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**THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF DEVOLUTION:  
REFORM OF HEALTH SERVICES  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

A thesis presented  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
PLANNING  
at  
Massey University  
Palmerston North, New Zealand

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1996

## **ABSTRACT**

1992 saw radical reform to local government in the Philippines through enactment of a new Local Government Code. This provided for the devolution of powers, resources and service functions from central government to local government. The process of devolution is now in its third year. This study has been undertaken as a preliminary assessment of the factors that influenced implementation of devolution in the health services, its impacts and its effectiveness.

The study is based mainly on survey techniques. Face-to-face interviews were undertaken with policy makers to establish motivations underlying devolution, what they believe has been achieved, and what they think promote or impede implementation.

Face-to-face interviews were also undertaken with key local officials to identify the health services and functions transferred from central to municipal governments, and to identify the degree of discretion these people now have in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, and in fiscal and personnel matters.

An opinion survey was administered to assess the perceptions of key players in the management of decentralised responsibility (elected officials, transferred health personnel, and advisory board members) to determine their views of the objectives, the factors that promoted or impeded devolution, and changes in the way things are done as a consequence.

It was concluded that devolution is moving towards local autonomy as intended. The necessary structural changes have been met. Local government responsibilities, resources, and authority have increased, and public participation in local government has been institutionalised. Substantial benefits have been realised particularly in terms of local self-reliance, participation, and competence development. Devolution has also been effective in changing people's behaviour. The results indicate that the key to

successful devolution and to decentralised responsibility is the nature of local leadership and local commitment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I gratefully acknowledge and sincerely thank a number of organisations and individuals for their support and assistance in making the conduct of this study easy and possible:

- o The Philippine Government, in general, and the Department of Interior and Local Government, in particular, for their confidence in nominating me for an Overseas Development Assistance scholarships;
- o The New Zealand Government, in general, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in particular, through Massey University International Student Office, for providing the financial resources for this study;
- o The Local Chief Executives of the study areas - Solano, Bayombong, and Bagabag - for their permission to conduct the study in their respective municipalities;
- o Professor Philip McDermott, for his supervision, guidance and critical comments on the conduct of the study and the writing of this report;
- o Dr. Murray Patterson, for his ready advice in the statistical analysis for this study;
- o Karen Puklowski, for helping out in preparing the graphics used in this report;
- o The respondents of the interviews, for finding the time to respond to the survey;
- o Dr. Bonifacio V. Ramos, the personnel and staff of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Province of Nueva Vizcaya, and colleagues at Massey University - Loloy, Luke, Connie, Gertrude, and Gemma - for finding time to review the initial copy of the questionnaire;

- o Alan and Lucia Dorn, Gordon and Eleanor Lindsay, for their inspiring friendship and support throughout my stay in New Zealand;
- o Crispin, Crissel Anne, Crissa Lei, and members of my immediate family, for their encouragement and support throughout the course of this study; and
- o Above all, the Almighty God, for giving me the wisdom, strength and spiritual guidance.

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