Public Administration in China and Malaysia: Evidence of Reforms

LooSee Beh

Email: lucybeh@um.edu.my

March 2007
Public Administration in China and Malaysia: Evidence of Reforms

LooSee Beh *

Introduction

Reform is a process of institutional transformation, which involves redefining the interests of, and the relationship between state and society. The purpose of administrative reforms in the public sector is to improve the effectiveness and performance of the public service and to ensure its affordability and sustainability. Administrative reforms aim at raising the quality of public services delivered to the population and to enhance the capacity to carry out core government functions. Applying the state-centered approach, some scholars emphasize the predominance of the party-state over society, and explain the reform path mainly through the intentions and options of the policymaking elite and negotiations among them. Other scholars, adopting the society-centered approach, see the emerging civil society as important determinant for the evolution for reform.

Reform has created opportunities for the nonpublic sector and has stabilized the polity and economy for a certain period, permitting economic growth and foreign trade. Reform usually requires a strong state as well as societal support. An authoritarian communist state is strong in promoting some economic reforms within the state apparatus and strong in implementing political control or repression over dissidents, but can be weak in carrying out thorough reform within the state sector and is feeble as well in protecting its remaining resources (Nathan, Hong, and Smith, 1999).

1 Dr LooSee Beh, Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia. Email: lucybeh@um.edu.my