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THE CHALLENGE

OF SUSTAINABILITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THAILAND

EL RETO DE LA SOSTENIBILIDAD EN LOS PAÍSES EN DESARROLLO: EL CASO DE TAILANDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, some of the most common sustainability challenges in developing countries are explored. The case of Thailand, a Southeast Asian country, is taken as a representative example with a particular emphasis on the importance of the self-sufficiency economy philosophy as a central platform for the development of sustainable public policies. It also discusses some of the challenges that have been faced in the Kingdom of Thailand in relation to foreign development philosophies and their pernicious effects on the consumption habits of the population and on the order of priorities from the point of view of preferences on public policy projects. Examples are given from the field of public education. The main conclusion of the study is that, although sustainability is a global problem, solutions must be local and collective. In other words, individual freedom should not take precedence over the needs and priorities of the collective.

Keywords: Self-sufficiency economy, Thailand, Sustainability, International Development.

RESUMEN

En este artículo se analizan algunos de los retos más comunes en materia de sostenibilidad en los países en desarrollo. Se toma como ejemplo representativo el caso de Tailandia, un país del sudeste asiático, se hace especial hincapié en la importancia de la filosofía de la economía de autosuficiencia como plataforma central para el desarrollo de políticas públicas sostenibles. También se analizan varios de los retos a los que se enfrenta el Reino de Tailandia en relación con las filosofías de desarrollo extranjeras y sus efectos perniciosos en los hábitos de consumo de la población y en el orden de prioridades desde el punto de vista de las preferencias en los proyectos de políticas públicas. Se ofrecen ejemplos del ámbito de la educación pública. La principal conclusión del estudio es que, aunque la sostenibilidad es un problema global, las soluciones deben ser locales y colectivas. En otras palabras, la libertad individual no debe primar sobre las necesidades y prioridades de la colectividad.

Palabras clave: Economía de autosuficiencia, Tailandia, Sostenibilidad, Desarrollo internacional.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, which establishes a 15-year global framework for action towards 2030 with the intention of eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, and achieving shared global prosperity. To achieve these goals, it is important to promote the sustainability of social, economic, and ecological dimensions to guide the international community towards future sustainable development (Fu et al., 2019). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and reverse globalization, cities play an even more important role in achieving the SDGs and giving responses to climate change and biodiversity loss. Currently, 55% of the world's population resides in cities, and this is expected to increase to 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2050 (Chen, et al, 2022).

Nearly 90% of future urbanization growth is expected to occur in developing countries in Asia and Africa, and the scale and speed of urbanization is unprecedented to date. To ensure sustainable global prosperity, the unsustainable conditions generated by the relationship between humans and the environment under current urbanization conditions must be understood from different perspectives and at multiple scales (Fu et al., 2021). Cities have critical direct and indirect global impacts on energy use, land use, climate change and resource consumption. So, it is the cities that should be most engaged in this movement (Scoones et al., 2020).

Everyone can agree that sustainability is an issue of global importance, yet there is considerable disagreement on how to address the many problems associated with sustainable development. Not only is there a lack of agreement on the meaning of the concept, but also on how to achieve or implement it. One of the main points of debate is the possible trade-off between short-term economic development and long-term sustainability and environmental resilience. The trade-off is particularly sensitive in the developing world because of its late integration into the international economic system and its generally young populations (von Feigenblatt, 2009a)..

Thailand is a good case study because of its strategic location in Southeast Asia, relatively large population and growing industrial base. The Southeast Asian Kingdom has attempted to balance sustainability with economic development and political stability. Although the usual emphasis of analysis in terms of sustainable development is economic growth and environmental considerations, it is important to note that a very important aspect of sustainability is cultural. Therefore, a nation's understanding of ambiguous concepts such as development and quality

of life are fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development.

In the case of Thailand, the numerous contradictions, structural oscillation, and negative externalities can be explained by exploring the concept of the self-sufficiency economy philosophy and comparing it with other development philosophies. Thus, the present research aims to address the challenge of sustainability in developing countries, particularly in the case of Thailand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is qualitative in nature with a focus on the descriptive nature of the proposed case study. Therefore, for its execution, different methods were combined and adapted to the Thai context to obtain a holistic and rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities of sustainability in the country. In addition, triangulation of different data sources was also used.

The analytical-synthetic method was mostly employed to identify the key components of the sustainability challenge in developing countries, such as natural resource management, climate change mitigation, poverty and inequality, among others. In addition, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the situation of each component in the context of Thailand by collecting relevant data, studies and evidence. Once the analysis of each component has been conducted, the findings were synthesized to understand the interconnectedness and relationships between them. For example, examining how poverty may be related to environmental degradation or how natural resource management policies may affect climate change mitigation. It also identified the key factors that contribute to sustainability in Thailand, as well as the barriers and challenges that hinder its achievement.

This involved understanding the synergies and conflicts between the different components and how they affect sustainability. Thus, this method relied on the technique of documentary analysis applied to documents and policies related to sustainability in Thailand, such as development plans, government strategies, technical reports, and scientific literature. These documents provided insights from institutional approaches and legal frameworks in relation to sustainability.

Likewise, the inductive-deductive method was used, which, within the present research, its process allows obtaining knowledge regarding sustainability and its challenges within developing countries. This allowed conclusions to be drawn from the general principles and theories established in the specific case of Thailand. This approach allows for a deeper and more informed understanding of

the sustainability challenge in Thailand and to extrapolate the situation to other developing countries with similar conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain a balance and meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is an approach that seeks the harmonious integration of economic, social, and environmental aspects, recognizing the interdependence between them. In the environmental sphere, sustainability implies the conservation and protection of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems, avoiding their depletion or degradation. It also seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, such as air, water, and soil pollution, and to mitigate climate change.

In the social sphere, sustainability is related to equity, justice, and people's well-being. It seeks to ensure equitable access to basic resources and services, such as food, housing, education, and health care. It also promotes citizen participation, respect for human rights, social inclusion, and the reduction of inequalities. In the economic sphere, sustainability seeks economic development that is viable in the long term, without depleting resources or compromising financial stability. It promotes the circular economy, based on the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials, as well as energy efficiency and the responsible use of natural resources. It also promotes a business approach that considers the social and environmental impacts of its activities, adopting social and environmental responsibility practices (Zambrano Murillo, et al, 2020).

The search for sustainability focuses on processes that provide an integral change: environmental, social, economic, political, and cultural. This set of processes will help to create social progress and live a healthier and more respectful life with the planet, other living beings, and future generations. This situation is affected by the interaction of factors such as regional conflicts, climate change, slowdown in development and raging epidemics that have caused multiple impacts on the global system, especially on the food system, which implies a major challenge for the world economy. The frequent occurrence of extreme weather events around the world as well as COVID-19 have hit the economies of many developing countries. These countries are generally burdened with large debts, resulting in decreased purchasing power and difficulty in developing and achieving sustainability and sustainability (Zhu, et al., 2023).

The challenge of sustainability in developing countries is a fundamental and complex issue that requires priority

attention from the international community. These countries, which often face significant socioeconomic and environmental challenges, need to effectively address sustainability to ensure long-term equitable and sustainable development.

One of the main challenges is to find a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation. Many developing countries rely heavily on natural resources for their economic development, such as agriculture, fisheries, mining, and energy. However, unsustainable exploitation of these resources can lead to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and depletion of ecosystems, which in turn can have a negative impact on local communities and the future development of the country.

Furthermore, developing countries often face additional challenges, such as poverty, lack of access to basic services, lack of adequate infrastructure, and lack of technical and financial capabilities. These factors further hamper their efforts to achieve sustainability in different sectors, such as energy, water, waste management and transportation.

To address the sustainability challenge in these countries, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive approach that combines environmental, social, and economic policies and measures. Some of the key measures that can be considered include:

- Promote sustainable agricultural practices that protect land and water resources while promoting food security and rural development.
- Encourage the adoption of renewable energies and clean technologies to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Improve water resource management, ensuring equitable access to drinking water and promoting water conservation and efficient water use practices.
- Promote environmental education and public awareness of the importance of sustainability, involving local communities in decision-making and promoting citizen participation.
- Establish sound policies and regulatory frameworks that promote investment in sustainable sectors and encourage corporate social and environmental responsibility.
- Strengthen international cooperation and financial support to developing countries to implement sustainable development projects and build technical and scientific capacity.

It is important to note that each developing country has its own specific characteristics and challenges, so

solutions must be tailored to local circumstances and needs. Sustainability is not an isolated goal, but an ongoing process that requires a long-term commitment from governments, civil society, the private sector, and the international community. Such is the case of Thailand as a developing country experimenting with the philosophy of self-sufficiency.

Thailand: a developing country

On the environmental front, Thailand has established an extensive network of protected areas, national parks, and nature reserves to conserve its rich biodiversity. In addition, measures have been implemented to protect endangered species such as elephants, tigers, and sea turtles. The country has also significantly increased its renewable energy generation capacity, such as solar and wind power. The country has set ambitious goals to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix and has implemented policies and programs to encourage their development.

It has also taken steps to improve waste management and reduce pollution. It has implemented recycling policies, promoted waste reduction practices, and worked on environmental education to raise awareness of the importance of proper waste management. According to the United Nations Development Program (2023) this country increased its greenhouse gas reduction target from 20% to 30% by 2030 compared to the current situation. It also increased its conditional target from 25% to 40%. This confirms its efforts to meet the long-term goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and zero emissions by 2065. For which it ratifies its adaptation and resilience components such as:

- Agriculture
- Water
- Natural resources
- Health
- Security and human settlements
- Tourism

Likewise, this country is exposed with an index of 66 in the Human Development Index Classification. According to the Bureau of Diplomatic Information (2023) this country showed ups and downs regarding its economic progress in the last four decades. However, in the last 3 years it has achieved an economic ascent ratifying its status as a developing country as shown below:

1. Recovery from the 1997 Asian economic crisis to become an upper middle-income country in 2011. According to World Bank figures, poverty decreased

from 67% in 1986 to 11% in 2014 with the remarkable growth and increase in agricultural prices.

2. Average growth receding in the face of a maturing economy and a series of political and social crises, the economy grew by less than 2% in 2014-15, mainly due to cautious private consumption stemming from high domestic debt, weak merchandise exports.
3. Slow recovery of the tourism sector after seven months of prolonged political protests in 2013- 14.
4. Steady economic growth of 3.7% in 2017.
5. In 2018, GDP grew 4.3% surpassing 2017's 3.7%.
6. In 2019, however, growth slowed to 2.4%, due to trade tensions and the appreciation of the Baht, which affected exports and tourism, as well as a decline in private consumption due to high household indebtedness (78% of GDP), stagnation of private investment, held back by uncertainties, and difficulties in executing scheduled public investments. In 2019, 40 million tourists arrived, 27% Chinese. A high dependence on a sector that accounts for more than 15% of GDP and more than 18% of employment.
7. Thailand's high dependence on tourism and exports makes it one of the economies that is being hit hardest by the negative economic consequences of the pandemic. In the first half of 2020 they fell dramatically (-76%) with an even greater decline (bordering on 99%) in the second half.
8. In 2021 the sector was devastated until September with a very timid recovery in the last quarter.
9. In March 2022, the Thai economy continued to grow gradually, due to the impact of the war in Ukraine, Thailand's headline inflation reached a 13-year high of 7.1% in May 2022, largely attributed to rising energy and food prices.

From the social point of view, the establishment in 2017 of its long-term economic objectives can be highlighted. Which was embodied in its 20-year National Strategy (2017-2036) to achieve developed country status and transition to a digital economy. A key policy underpinning the strategy is "Thailand 4.0" which covers three core elements:

- advance technology and innovation to improve the productivity of industries with the greatest potential;
- improving the capacity to be the land, sea, and air logistics hub of the region; and
- modernizing digitization in small and medium-sized companies, in areas such as agriculture and healthcare.

Taking full advantage of its strategic position as a natural bridge connecting the East, Southeast and South Asian region, Thailand is investing in the future through public and private investment. Mainly in the mega-infrastructure project called the Eastern Economic Corridor worth \$43 billion dollars, covering the three eastern provinces of Chonburi, Rayong and Chachoengsao. The development of the area is in line with Thailand's adoption of the Bio-Circular-Green economic model. This model was introduced in 2021 as part of a major push to transform the economy into one based on value and innovation, focused on promoting four industries: agriculture and food; medicine and wellness; bioenergy, biomaterials and biochemicals; and tourism and creative economy:

- Access to basic services: The Thai government has worked to improve access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and housing. Programs have been implemented to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas and to ensure equitable access to these services.
- Empowering communities: Efforts have been made to empower local communities, especially those in rural and ethnic minority areas, to participate in making decisions that affect their lives and environments.
- Poverty reduction: Thailand has made significant progress in reducing poverty. Policies and programs have been implemented to improve the welfare of the most vulnerable sectors of society, such as access to employment, social services, and social protection programs.

Thai self-sufficiency philosophy

The self-sufficiency philosophy of development is a theory of development derived from Theravada Buddhism and traditional Thai culture. Its current form was condensed and slowly operationalized by the late King Rama IX, who was heavily involved in his country's development process from the late 1950s to the early 21st century. His very long reign saw the country grow from a primarily agrarian economy to a highly complex newly industrialized economy (NIE) with a dynamic heavy industrial sector, a booming tourism industry and a growing financial sector. However, those decades also saw an HIV crisis, a rising crime rate in urban centers, a growing urban-rural divide, and a deep polarization in public opinion about the meaning of and path to sustainable development in Thailand. (Sorajjakool, 2013).

At the core of the theory of self-sufficiency philosophy are some of the basic tenets of Theravada Buddhism such as moderation and a long-term perspective. Self-sufficiency economics has also incorporated several elements borrowed from Brahmanism, its Southeast Asian form that

emphasizes order and stability. Thus, the philosophy of self-sufficiency economics aims to align the country's culture with its objective needs. (von Feigenblatt, 2009c, 2009d).

So, it can be said that the Thai Self-sufficiency Philosophy is mainly aimed at providing a guide for sustainable development and decision making in this country. It focuses on the pursuit of balance and stability in different aspects of life, including the economy, society, and the environment. Some of the key principles of the Thai Self-sufficiency Philosophy include:

- Sufficiency: Refers to living within the limits of available resources and satisfying basic needs adequately. This implies avoiding excess and overexploitation, and cultivating an attitude of contentment and satisfaction with what one has.
- Moderation: Focuses on avoiding extremes and excessive consumption. It promotes prudent management of resources and responsible consumption, avoiding excessive indebtedness and dependence on external factors.
- Resilience: Seeks to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of change and adversity. It promotes the diversification of income sources, risk management and the construction of strong and self-sufficient communities.
- Ethics: The philosophy emphasizes the importance of ethical values and social responsibility in all activities. Integrity, transparency, and accountability in decision making are encouraged.

The basic principles of self-sufficiency economics at the individual level are surprisingly simple. Individuals are advised to balance present needs with long-term goals. Consumption should be aligned with a person's station in life and should not exceed one's means. Overall lifestyle should be aligned with a person's life position and should focus on resilience rather than short-term transformation. From an economic perspective, individuals are encouraged to avoid excessive risk and economic endeavors that are beyond a person's educational level.

This philosophy offers several potential benefits for a developing country like Thailand. Some of the greatest benefits are:

- It fosters sustainability and resilience by promoting prudent management of natural resources and avoiding overexploitation. This helps to preserve resources in the long term, which benefits both present and future generations. In addition, philosophy seeks to strengthen resilience in the face of challenges and adversity, such as economic changes and natural disasters.

- Seeks a balanced development that is not based solely on economic growth, but also considers social and environmental aspects. It promotes equity, social justice, and the well-being of the population, avoiding excessive concentration of wealth and social exclusion.
- It contributes to reducing dependence on external factors, such as international trade and financial flows. This can provide greater autonomy and sovereignty in decision-making, reducing vulnerability to external shocks and global economic crises.
- Emphasizes the importance of ethical values and social responsibility in all activities. Promotes integrity, transparency, and accountability in decision-making, which contributes to more ethical governance and the construction of a more just society.
- Values and promotes the preservation of Thai culture and traditions. Recognizes the importance of cultural identity in sustainable development and seeks to integrate traditional values and knowledge into decision making and daily practices.

At the collective level, individual precepts translate into an emphasis on appropriate technology and channeling resources to collective needs. The emphasis is on social resilience rather than short-term satisfaction. Thus, according to this development philosophy, projects should meet social needs and should lead to economic stability rather than rapid economic growth. (von Feigenblatt, et al., 2022).. There is also an explicit rejection of economic growth as an end. Development is viewed holistically and differentiated to the individual characteristics of each community and person. An example of the philosophy of self-sufficiency economics in action is Thailand's public policy in terms of higher education.

Public higher education policy is very important for a country with a large proportion of young people and a high unemployment rate. It is not only a driving force for innovation, but also one of the most effective means of achieving social mobility. Thailand has some of the best public universities in Southeast Asia and several are among the top 1000 in the Times World Rankings. A developing country has achieved a balanced and diversified higher education sector by applying the principles of the self-sufficiency economy philosophy to this sector (Amyot, 2003).

Chulalongkorn University and Mahidol University are emblematic institutions in the country and many of their programs are among the most selective in the world. It should be noted that Thailand has achieved this notoriety in higher education by channeling scarce resources to appropriate educational institutions. There are vocational schools and rural universities offering related programs in the provinces. While highly selective flagship universities

attract top regional students and even students from the rest of the world. Admission is based on standardized tests for undergraduate programs and a combination of factors for graduate programs.

The programs offered at the referral universities are suited to the needs of the country and the aptitude of the admitted students. Thus, the faculty of Political Science at Chulalongkorn University produces most of the Kingdom's government officials and diplomats, while the open admission universities and rural universities are known for training administrative staff and entry-level managers for the private sector. The same approach is followed in terms of research and development. Most government funds are channeled to top universities for research, while other universities focus on teaching and training functions.

This follows the precept of appropriate tools and resources of the self-sufficiency economy. Most government funds are channeled to the best universities for research, while other universities focus on teaching and training functions. This follows the precept of appropriate tools and resources of the self-sufficiency economy. Most government funds are channeled to the best universities for research, while other universities focus on teaching and training functions. This follows the precept of appropriate tools and resources of the self-sufficiency economy.

Challenges

The Thai Self-sufficiency Philosophy seeks to promote sustainable and balanced development that considers both the well-being of people and the protection of the environment, but it offers challenges that are impossible to ignore, especially for a developing country like Thailand. While this philosophy seeks to promote sustainability and resilience, it can also present difficulties in its implementation. Some of the challenges it imposes are as follows:

- Globalization and external dependence: In an increasingly globalized world, developing countries face pressure to integrate into the global economy and depend on international trade and financial flows. This philosophy emphasizes moderation and prudence in external dependence, which can be a challenge in a globalized and highly interconnected environment.
- Balanced economic development: The philosophy promotes the pursuit of balanced and sustainable economic growth, avoiding excesses and overexploitation of resources. However, achieving a balance between economic development and meeting the needs of the population can be a challenge, especially in a developing country that needs to address poverty and improve the well-being of its citizens.

- Change of mentality and values: Its successful implementation requires a change of mentality and values in society. This involves promoting an attitude of sufficiency, moderation, and social responsibility. However, changing ingrained perceptions and behaviors may take time and require extensive awareness and education.
- Vulnerability to external factors: The philosophy stresses the importance of resilience and diversification to cope with change and adversity. However, developing countries such as Thailand can be particularly vulnerable to external factors such as global economic challenges, climate change and natural disasters. These factors can hinder the ability to fully implement the principles of self-sufficiency and resilience.

The philosophy of the self-sufficiency economy has been questioned both internally and externally (von Feigenblatt, 2009b; Joll, 2010).. Many Western scholars have pointed out that the philosophy is inherently conservative and curbs social mobility in exchange for stability and sustainability (Murphy, 2009; Ungpakorn, 2010). Liberal economists have attacked philosophy's aversion to the "creative destruction of capitalism" in favor of certain economic mechanisms borrowed from traditional societies, such as paternalism, clientelism, and bartering (Ungpakorn, 2007). And others have claimed that philosophy is hierarchical in nature and therefore contradicts many of the basic ideas of liberal capitalism and universal human rights.

Many of these criticisms have gained momentum within the country and have resulted in deep social and generational polarization (Murphy, 2009). Globalization has brought with it mass consumption and hegemonic discourses of liberal individualism. Therefore, Thailand has struggled to keep sustainability at the center of its culture and development philosophy while dealing with the influx of foreign ideas that promote a lifestyle based on short-term individual gratification.

This philosophical struggle is evident in political discourse and manifests itself daily in millions of individual interactions in schools, playgrounds, bars, and parliaments. It is particularly difficult to teach the philosophy of self-sufficiency economics to younger generations because many of them expect immediate gratification and short-term results (von Feigenblatt, et al., 2021). In addition, the international media present images of rapid socioeconomic mobility that generate rising and unrealistic expectations.

Strategies for implementation and generalization

Despite the challenges of the Thai Self-sufficiency Philosophy also offers opportunities to address long-term socioeconomic and environmental problems. By promoting prudent resource management, economic diversification,

and social responsibility, it can help Thailand and other developing countries move towards more balanced and sustainable development. The following strategies are therefore proposed for implementation at home and abroad:

1. Proposed strategies for implementation and improvement in Thailand:
 - Conduct a critical evaluation in the Thai context by identifying the positive aspects and challenges specific to each region, as well as the constraints specific to the regional culture.
 - Promote economic diversification in specific sectors by encouraging jobs in non-agricultural sectors, fostering innovation, and supporting entrepreneurship.
 - Strengthen education and training in skills relevant to self-sufficiency and sustainable development. This includes providing learning opportunities in sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, renewable energy, and other relevant areas. As well as fostering education in entrepreneurship and business skills to promote the creation of sustainable businesses.
 - Improve basic infrastructure to support self-sufficiency. Also promote the adoption and development of sustainable technologies, such as precision agriculture and renewable energies.
 - Encourage the participation of local communities and affected groups in decision making related to the implementation of the Self-Sufficiency Philosophy. Ensure that the voices of stakeholders are heard and considered in the planning and execution of projects and policies related to self-sufficiency.
 - Establish evaluation and follow-up mechanisms to monitor the results and impacts of actions related to self-sufficiency. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies and programs, identify challenges and possible detriments, and make necessary adjustments to achieve better results.
2. Proposal of strategies for generalization of philosophy in other countries:
 - Contextualization and adaptation: It is important to recognize that this philosophy was developed in the specific context of Thailand and may not be directly applicable to other developing countries. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt and contextualize it to the realities and needs of each country, considering its socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental characteristics.
 - Integration with complementary approaches: Instead of exclusively following the Self-Sufficiency Philosophy, its integration with other complementary approaches can be considered. For example, combining it with inclusive development strategies, circular economy approaches, human rights-based approaches, and

gender equality, among others. This can help to better address multidimensional challenges and maximize potential benefits.

- Capacity building: To effectively implement the Self-Sufficiency Philosophy, it is important to strengthen the capacities of relevant stakeholders, such as farmers, local communities, and decision makers. This involves providing access to knowledge, technical training, management skills and resources needed to apply the principles of self-sufficiency in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- Participatory and consultative approach: The participation of stakeholders, including local communities and marginalized groups, is essential to address the challenges and minimize the harms of the Self-Sufficiency Philosophy. Promoting a participatory and consultative approach to decision-making and project implementation helps ensure that the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders are considered.
- Evaluation and monitoring: It is important to conduct ongoing evaluation and rigorous monitoring of the impacts and outcomes of the implementation of the Self-Sufficiency Philosophy. This allows for quickly identifying and addressing any potential challenges or harms, adjusting strategies as needed, and learning from experiences to improve effectiveness and equity in the process.

CONCLUSIONS

The Thai Self-Sufficiency Philosophy has been applied in different fields, including agriculture, natural resource management, education, governance, and community development. It has been recognized as a guide to promote balanced and sustainable development in Thailand, considering the country's socioeconomic and cultural contexts. While Thailand has made significant progress and has undergone an impressive economic and social transformation, it still faces challenges unique to a developing country. It is important to continue to address these challenges and work towards inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development in the country.

Thailand's experience in terms of sustainability reflects the many contradictions of high modernity and economic development. Sustainability is, in essence, a philosophy and therefore must be integrated into all aspects of public policy making. Nation-states are open systems and therefore there are national and international forces that influence the culture of institutions and the individual culture and subcultures of citizens. Another factor focuses on the economic indicators that tend to dominate the literature on international development, while another important part focuses on environmental factors and conservation.

Addressing the challenges and detriments of the Thai Self-Sufficiency Philosophy involves adapting it to local realities, combining it with complementary approaches, strengthening capacities, fostering participation, and conducting continuous evaluation and monitoring. In this way, its potential benefits can be harnessed while proactively addressing its potential limitations.

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