



PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT THROUGH CO-PRODUCTION : A CASE OF CARING FOR THE ELDERLY BY VOLUNTEERS

Piyakorn Whangmahaporn

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Preface

The book entitled *“Public Service Management through Co-Production : A Case of Caring for the Elderly by Volunteers”* was written as an instructional text for public governance innovation, creative public policy and vision, and public administration theory courses at higher education level and for interested persons with the aim to provide knowledge on public services and volunteerism, which can be applied to the future management of volunteer work.

The content of this book revolves around the management of public services in Thailand and foreign countries, which has continuously transformed based on the New Public Governance or New Public Service approach. This book will provide a clearer picture of the Thai public service management that gives more importance to public-private-civil partnerships, where volunteers serve as a “co-producer” and operational mechanism. The knowledge and understanding of the characters, motivations, and co-production of volunteers, especially those providing care for the elderly, will enable the Thai government to cope with aging population issues and manage a volunteer workforce in a more effective way.

Some parts of this book are taken from the author's book, "*Thai Public Administration : Civil State Management.*" The relevant content was modified and rewritten to emphasize public service co-production, the main theme of the book.

This book is published in both Thai and English versions with the goal to disseminate knowledge about Thai volunteers to international readers all over the globe.

I would like to thank Dr. Ratchaneeporn Pookyaporn Pukkamarn, President of Sripatum University, for encouraging all faculty members to continue develop themselves and producing academic outputs that can be used to effectively develop students. Further appreciation goes to Dr. Photjanee Krutawong, Municipal Clerk of Tha Mai Sub-district Municipality, and the elderly home care volunteers for participating in the interview and Mrs. Chaweewan Sapap for helping out in printing process.

I hope that this book will be a helping hand to those who seek to learn more about public services, volunteerism, and elderly population.

Piyakorn Whangmahaporn

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Introduction

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Introduction

Public service is vital in both academic and practice settings. This topic has attracted the attention of scholars in various fields, including public administration and legal studies. Particularly, public administration scholars tend to pay attention to public service management, organizations and agencies responsible for public service provision, public service networks, and best practices for public service management. In terms of practice settings, public service is considered the heart of the government sector because the government has a duty to provide public services to the public. Some public services must be solely operated and delivered by the government. However, private, non-governmental, and voluntary organizations may be appointed to carry out some public service activities on behalf of the government. Regardless of who or what organization is responsible for the provision of public services, each process must be done to meet the needs of people so that they can have a good quality of life and live happily in society.

According to the Old Public Administration approach, public service refers to an activity conducted by the government through government agencies. Most activities performed by government agencies place importance on hierarchical chains of command. Government officials plan, organize, manage, oversee, coordinate, and report all activities with the aim to support politicians rather than citizens.

The New Public Administration approach calls for a shift in the role of the government from executor to regulator. Private and non-governmental organizations should be appointed to carry out public service activities in order to respond to the driving force of the market. Government officials must think and act like entrepreneurs based on private business principles with the goal to increase productivity and satisfy the public as customers.

As administrative environment has changed, the provision of public services is currently carried out in form of cooperation between the government, related agencies, and people in society. Public services are delivered through working networks, collaborative processes, and co-production. Government officials change the role from leading or controlling to providing information, supporting, creating a space for knowledge sharing, and collaborating with other sectors such as private agencies, non-governmental

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organizations and local people in order to enhance public interests. People are the owners of government resources, not government executives. Thus, government officials must appropriately serve people and act as good service providers and caretakers, while government organizations act as facilitators. This kind of public service management is influenced by the concept of New Public Service or New Public Governance.

Due to the influence of various theories and concepts, public service management in foreign countries and Thailand has continually evolved and developed. Most foreign countries focus on providing public services through private agencies, non-profit organizations, and voluntary organizations. Voluntary organizations have played a role in the provision of social work services since 1630. Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), founded in London in 1844, is the first non-profit organization that participated in providing social work services to the public. After that, voluntary workers and organizations have played an increasing role and become government partners in the provision of public services on a continuous basis.

In Thailand, there is no clear evidence when the term “volunteer” was used for the first time. However, there were non-governmental organizations cooperating in solving social problems since the reign of King Chulalongkorn. In 1893, the