
Hotel Businesses and Their Connection to Local Governments: A Comparative Case Study between Chao Samran Beach and Cha-am Beach

Apirat Udomsup¹ and AkeTangsupvattana, Ph.D.²

¹Division of Community Development, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Phetchaburi Rajabhat University, 38 Moo 8, Haad Chao Samran, Na Wung, Muang, Phetchaburi 76000, Thailand,

²Dean and Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Udomsup A. and Tangsupvattana A. (2015). Hotel Businesses and Their Connection to Local Governments: A Comparative Case Study between Chao Samran Beach and Cha-am Beach. *Journal of Agricultural Technology*. 11(8): 2081-2085.

This study aimed to investigate the relationships between local hotel businesses and Thai Hotels Association (Western Region Group) and Cha am Municipality and Had Chao Samran Municipality on the construction permission of embankment dam. The qualitative method was used. The assumption was set that the local hotel business-people proposed the Thai Hotel Association (Western Region Group) to influence related municipalities to permit the construction.

The study found that there was no relationship between hotel businesses and the Thai Hotel Association (Western Region Group) in such construction permission. The hotel businesses did not request to construct the dam through Thai Hotel Association. Local hotel businesses did not formally request the construction permission through the related authorities including offices of district, province and municipality too. In fact, embankment dam could be constructed because of inter-personal interest of local hotel business-people and municipalities' staff.

There was no relationship between hotel businesses and the Thai Hotel Association regarding the continue existing of this illegal dam. Presently, the dam still exists because of the hotel business-people's individual power. Moreover, since hotel businesses brought about community's economic development, they could persuade key officials in provincial administration and local governments to hold back some essential rule application.

Keywords: Local Hotel Business, Local Government, Community's Economic Development

Introduction

When the hotel owners occupied majority of public area at Hatchosamran beach, they made bold to build the private facilities like hotel's embankment dam and trespass on other properties in public area regardless to environmental impact. The report also showed that they did ignore to move back their properties trespassing on public area as well as made trouble with villagers and local fishermen—prohibited from fishing boat anchorage and passerby by the hotel's beach front with the excuse of visual pollution problem.

Once the fishermen did boat anchorage, they had to watch out stealing their own boat so the temporary shelters were built in need. This area, furthermore, did not provide them a small harbor leading conflict between fishermen and such investor. Noticeably, if legitimate construction permission must be approved by local government agency, it is probably that such agency has relationship with business group. Moreover, the hotel owner, engaging membership of Thai Hotel Association might get help from their association committing members to protect, promote and secure common business interest.

As analyzed on the important groups including the hotel owner, Hotel Association, Municipality offices and the others found that each group was related to each other. That is, once the hotel owners had a land-use plan on public area, they might first propose their need to hotel association then push it forward the government. In term of group influence, such association played role as a key influence group to leverage the yield of its members against the government. Thus, this is why the hotel owners would rather first made their proposal with the association than get through to the government themselves.

Consequently, what relationship they had each other can be seen in the following ways 1) the hotel owner might reward the government officials with political promotion, dinner, vocation, gift, introducing to some business tycoon, 2) once the local tourism promotion campaign took place, majority of the hotel owners might participate the program and each one or the delegate from hotel group used a privilege of majority right to propose their need to the government directly 3) They might have an invitation to government officer for taking one of the hotel's board committees, 4) they might focus on the right interest group; for instance, they, as a business group, made a deal with a municipality's civil department where construction approval was engaged.

The researcher aimed to find out answers from the following questions: why public beach become embankment dam?, how did hotel association play role toward their members or hotel association having relationship with the government? The answers would probably show the relationship between local business and politics toward environment preservations and provide local government further suggestion as well.

Objective: This study aimed to investigate the relationships between local hotel businesses and Thai Hotels Association (Western Region Group) and Cha am Municipality and Had Chao Samran Municipality on the construction permission of embankment dam.

Methods

The qualitative method was used and data studied was drawn from the different forms of primary document including provincial committees

meeting report, municipality report, regulation of Thai Hotel Association, tourism industry development plan, related law, urban plan, and online newspaper as well as some certain forms of secondary data including thesis, book, government and Thai hotel association website, and interview key informant persons

Result

Embankment dams found on public area by Cha-Am beach and Hatchosamran were built without asking for permission. According to ministry of interior regulation, hereby, when the hotel has construction or land-use plan on public area, they must ask permission to sheriff then such proposal are checked for completion, and push it forward the governor as a registrar on duty for final approval.

Even if Hotel Association was a formal interest group, they did not perform their role to propose what member needed to the government. This was because the hotel owner, preliminarily, intended to leave out permission to government so the hotel owner felt no need to bring the proposal to the association. The result confirmed that there was no relationship between association and hotel in permission process.

This embankment area revealed that hotel and local government supported each other. For instance, local government showed their sympathy to the hotel owner on the strict audit of the Hotel EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) and they would rather realize on common interest in economic dimension (Local employment and local people wealth) than environmental one as seen from the problem of evicting the fishermen from the hotel embankment area by the government officials.

However, such existing embankment dams where they were not built legally were not involved with Hotel association as the hotel association did nothing to cope with such embankments. They claimed that the association prefer not to deal with this problem since they has no authority yet engage in the same interest (business must gain profit). Thus, it had no relationship between hotel and local government in term of tackling on hotel embankment dam.

Even so, the relationship between hotel and government was fine because the government gave the hotel privilege to exploit such public beaches as needed. Being one of high revenue business sector contributed the hotel to dominant local government's economic development idealism. Undoubtedly, they seized this opportunity to force the government to support them; for instance, the government restrained the law and regulation enforcement and delayed the application of new city plan for the hotel's sake on embankment dam construction.

Neglect of tackling the dam in dispute by the government was not under pressure from the hotel association. It was, on the other hand, the government themselves.

Discussion

Chumak (1974) said that association was raised as collection of individual interest need. They intended to use group as their interest protection tool. However, the study showed that the association did not help their members negotiating on the dam in dispute because when hotel did not intend to ask government permission early, the hotel did nothing for their request to the association. Therefore, it had no relationship between hotel association and government for in which the government approved what the hotel association asked for such permission.

The hotel business used their government as a tool to provide benefits. It was seen as interpersonal relationship (individualism). As Rattanamongkonmas (1971) figured out on association or interest group, It indicated that the association's key components was drought since it was not used as a tool for protecting their interest—not a group for another purpose.

Clearly, the role of association to tackle with such dam in dispute took nothing; likewise, the relationship between the hotel business and the association in term of supporting the hotel business for approval of construction permission by the government both Cha-Am and Hatchosamran beach areas were not found. In fact, the dams existed as yet because of the hotel businesses themselves as power of individual. As the findings showed that the association had no relationship with the government in term of approval to construction permission, this opposed Janwitkan's view in which group not only had to propose their request and execute what the government made approval, they also had to perform their duty as far as they had a chance to do so (Janwitkan, 1988). The study, on the other hand, showed that they did nothing.

What Provincial executive emphasized on economics development was agreed by the civil servant and local officers. This provided hotel business great opportunity to earn more income from exploiting public area as well as delay the hotel facility's pulling down caused by current city plan enactment set aside.

In conclusion, the role of local government and the province to illegal embankment dams was seen as mutual benefits. That was because once the hotel's influence power based on major contribution of local maintenance and property tax revenue was enough to dominate over the government's economic development ideology; government then did not apply the law enforcement and delay the city plan enactment for the hotel's sake. Moreover, they revered influence power of some hotel's executive

committee drawn from general army and politician kinship. The causes of embankment dam could be analyzed by political power breaking into 3 dimensions (Tangsapwattana, 2013)-- 1st dimension was emphasized. The findings found that the hotel forced local government to support them based on the advantage of vast of property right they held; for instance, the hotel then gave their property to local government so that they took them for grant of embankment construction. Also, they were afraid by the local and provincial civil servants in term of high potential business. The result implied what Sanyawiwat (1989) described on power resource-- anything that individual people bring for power. Thus, the power they had turned the power in use. Based on the findings on 3rd dimension regarding idealist, thinking and believe, found that economics development ideology was engaged in because the government realized that the hotel brought their locale high income.

References

- Tangsapwattana, A. (2013) Relationship between cabinet's policy decisions with the political business group interest by using new from media: A case study NGV bus and rice subsidy program. Bangkok: Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.
- Janwitkan, M. (1988) Political Sociology, Group study. in teaching documentary, principal and political study method, page 499-514. Bangkok: Sukhothaitammarat University.
- Sanyawiwat, S. (1989) Political Sociology: Principal and Applied. Bangkok: Sociology and Anthropology Department, faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.
- Ratanamongkonmas, S. (1971) Influence Group: Specify, Role, Producer and Attitude toward change of political animal. Phar Nakorn: Thaiwattsanapanit Printing.
- Chumak, S. What is Influence group? Political Communication, year 9th, volume 3 (July – September 1974):pp. 18.