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BENJAPORN RAJATARAMYA: PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY PROCESS ON TRANSFORMATION TO AN AUTONOMOUS PUBLIC ORGANIZATION IN THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR STHIRAKORN PONGPANICH, Ph.D., 160 pp.

The Master Plan of Public Sector Reform was developed in June 1997. The Autonomous Public Organization Law was the one objective of this plan. At that time the government pushed more effort to encourage the public organizations to transfer to Autonomous Public Organization which is more flexible organizational structure.

This study describes factors affecting Autonomous Public Organization Policy, especially at the agenda setting process and the policy formulation process. To understand each step of the policy process, the analytical framework to explore four elements: context, actors, process and content were applied in the study. One educational institute under the Ministry of Education and one educational institute under the Ministry of Public Health were explored the transformation process to Autonomous Public Organization.

A case study design was applied employing a qualitative approach through documentary research, in-depth interviews, and participant observation, using content analysis on both national and organizational levels of the agenda setting process and policy formulation process. Two institutes within different sectors were selected for this analysis based on their comparative roles in education.

Documentation and participants were purposively selected based on relevance criteria on their representativeness for main constituencies. To improve sampling of participants, the snowball technique was used. Triangulation of both methods and data sources was applied to ensure reliability of analysis outcomes.

Factors that facilitated enactment of the APO policy in this study were: (1) awareness on the limitations of government systems to address the need for efficiency and effectiveness; (2) the clarity of strategies to address these gaps; (3) enhancing political support through leadership, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, (4) a clear organizational identity in terms of mission and vision; (5) an inclusive and participatory approach to policy formulation, (6) the identification of a policy window.

Factors that impeded enactment of the APO policy in this study were: (1) diverting political priorities; (2) absence of a well defined organizational identity; (3) fluctuating leadership direction, (4) external and top-down approach to policy formulation; and (5) political instability.

Field of Study: Public Health..... Student's signature:

Academic Year: 2008..... Advisor's signature: