

Citizen Attitudes toward the Concept of Good Governance: A Survey of the North and Northeast Regions of Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates citizen attitudes toward good governance and correlates of those attitudes for a sample of 4,785 respondents living in the north and northeast regions of Thailand. A composite scale was constructed to measure attitudes toward four dimensions of good governance: accountability, participation, rule of law, and transparency. Hypothesized correlates of attitudes supportive of good governance included demographic and socio-economic factors; information about government and knowledge of citizens' rights; satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems; and trust in public officials.

The attitudinal data from the survey indicate that, despite the presence of traditional culture with its emphasis on hierarchical relationships and patron-client

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linkages, citizens in the north and northeast regions of Thailand are receptive to the notion of good governance. In terms of relative support for the four dimensions of governance, most support was expressed for accountability, followed by transparency, rule of law, and participation.

With respect to correlates of attitudes supportive of good governance, analysis using partial correlations revealed weak but statistically significant relationships between governance attitudes and education, knowing citizens' rights, satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems of health, education, and poverty, and trust in public officials. Educational attainment and knowledge about citizens' rights were positively associated with good governance attitudes; satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and trust in public officials were negatively associated with good governance attitudes. For the northeast region, two additional variables were found to be related to good governance attitudes: a positive association was obtained for degree of urbanization, and a negative association was obtained for age. Contrary to the research hypotheses, gender, frequency of reading newspapers, and name recognition of public figures and organizations dropped out.

The findings suggest that good governance attitudes may be fostered through the dissemination of information to citizens regarding their legal entitlements, as well as information regarding public agencies' resources, legal mandates, procedures, and practices. This information may be disseminated by the news media, by educational institutions, and by not-for-profit organizations, but in fact the most important actors in the process are public bureaucracies themselves, for they are in possession of the key facts and control accessibility to information. Information dissemination must take into account stakeholder requirements, and must be appropriate for differing levels of education.

Keywords: *Good Governance; Attitudes; North and Northeast Regions of Thailand*

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นการสำรวจทัศนคติของประชาชนที่มีต่อหลักธรรมาภิบาล จำนวน 4,785 คน ที่อาศัยอยู่ในพื้นที่ภาคเหนือ และภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย โดยจำแนกทัศนคติต่อหลักธรรมาภิบาลออกเป็น 4 มิติ ประกอบด้วย หลักความรับผิดชอบ หลักการมีส่วนร่วม หลักนิติธรรม และหลักความโปร่งใส

สมมติฐานในการวิจัย คือ ตัวแปรด้านประชากร สถานภาพทางเศรษฐกิจสังคม การรับรู้ข้อมูลข่าวสาร การรับรู้สิทธิของประชาชน ตลอดจนความพึงพอใจต่อการแก้ไขปัญหของรัฐบาล และความไว้วางใจต่อเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐ มีผลต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า แม้สังคมไทยจะมีพื้นฐานวัฒนธรรมที่เน้นการนับถือความอาวุโส และมีความสัมพันธ์ในรูปแบบอุปถัมภ์ แต่ผลการสำรวจประชาชนในภาคเหนือ และภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ กลับสะท้อนให้เห็นว่า ประชาชนมีทัศนคติที่สอดคล้องต่อหลักธรรมาภิบาลโดยรวม จำแนกเป็นทัศนคติที่สอดคล้องต่อหลักความรับผิดชอบมากที่สุด รองลงมาคือ หลักความโปร่งใส หลักนิติธรรม และหลักการมีส่วนร่วม ตามลำดับ

ในประเด็นต่อมาคือ การศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีความสัมพันธ์ต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล โดยใช้ค่าสหสัมพันธ์บางส่วน (Partial Correlation) เป็นเครื่องมือในการวิเคราะห์ ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ตัวแปรที่มีความสัมพันธ์ต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล ได้แก่ ระดับการศึกษา การรับรู้สิทธิของประชาชน ความพึงพอใจต่อการแก้ไขปัญหของรัฐบาล รวมทั้งความไว้วางใจที่มีต่อเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐ ทั้งนี้ตัวแปรดังกล่าวข้างต้นมีความสัมพันธ์ต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาลอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติแต่ทว่าเป็นความสัมพันธ์ในระดับต่ำ โดยระดับการศึกษา และการรับรู้สิทธิของประชาชน มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล ในขณะที่ความพึงพอใจต่อการแก้ไขปัญหของรัฐบาล และความไว้วางใจเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐ มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า ในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือยังมีอีก 2 ปัจจัย ที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล คือ ระดับความเป็นเมืองที่มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวก และอายุที่มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบ ในขณะที่ เพศ ความถี่ในการอ่านหนังสือพิมพ์ และการรู้จักบุคคล/องค์กรต่างๆ ไม่มีผลต่อทัศนคติแต่อย่างใด

จากผลการศึกษาข้างต้นนำมาสู่ข้อสรุปได้ว่า การส่งเสริมทัศนคติต่อธรรมาภิบาล อาจทำได้โดยการเผยแพร่ข้อมูลให้แก่ประชาชน ให้ตระหนักถึงสิทธิที่พึงได้รับตามกฎหมาย รวมทั้งการรับทราบถึงข้อมูลข่าวสารจากหน่วยงานภาครัฐ ซึ่งข้อมูลเหล่านี้อาจเผยแพร่ผ่านการนำเสนอข่าวของสื่อ สถาบันการศึกษา และองค์กรที่ไม่แสวงหาผลกำไรต่างๆ อย่างไรก็ตาม

ผู้ที่มีบทบาทสำคัญในกระบวนการนี้คือ หน่วยงานภาครัฐเอง ซึ่งทำหน้าที่เป็นผู้ควบคุมการเข้าถึงข้อมูลข่าวสารดังกล่าว ซึ่งควรส่งเสริมการเผยแพร่ข้อมูลข่าวสารที่สามารถตอบสนองความต้องการของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียทุกกลุ่ม โดยจัดรูปแบบการนำเสนอให้เหมาะสมต่อกลุ่มเป้าหมายที่มีระดับการศึกษาที่แตกต่างกันด้วย

คำสำคัญ: ธรรมาภิบาล สำนวณทัศนคติ ภาคเหนือและตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ

I. Introduction

Scholars in the field of public administration have recognized since the early 1990s that globalization together with forces such as devolution and hyperpluralism has necessitated paradigm shifts in administrative theories and practice (Barzelay, 1992; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993; Frederickson, 1997). In this paradigmatic shift, “governance” has become a key organizing concept (Kettl, 2002; Frederickson and Smith, 2003).

In development administration, the concept of good governance, first proposed by the World Bank and other donor agencies in the 1990s, has become firmly established. It is one of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Good governance is viewed as a necessary condition for providing an enabling environment for sustainable development (Schneider, 1999: 7). Successive Thai governments have acknowledged the principle of good governance, and public sector reforms have been proposed with the objective of promoting good governance.

Good governance is a multidimensional construct. It has been defined differently by different agencies. Some definitions identify four dimensions of governance, others six, yet others eight (<http://www.worldbank.org>, <http://www.adb.org>, <http://www.escap.org>). Good governance has been defined as consisting of all or some combination of the following dimensions: accountability, transparency, participation/voice, rule of law/predictability, regulatory quality, political stability, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness. Elimination of corruption and its variants (e.g. “efficiency”) are sometimes treated as a separate dimension, although corruption is generally subsumed under rule of law. The dimensions complement each other, and there is overlap among them: mutually reinforcing, they are also conceptually intertwined.

Examination of the literature on good governance reveals two important features (Punyaratabandhu, 2005). First, good governance requires mutually supportive and cooperative relationships among three groups of stakeholders: government, civil society, and the private sector. Second, good governance is a normative and value-laden construct. The values it embodies are the values originally formulated by international donor institutions, most notably the World Bank, in their efforts to ensure effective and efficient utilization of development aid in the management of the development process in recipient countries.

The requirement of mutually supportive and cooperative relationships among stakeholders is crucial. A civil society where citizens' preferences and cognitive outlooks are supportive of good governance is a necessary condition for the creation of good governance. When there is cultural dissonance, however, when the traditions and values of a civil society are at variance with externally imposed norms, desired outcomes may fail to materialize. In Kettl's words,

"The first governance problem is adaptation: fitting traditional vertical systems to the new challenge of globalization and devolution and integrating new horizontal systems into traditional vertical ones" (2002, 147).

Some critics of public sector reform policies in Thailand have argued that Thai reforms too often have their basis in foreign reform experiences. The latter experiences are rooted in specific institutions, development trajectories, administrative traditions, and political dynamics. As a result, they may not be directly capable of adaptation to the Thai context (Bowornwathana, 2000). For example, civil society in Thailand may not be strong enough to perform the independent monitoring functions that lie at the heart of reform programs implemented in other countries. Or, the traditional hierarchical culture and value orientations of the citizenry may not be supportive of the "horizontal" democratic norms embedded in governance concepts.

The values that underlie the concept of good governance are Western values. In this regard, Doornbos has remarked,

"If donor-conceptualized standards of good governance were more fully elaborated ... it would almost certainly imply an insistence that Western-derived standards of conduct be adopted in non-Western politico-cultural contexts" (2003, 8).

Accountability, transparency, voice/participation, rule of law/predictability assume a democratic, egalitarian, participatory society. The Thai traditional culture, by contrast, emphasizes hierarchical relationships and patron-client ties. Hierarchy in social relations means that those higher up in the hierarchy are ascribed certain authoritative powers and wisdom, and are deferred to by those lower down in the scale. Patron-client linkages imply an exchange relationship: a patron has the duty to protect and promote the welfare of his clients; a client returns the favor by obeying and carrying out the wishes of his patron (Samakarn, 2004). Charoenwongsawad (2004, 30-31) has identified three core values underlying patron-client ties: putting the interests of one's own group above all other interests; making reciprocity and mutual interdependence the basis for patron-client relationships (e.g. superior-subordinate, politicians and public officials, public officials and citizens); and placing a high value on gratitude and loyalty ("katanyu" which is akin to filial piety, except in this case it extends to piety shown by clients to their patrons), including the return of past kindnesses and favors. Thai traditional society has been described as a "loosely structured social system" (Embree, 1950), in other words a structure characterized by lax observance of rules and regulations. Such a culture runs contrary to "a logic of governance rooted in the rule of law" (Heinrich et al., 2004, 10). Thus, in the traditional culture, public/private distinctions carry little weight. A holder of public office, in his role either as patron or as client, would pay scant attention to norms of transparency or rule of law.

Governance reforms in Thailand, taking place in the context of external donor institution requirements especially after the financial crisis of 1997, have been supply side, by and large. Scant attention has been paid to the demand side. What kind of governance do Thai citizens expect or wish to see? Quite as importantly, what are their values and attitudes toward good governance? Are those values and attitudes conducive to, and supportive of, the exercise of good governance? This paper is part of a series that report on research designed to address some of these questions. In seeking answers to the questions, attention is drawn to the demand side of governance. This paper has two main objectives: first, to present findings from a survey conducted in north and northeastern Thailand on citizen attitudes toward four key dimensions of governance: rule of law, accountability, transparency, and participation; and second, to investigate correlates of these attitudes. The survey represents the first part of a three-phase research project: phases two and three covering the central and southern regions of the country are being conducted in 2006-07.

II. Hypotheses, Data, and Measurement

Hypotheses. Demographic factors are hypothesized to affect attitudes. An inverse relationship between age and attitudes toward good governance is hypothesized (i.e., older persons accustomed to mores of a traditional society tend to be less critical of the actions of government, however authoritarian, unlike younger, less traditional persons). It is also hypothesized that the relationship is positive for education (the higher the education, the more supportive of good governance, assuming that the more educated have greater awareness of the responsibilities of government and the role of citizens in holding government accountable for its actions). A third hypothesis is that men are more supportive of good governance than women, because men are more likely than women to receive exposure to, and become integrated into, the larger society. Thus they would be more likely to be aware of the actions of government and the standards of public service delivery.

Region and degree of urbanization are also hypothesized to affect governance attitudes. Citizens living in poorer and less developed regions may be more preoccupied with survival and daily needs, and less concerned about good governance those living in more affluent regions. The more affluent north of Thailand is hypothesized to be more supportive of good governance than the northeast, which is the country's poorest region. Moreover, the greater the degree of urbanization, the more likely it is that citizens will be supportive of good governance, because of greater exposure and access to information channels.

Information and knowledge about government play a key part in shaping public opinion and attitudes. Frequency of reading newspapers is one indicator of access to information. Indicators of knowledge concern the extent to which citizens are aware of their rights guaranteed by the Constitution, and the extent of name recognition of prominent public figures and organizations. The hypothesis is that the greater the degree of information and knowledge, leading to greater empowerment, the greater the likelihood of supporting good governance concepts.

Finally, satisfaction with government and trust in public officials are hypothesized to have an inverse relationship with good governance attitudes. In other words, lower levels of satisfaction and trust are related to a stronger support for good governance. The rationale here is that the greater the levels of satisfaction and trust, the less the perceived need to monitor governance. Conversely, lower levels of

satisfaction and trust generate the desire to monitor governance and hold it accountable for its actions.

The Data Set. The data set consists of a sample of 4,785 respondents surveyed in eight provinces in the north and northeastern regions of Thailand in late 2005 - early 2006. The sample was divided into three strata based on degree of urbanization, with municipal towns and cities representing the highest degree of urbanization, *tambon* municipalities representing a lesser degree of urbanization, and rural villages outside municipal areas representing the least degree of urbanization. Each stratum consisted of the following number of respondents: 840 respondents in town municipalities in the north and 840 respondents in the northeast; 585 respondents in semi-urban *tambon* municipalities in the north and 600 respondents in the northeast; 960 respondents in rural villages in the north and 960 respondents in the northeast. A multistage stratified sampling design was used. The National Statistical Office of Thailand provided generous assistance in drawing the sample and supplying the area maps.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire consisting of some 70 items. In addition to demographic and socio-economic questions, the first part of the questionnaire also contained items related to access to information and public officials and offices, and levels of satisfaction with public service provision. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit attitudes toward the dimensions of governance, as well as respondent opinions on desired characteristics of government and governance. The questionnaire and survey design are described at length in Punyaratabandhu (2006a, 2006b).

Scale Construction. The following composite scales were constructed: satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems; trust in public officials; name recognition of public figures; having information about citizens' basic rights; and attitudes toward good governance.

a) Composite scales for the independent variables

i) *Satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems.* Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems of poverty, education, and health. A Likert-scale ("satisfied", "somewhat satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", "dissatisfied") was employed. The Cronbach's alpha for the three-item scale is 0.836.

ii) *Trust in public officials.* Using a five-point Likert-scale, respondents were asked to rate their trust in the following public officials: kamnan and village headmen; local tambon (or municipal, depending on location) councils; members of parliament; government officials; and the local police. The Cronbach's alpha for the five-item scale is 0.861.

iii) *Name recognition of public figures.* Names of ten public figures and organizations were read to respondents, who were asked whether they knew or had heard of them. The list included television presenters, sports and entertainment figures, as well as social critics, politicians, and government and not-for-profit organizations. The name recognition index consisted of aggregating answers to the following names: Dr. Prawase Wasi, well-known academic and social critic; Suriya Jeungruengruengkij, the then deputy prime minister and minister of transport and communications, and secretary-general of the ruling Thai Rak Thai party; Khunying Jaruwan Maintaka, the Auditor General whom the Thaksin administration was seeking to remove; Police General Vasana Permlap, Election Commission chairman; and the National Counter Corruption Commission. The Cronbach's alpha for the five-item index is 0.797.

iv) *Knowing citizens' rights.* The Thai Constitution guarantees Thai citizens certain basic rights. Respondents were asked whether they were entitled to, or had the right to the following: a free 12-year education; receiving social services on an equal basis; the right to sue government agencies; and the right to combine to remove politicians from office. The knowledge of rights index consists of aggregating answers to the preceding questions. The Cronbach's alpha for the four-item index is 0.768.

b) Composite scale for the dependent variable

The dependent variable, attitudes toward good governance, is a composite of four sub-scales: accountability, participation, rule of law, and transparency. Approximately 30 items were included in the questionnaire, designed to measure the four dimensions. Some of the items were intended to tap traditional values (such as social hierarchy and patron-client ties) assumed to run counter to governance norms. For scale construction, factor analysis employing a varimax rotation was performed as a preliminary check whether Likert-scale ("agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," "disagree") questionnaire items loaded on hypothesized dimensions of governance. Items with factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.35 were retained

for scale construction. A description of the good governance scale and the component sub-scales follows.

i) *Accountability* means that public officials are answerable for their behavior, which includes the corollary that the actions of public officials should be open to scrutiny by the public. Respondents were asked whether they thought the actions of politicians they approved of should be subjected to scrutiny. The basis of approval varies - for instance, approval could be based on the feeling that the politician is a good person, or that he has done a good job, or that he is supported by a majority of the public, or that he has personally helped the respondent in some way. Responses were therefore sought to the following questions: "Should the following persons be subject to scrutiny..."

1. Politicians who you're certain are good persons?
2. Politicians whose performance you approve of?
3. Politicians who are supported by the majority of the people?
4. Politicians who have personally helped you or with whom you're friendly?"

The Cronbach's alpha for the four-item scale was 0.905.

ii) *Participation* is considered a key element of governance on the principle that people are the ultimate beneficiaries of public policies. The rationale is that participatory approaches foster a sense of ownership amongst stakeholders, leading to increased cooperation and enhancing performance and sustainability of public programs. Initially, an attempt was made to identify participation attitudes relating to development projects and plans, and to local government. Pretests revealed, however, that unlike their rural counterparts, most urban respondents had never thought about participating in such activities. Upon reflection, this appears to be a reality of urban life in Thailand. The survey therefore focuses on *political participation*, because this construct is capable of measurement at all levels of urbanization. Responses were sought to the following four-point Likert-scale items:

1. Politics is for politicians. Ordinary people shouldn't interfere.
2. Farmers and poor people shouldn't be involved in protest activities.
3. It's more important to focus on basic necessities than to be interested

in politics.

4. Making a living is more important than checking public officials' performance.
5. People who are more educated have more opportunity to express their political views than people with little education.
6. Voting isn't a duty. Whether one votes depends on whether it's convenient to do so.

The Cronbach's alpha for the six-item scale was 0.612.

iii) *Rule of law* refers to the provision of legal and regulatory frameworks that are fair and are implemented impartially. Impartial enforcement of laws and regulations requires noncorrupt public officials. The items on the rule of law scale tap the dimensions of equality before the law, corrupt practices, as well as the more subtle consideration that whatever government does is (legally) correct, so that ordinary citizens should not question the legality of government actions. Responses were sought to the following four-point Likert-scale items:

1. It's all right for rich people to be above the law.
2. You can accept "influential persons" taking unfair advantage of you.
3. It's all right to use connections to put one's children in school or to find them jobs.
4. It's all right to sometimes bribe government officials, in order to receive better and more efficient service from them.
5. It's all right for government officials to accept "envelopes" to turn a blind eye on small violations of the law.
6. Do you think it's wrong for government officials to accept "envelopes" for speeding up services?
7. Government officials know their duties. The people don't need to advise them on how to do their work.
8. Government leaders are like the head of family. We should accept and obey their decisions in all matters.

The Cronbach's alpha for the eight-item rule of law scale was 0.603.

iv) *Transparency* refers to the “availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions” (<http://www.adb.org>). Availability of information assists citizens to make informed decisions and to assess government performance. Clarity about government rules and procedures, communicated in easily understandable forms and language, reduces uncertainty and may inhibit abuses of authority among public officials. Questionnaire items on the transparency dimension were designed to probe respondents’ attitudes on whether the government should make certain kinds of information available to the public and whether they were aware of citizen rights under the Constitution, such as the right to remove poorly performing politicians. Responses were sought to the following four-point Likert-scale items:

1. The public must be kept informed about government decisions.
2. The government must inform the public how it spends its budget.
3. The public must be informed what their local government does with its budget.
4. The people can remove politicians who don’t perform well.

The Cronbach’s alpha for the four-item transparency scale was 0.846.

v) *Good Governance*. A reliability coefficient was computed for the combined 22 items in the four dimensions of governance described above. The Cronbach’s alpha is 0.745. Since each dimension consisted of a different number of items, varying between four and eight, combining the items to form a composite scale would have resulted in weighting the dimensions unequally in the new scale. Thus, in order to create a composite governance scale based on four components weighted equally, rather than combining individual items, the governance scale was computed using the mean of the accountability, participation, rule of law and transparency sub-scales.

III. Empirical Results

Characteristics of the Sample. Table 1 presents characteristics of the sample, by region. The proportion of women is somewhat greater than men (53.9 percent and 46.1 percent, respectively). The proportions do not differ significantly between the north and northeast regions.

More than half the sample were aged between 36 to 55 years. The mean age was 44.8 years, with a standard deviation of 12.5 years. Respondents in the northeast region tended to be somewhat older than respondents in the north.

In terms of educational attainment, 40.2 percent of the sample had less than a sixth grade education. Twenty-six percent had between sixth grade and ninth grade education; 13.1 percent had completed high school; and 20.7 percent had two or more years of college. Respondents in the north tended to have more education than respondents in the northeast.

Almost 30 percent of the sample were engaged in agriculture, including fisheries and animal husbandry; 27.4 percent were shopkeepers, ran small businesses or were self-employed; 20.4 percent were laborers and wage earners (non-company employees). Public sector employees (government and state enterprise) accounted for 8.5 percent of the sample. The remaining occupations consisted of company employees (3.5 percent), students (2.6 percent), and housewives (8.1 percent).

Table 1 Characteristics of the Sample, by Region

Variables	Region		Total (n = 4,785)
	Northeast (n = 2,400)	North (n = 2,385)	
Gender			
Male	46.4	45.8	46.1
Female	53.6	54.2	53.9
	n.s.		
Age			
Under 25	5.6	6.7	6.1
26 - 35	17.3	19.3	18.3
36 - 45	28.5	28.6	28.6
46 - 55	25.0	26.4	25.7
56 - 65	17.6	13.3	15.5
65 or older	5.9	5.7	5.8
	$\chi^2 = 19.95$, d.f. = 5, p = 0.01		

Variables	Region		Total (n= 4,785)
	Northeast (n = 2,400)	North (n = 2,385)	
Educational Attainment			
Less than 6th Grade	45.2	35.2	40.2
6th Grade	17.2	14.4	15.8
9th Grade	9.1	11.3	10.2
12 th Grade or Occupational Certificate	11.9	14.4	13.1
Diploma or Higher Occupational Certificate	4.7	7.5	6.1
B.A. and Higher	12.0	17.3	14.6
	$\chi^2=85.60$, d.f. = 5, p=0.01		
Occupation			
Agriculture/ Fishing/ Animal husbandry	35.5	23.6	29.6
Government service/ State enterprise	7.5	9.5	8.5
Company employee	2.4	4.6	3.5
Merchant/ Self-employed	27.5	27.2	27.4
Employee	16.0	24.8	20.4
Student	1.8	3.4	2.6
	$\chi^2=141.10$, d.f. = 6, p=0.01		

Regional differences exist. In the northeast, 35.5 percent of respondents were engaged in agriculture, as opposed to 23.6 percent of respondents in the north. Fewer respondents in the northeast were laborers and wage earners than respondents in the north (16.0 percent and 24.8 percent, respectively).

Information, Satisfaction with Government, and Trust in Public Officials. The state exercises control over the content of Thai television programs, extending to news programs and talk shows, whereas newspapers enjoy relatively more editorial freedom. About ninety percent of respondents in the sample said their main source of news was television programming. When asked about frequency of reading newspapers, 37.3 percent of respondents said they never read newspapers at all; only 18.8 percent said they read newspapers on a daily basis. Respondents in the north region read newspapers more frequently than respondents in the northeast (Table 2).

Table 2 Information and Satisfaction Variables, by Region

Variables	Region		Total (n = 4,785)
	Northeast (n = 2,400)	North (n = 2,385)	
Frequency of reading newspapers			
Never	44.7	29.9	37.3
Some days	38.6	49.1	43.8
Every day	16.6	21.0	18.8
	$\chi^2 = 112.49$, d.f. = 2, p = 0.01		
Knowing citizens' rights			
Don't know any rights	8.9	7.2	8.1
Know 1 right	11.4	6.9	9.1
Know 2 rights	14.8	14.0	14.4
Know 3 rights	14.4	17.1	15.8
Know 4 rights	50.5	54.7	52.6
	$\chi^2 = 39.61$, d.f. = 4, p = 0.01		
Name recognition of public figures			
Don't recognize any name	25.6	20.5	23.1
Recognize 1 name	16.4	16.4	16.4
Recognize 2 names	15.7	15.2	15.4
Recognize 3 names	12.6	12.8	12.7
Recognize 4 names	13.4	13.5	13.5
Recognize 5 names	16.4	21.6	19.0
	$\chi^2 = 30.53$, d.f. = 5, p = 0.01		
Satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems			
1.00-1.80 (dissatisfied)	2.9	5.5	4.2
1.81-2.60 (somewhat dissatisfied)	7.2	11.8	9.5
2.61-3.40 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)	37.8	33.0	35.4
3.41-4.20 (somewhat satisfied)	31.1	30.5	30.8
4.21-5.00 (satisfied)	21.1	19.2	20.2
	$\chi^2 = 56.47$, d.f. = 4, p = 0.01		
Trust in public officials			
1.00-1.80 (don't trust)	4.1	3.7	3.9
1.81-2.60 (somewhat distrust)	14.5	14.5	14.5
2.61-3.40 (neither trust nor distrust)	44.0	37.9	41.0
3.41-4.20 (somewhat trust)	25.8	33.3	29.5
4.21-5.00 (trust)	11.5	10.7	11.1
	$\chi^2 = 35.27$, d.f. = 4, p = 0.01		

With respect to recognition of public figures and organizations, when presented with a list of five names, 23.1 percent of respondents failed to recognize any name, 31.8 percent recognized 1-2 names, 26.2 percent recognized 3-4 names, and 19.0 percent recognized all five names. Again, respondents in the north showed more name recognition than respondents in the northeast.

Respondents were asked whether they were entitled to, or had the right to the following: a free 12-year education; receiving social services on an equal basis; the right to sue government agencies; and the right to combine to remove politicians from office. Just over half (52.6 percent) of respondents said they were entitled to all four of the preceding; 15.8 percent were aware of three rights; 14.4 percent were aware of two rights; and 9.1 percent were aware of one right; and 8.1 percent did not know they were entitled to any of the four rights. Again, the level of awareness was significantly higher for respondents in the north than in the northeast. As shown in Table 2, 20.3 percent of respondents in the northeast knew one right or did not know any rights, as opposed to 13.9 percent of respondents in the north.

With respect to satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems of health, education, and poverty, 51.0 percent of respondents said they were "satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the government's performance; 35.4 percent expressed neutrality ("neither satisfied nor dissatisfied"); while 13.7 percent said they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied". Respondents in the north expressed a greater degree of dissatisfaction than respondents in the northeast.

Although respondents were on the whole satisfied with the government's ability to solve problems of health, education, and poverty, they indicated lower levels of trust in public officials. About forty-six percent of respondents said they "trusted" or "somewhat trusted" public officials; 41.0 percent expressed neutrality ("neither trust nor distrust"); while 18.4 percent said they "somewhat distrusted" or "distrusted" government officials. Respondents in the north expressed a greater degree of trust than respondents in the northeast.

Good Governance Attitudes. Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations of the composite good governance scale and the four sub-scales - accountability, participation, rule of law, and transparency. The scales measure attitudes supportive of good governance concepts, with a minimum score of 1.00 ("disagree") and a maximum of 4.00 ("agree"). As shown in Table 3, attitudinal data given by

respondents in both the north and northeast were supportive of good governance (with mean scores of 3.29 and 3.18, respectively). The dimension most strongly supported was transparency, followed by accountability, rule of law, and participation, in that order.

Table 3 Good Governance Attitudes, by Region

Dimensions	Region				t	p
	Northeast (n=2,400)		North (n=2,385)			
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
Good Governance Composite Scale	3.18	0.43	3.29	0.38	-9.24	0.01
Accountability	3.31	1.12	3.47	0.95	-5.47	0.01
Participation	2.79	0.56	2.88	0.57	-5.33	0.01
Rule of law	3.21	0.46	3.25	0.48	-3.03	0.01
Transparency	3.39	0.66	3.52	0.53	-7.71	0.01
	Min = 1.00, Max = 4.00		Min = 1.00, Max = 4.00			

Regional differences exist, however. On every dimension of governance, respondents in the north were more supportive than respondents in the northeast. The differences are more pronounced on the accountability and transparency dimensions. They are less pronounced, although still statistically significant, on the rule of law and participation dimensions.

Correlates of Good Governance Attitudes. One of the objectives of this paper was to identify correlates of attitudes supportive of good governance. Hypothesized correlates included: gender; age; education; degree of urbanization; information variables including frequency of newspaper reading, knowledge about citizen rights, and name recognition of prominent public figures; satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems of health, education, and poverty; and trust in public officials. Table 4 reports Pearson product-moment zero-order correlations between hypothesized correlates and good governance attitudes, and the partial correlation coefficient between each hypothesized correlate and good governance attitudes, holding the remaining variables constant. The partial correlation coefficient is the average change in the dependent variable per unit change in the independent variable, with all other predictor variables held constant.

For respondents in the northeast region, examination of the zero-order correlations for the nine hypothesized correlates of good governance attitudes reveals that eight are statistically significant. Gender is not correlated with attitudes supportive of good governance. When partial correlations are computed, however, only seven partial correlations remain statistically significant. The variable dropping out is frequency of newspaper reading. The explanation is that the eliminated variable is correlated with other predictor variables in the table, and when the predictor variables are held constant, the initially observed bivariate relationship with the dependent variable disappears.

Table 4 Predictor Variables and Good Governance Attitudes: Pearson Product - Moment and Partial Correlation Coefficients (n=4,785)

Variables	Good Governance Attitudes			
	Northeast (n=2,400)		North (n=2,385)	
	Pearson r	Partial r ***	Pearson r	Partial r ***
Degree of Urbanization	0.239 **	0.123 **	0.121 **	-0.023
Gender	0.032	0.025	0.033	0.014
Age	-0.135 **	-0.056 **	-0.157 **	-0.044 *
Educational Attainment	0.241 **	0.043 *	0.250 **	0.073 **
Frequency of reading newspapers	0.225 **	0.033	0.204 **	0.038
Name recognition of public figures	0.228 **	0.063 **	0.217 **	0.032
Knowing citizens' rights	0.234 **	0.188 **	0.238 **	0.206 **
Satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems	-0.170 **	-0.042 *	-0.223 **	-0.102 **
Trust in public officials	-0.203 **	-0.091 **	-0.216 **	-0.079 **

* Significant at the 0.05 level

** Significant at the 0.01 level

*** Partial correlations between each variable and good governance, holding remaining variables constant.

For respondents in the northeast region, weak but statistically significant partial correlations are obtained for degree of urbanization, age, and educational attainment (partial $r = 0.123, -0.056, 0.043$, respectively). The signs on the coefficients are in the hypothesized direction. Degree of urbanization and education are positively related to attitudes supportive of good governance, whereas the association with age is negative. Name recognition of public figures is weakly associated with attitudes supportive of good governance (partial $r = 0.063$). Interestingly, a somewhat stronger relationship exists between knowing citizens' rights and good governance attitudes (partial $r = 0.188$). Finally, weak but statistically significant partial correlations are obtained for satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and trust in public officials. The signs on the coefficients are in the hypothesized direction (partial $r = -0.042$ and -0.091 , respectively). The less the satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and the less trust in public officials, the greater the support for the concept of good governance.

For respondents in the north region, examination of the zero-order correlations for the nine hypothesized correlates of good governance attitudes yields results similar to the northeast: eight of the nine zero-order correlations are statistically significant. Gender is not correlated with attitudes supportive of good governance. Unlike the results for the northeast region, however, when partial correlations are computed for the north region, only five partial correlations remain statistically significant. The variables dropping out are degree of urbanization, frequency of newspaper reading, and name recognition of public figures.

Analysis of the data for the northern sample shows weak but statistically significant partial correlations for age and educational attainment (partial $r = -0.044$ and 0.073 , respectively). Age has a negative, and education a positive, association with attitudes supportive of good governance. Similar to the northeast, in the north region a stronger relationship exists between knowing citizens' rights and good governance attitudes (partial $r = 0.206$). Lastly, weak but statistically significant partial correlations are obtained for satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and trust in public officials. The signs on the coefficients are in the hypothesized direction (partial $r = -0.102$ and -0.079 , respectively). The less the satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and the less trust in public officials, the greater the support for the concept of good governance.

IV. Conclusions and Implications for Public Administration

This paper set out to investigate citizen attitudes toward good governance and correlates of those attitudes for a sample of 4,785 respondents living in the north and northeastern regions of Thailand. A composite scale was constructed to measure attitudes toward four dimensions of good governance: accountability, participation, rule of law, and transparency. Hypothesized correlates of attitudes supportive of good governance included demographic and socio-economic factors; information about government and knowledge of citizens' rights; satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems; and trust in public officials.

The initial thesis that the traditional Thai culture based on hierarchical relationships and patron-client ties would perhaps serve to undermine citizens' support for good governance concepts was not substantiated by the data. Respondents both in the north and northeastern regions expressed attitudes supportive of good governance. In terms of relative support for the four dimensions of governance, most support was expressed for accountability, followed by transparency, rule of law, and participation. Citizens living in the poorer and less developed northeast region are less supportive of good governance than citizens living in the more affluent north. For those living in poverty, daily subsistence requirements assume priority over governance concerns. The inference could be drawn that it is necessary to achieve a minimum threshold of economic well-being before attention is given to good governance.

With respect to correlates of attitudes supportive of good governance, analysis using partial correlations revealed weak but statistically significant relationships between governance attitudes and age, education, knowing citizens' rights, satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems of health, education, and poverty, and trust in public officials. The signs on the coefficients were consistent with the research hypotheses. Educational attainment and knowledge about citizens' rights were positively associated with good governance attitudes; satisfaction with the government's ability to solve problems and trust in public officials were negatively associated with good governance attitudes. For the northeast region, but not for the north, two additional variables were found to be related to good governance attitudes: a positive association was obtained for degree of urbanization and name recognition of public figures. This was consistent with the research hypotheses.

Lastly, and contrary to the research hypotheses, gender and frequency of reading newspapers dropped out.

The findings have implications for the public administration. The attitudinal data from the survey indicate that, despite the presence of traditional culture with its emphasis on hierarchical relationships and patron-client linkages, citizens in the north and northeast regions of Thailand are receptive to the notion of good governance. Receptivity to good governance is associated with level of education, and information concerning citizens' rights as guaranteed by the constitution. The obvious implication to be drawn is that good governance attitudes may be fostered through the dissemination of information to citizens regarding their legal entitlements, as well as information regarding public agencies' resources, mandates, procedures, and practices. This information may be disseminated by the news media, by educational institutions, and by not-for-profit organizations, but in fact the most important actors in the process are public bureaucracies themselves, for they are in possession of the key facts and control accessibility to information. Information dissemination must take into account stakeholder requirements, and must be appropriate for differing levels of education.

V. Recommendation

Successful implementation of governance reforms requires mutually supportive and cooperative relationships among stakeholders. If the demand side for good governance is weak, it hardly augurs well for the success of implementation. The primary action recommendation emerging from this study is that interventions designed to foster attitudes supportive of good governance should focus on dissemination of information to the public, in particular information about citizens' rights under Thai law and those guaranteed by the Thai Constitution.

The dissemination of information should be differentiated. Stakeholders have different levels of receptivity. The most receptive groups are the young and the educated, living in towns and cities. The least receptive are older and less educated persons, living in rural villages. The form and content of information should be designed to serve the needs of each target group.

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