thai bureaucracy. Professional in Thai bureaucracy starts in recruitment step and then the government office can raise position up to higher professional by test.

### Conclusion

According to Thai bureaucracy history, there are three times of administration revolution in Thailand. The first in Ayutthaya era in King Borrommatrilokkanath period, it appears four departments to service citizen. The second is in King Rama V period, it appears ministry at the first time in Thailand and it appears the first election leader by citizen. The third is 2002, the duty of ministry was rearranged that some duty was cancelled, some duties give to the others or new ministry. Most of changing administration in Thailand were changed in structure not in operation. It is still an importance problem of Thai bureaucracy.

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