



## TU 122 LAW IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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## Introduction to Thai Law

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### Overview

- What is “Law”?
  - Development of Law
- Sources of Thai Law
  - The Hierarchy of Thai written law
  - Roles of customary law and general principles of law
- Classification of Law

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### What is “law”?

Is law a ruler’s orders?  
Or  
Does law represent the will of the  
Government?

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### Development of Law in General

**Close connection between law and society**

*“Ubi societas ibi ius”*  
If there's a society, law will be there.

“From status to contract”

“Law is a mirror of society”

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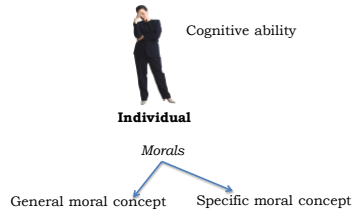
### Development of Society



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## Development of Law

How has law evolved?



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## Development of Law

How has law evolved?



**Family & Clan**

Morals + customs  
(or tradition)

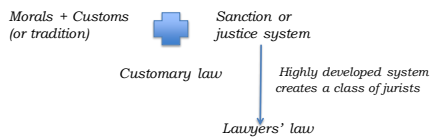
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## Development of Law

How has law evolved?



**Towns, cities, and states**



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## Three-layer of Law Theory



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## Three-layer of Law Theory

Stages of Development	Forms	Reasons	Origins
Customary law	Customs	Common sense	(1) Morals and (2) a certain legal practice is observed and the relevant actors consider it to be law
Lawyers' law	Legal principles	Juristic reasons	Legal opinions and court decisions
Technical Law	Statutes / written law	Technical reasons	Will of the ruler / government policy

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## Examples

### CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL CODE

**Section 20** A person, on completion of twenty years of age ceases to be a minor and becomes *sui juris*.

**Section 21** For the doing of a juristic act, a minor must obtain the consent of his legal representative. All acts done by him without such consent are voidable unless otherwise provided.

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## Examples

### CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL CODE

**Section 5** Every person must, in the exercise of his rights and in the performance of his obligations, act in good faith.

**Section 150** An act is void if its object is expressly prohibited by law or is impossible, or is contrary to public order or good morals.

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## Examples

### PENAL CODE

**Section 288** Whoever, murdering the other person, shall be imprisoned by death or imprisoned as from fifteen years to twenty years.

**Section 334** Whoever, dishonestly taking away the thing of other person or which the other person to be co-owner to be said to commit the theft, shall be imprisoned not out of three years and fined not out of six thousand Baht.

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## Examples

### PENAL CODE

**Section 60** Whenever any person intends to commit an act against a person, but the effect of the doing of such act occurs to another person through a slip, it shall be deemed that such person intentionally commits such act against the person who suffers from the bad effect of such doing. But, in case of the law provides for the infliction of heavier punishment on account of individual status or the relation between the doer and the person suffering from the bad effect, such law shall not be applied so as to inflict the heavier punishment on the doer.

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## What is “law”?

- Law - a norm of conducts enforced by organised sanction
- Law does not necessarily be merely ruler’s order or represents the will of the government.

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## Sources of Thai Law

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## Definition

### Sources of Law

- Where you can find law
- Types of law applicable in a legal system

### Why do we need to know sources of law?

- We can identify and interpret what is recognised as law in a legal system (*practical purpose*)
- We can identify a legal family of that legal system (*academic purpose*)

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## Section 4 of TCCC

The law must be applied in all cases which come within the letter or the spirit of any of its provisions.

Where no provision is applicable the case shall be decided according to the local custom.

If there is no such custom, the case shall be decided by analogy to the provision most nearly applicable, and, in default of such provision, by the general principles of law.

*(Copied from Section 1 of the Swiss Civil Code)*

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## Sources of Thai Law

### 1. Written law

- 1) Primary legislation
- 2) Executive legislation
  - Emergency Decree
  - Delegated or secondary legislation
- 3) Bylaw

### 2. Unwritten law

- 1) Traditional (or customary) law
- 2) General Principles
- 3) Judgements

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## Written Law

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## Legislation

### TERMINOLOGY

“legislation”, “statute” and “act”

**Legislation** – a law or set of laws which is enacted by a legislative body

**Statute** – a law which is formally written down

**Act** (or Act of Parliament) – a law is enacted by Parliament

(A draft piece of legislation is called a bill)

What do you call a law which is enacted by Parliament in Thailand?

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## Enactments of Acts

(See Sections 133-148 of the Constitution of 2017)

- A bill is introduced to the House of Representatives.
- The Lower House considers the bill.
- The approved bill goes to the Senate.
- The approved bill is presented to the King for royal assent.

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## Executive Legislation

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## Emergency Decrees

**Section 172 paragraph 1** For the purpose of maintaining national or public safety or national economic security, or averting public calamity, the King may issue an Emergency Decree which shall have the force as an Act.

### Two conditions must be satisfied

- (1) Subject matter
- (2) Emergency

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## Delegated or Secondary Legislation

**Delegated or secondary legislation** is "law made by an executive authority under powers delegated from a legislature by enactment of primary legislation; the primary legislation grants the executive agency power to implement and administer the requirements of that primary legislation".

*Secondary legislation cannot be contrary to the primary legislation or legislation of higher ranks*

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## Delegated or Secondary Legislation

### Examples of secondary legislation

- Royal Decrees
- Ministerial Rules
- Ministerial Declarations
- Department Declarations
- Etc.

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## Municipal Bylaw

**Bylaw** is a rule or law established by an organisation to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority.

**Local government bylaw** is a bylaw issued by local governments (Municipalities, Provincial Administrative Organisations, District Administrative Organisations, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Muang Pattaya)

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## Hierarchy of Written Law

### Tier 1 National Government Level

1. Constitution
2. Acts / Emergency Decrees
3. Secondary Legislation

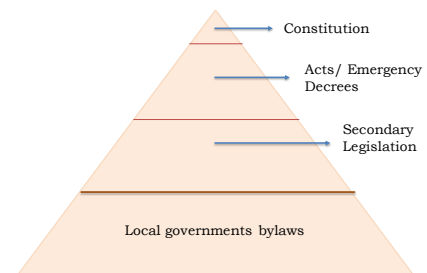
### Tier 2 Local Government Level

1. Acts concerning local governments
2. Local government bylaws

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## Hierarchy of Written Law



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## Unwritten Law

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## Customary Law

Roles of customary law in the Thai legal system

1. Secondary source – supplement to written law (See Section 4)
2. Primary source – customary law can be applied as a primary source of law
  - 1) Explanatory – Engagement (Betroth)
  - 2) Contradictory – Atheletes

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## Customary Law

Section 1437 TCCC “Betrothal is not valid until the man gives or transfers the property which is Khongman (Engagement gift) to the woman as evidence that the marriage shall take place.”

Section 295 The Penal Code of Thailand (PCT)  
 “Whoever causes injury to the other person in body or mind is said to commit bodily harm, and shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding two years or fined not exceeding four hundred thousand Baht, or both.”

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## General Principles of Law

“General Principles of Law” is general principles of fairness and justice which are applied universally in legal systems around the world

**Question:** Can a court reject to decide a case on the grounds that there is no law to apply to it.

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## Classification of Thai Law

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## Classification of Thai Law

### 1. Private law

Law concerns relationships between individuals.

#### Important examples:

- (1) Contract law
- (2) Tort law
- (3) Property law
- (4) Family law
- (5) Law of succession
- (6) Commercial law (or business law)

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## Classification of Thai Law

### 2. Public law

Law governs relationships between individuals and the government, and those relationships between individuals which are of direct concern to the society

#### Notable examples:

- (1) Constitutional law defines the relationship of different entities within a state, namely, the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary.
- (2) Administrative law governs the activities of administrative agencies of government
- (3) Tax Law
- (4) Criminal law?

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## Classification of Thai Law

### Criminal law

Law relates to crime and punishment.

Criminal punishment

- (1) Capital punishment (2) Imprisonment (3) Detention
- (4) Forfeiture of property (5) Fine

Any legal rule which includes a criminal punishment can be considered criminal law.

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