

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 7.1 Conclusion

This research confirms the researcher's contention that certain techniques developed in the West are applicable to the measurement of Thai civil servants' attitudes toward agricultural cooperatives. Fishbein's approach to attitude saliency was employed in item construction. Factor analysis was used to make sure that the attitudinal items measure the same attitudinal dimensions. Likert's method of item analysis was then employed to select only those attitudinal items that discriminate well. The factor scores were then used to normalize the composite attitude scales. These combined methods enabled the researcher to secure two dimensions of the civil servants' attitudes toward cooperatives, namely, the attitude toward cooperative benefits, and the attitude toward cooperative weaknesses. In addition, the researcher was able to demonstrate that the measured civil servants' attitudes are related to many proposed independent variables as follows.

##### 7.1.1 Attitudes Toward Benefits

For the civil servants' attitude toward cooperative benefits, six out of eight socio-demographic variables, i.e., age, educational level, field of study, father's occupation, position classification level, and salary, were found to relate to the attitude; the higher the age of the civil servants, the more likely they agree with the cooperative benefits. On the other hand, educational level is negatively associated with attitude; the more educated civil servants,

the less they tend to agree with the benefits of the cooperatives. As for the field of study, the civil servants who received only Social Sciences or Humanities education tend to disagree with the advantages of agricultural cooperatives. Those civil servants whose fathers are or were in government service and public enterprise employees were found to be the most positive in their attitude toward cooperative benefits; whereas, the civil servants whose fathers are or were farmers are more likely to believe in cooperative benefits compared to those civil servants whose fathers are neither bureaucrats nor farmers. The relationship between the position classification level and the attitude toward cooperative benefits is however not linear. The civil servants who hold either the lowest or the highest position classification level in this sample, levels one and six, tend to agree more with the cooperative advantages than those who are in between. In the same manner, the civil servants classified by their salaries to be in the low and the high groups are more likely to agree with the cooperative benefits than those in the medium group. In addition, one indicator of proximity to agricultural life was found to be related to attitude; the civil servants who have close friends or relatives working in agriculture tend to agree more with the advantages provided by the cooperatives than those who are not in agricultural occupations.

All ten organizational factors were found to be associated with the attitude toward cooperative benefits. The civil servants who perceive their organizations as having a low level of structural constraint but a high level in individual responsibility, organizational warmth, support, reward, identity, and moderation in risk-taking tend to be more positive toward cooperative

benefits than others. The civil servants who perceive a higher degree of conflict toleration and confrontation in their work-places are, however, less likely to agree with cooperative benefits. The relationship between performance standard and attitude is not linear; although the civil servants who perceive high degree of performance standard tend to agree more with the cooperative benefits. Those who are in the medium group agree least with such benefits. The civil servants' perception of task environment as measured by degrees of favorableness toward their clients was found to be positively related to their attitude toward cooperative benefits; the more favorably they perceive of their clients, the more they also tend to agree with the benefits of agricultural cooperatives.

#### 7.1.2 Attitudes Toward Weaknesses

Regarding the civil servants' attitude toward cooperative weaknesses, four out of eight socio-demographic factors were found to be associated with attitude. Male civil servants tend to agree with the weaknesses more than their female counterparts. For the other three factors, i.e., educational level, position classification level, and salary, it can be stated that the higher the levels of civil servants' education, position classification, and salary, the less they tend to score on attitude toward the cooperative weaknesses, which means that they are more likely to agree with the imputed weaknesses of the cooperatives. Attendance at an in-service course on agricultural cooperatives, which is one indicator of proximity to agricultural life, was found to be associated with the attitude toward cooperative weaknesses.

The civil servants who attended the course tend to agree with such weaknesses more than those who did not.

At the same time, eight out of ten organizational factors are significantly related to attitude toward cooperative weaknesses. The civil servants who perceive a lower level of structural constraint in their offices tend to agree less with cooperative weaknesses. The higher the levels of individual responsibility, organizational support, reward, conflict toleration, and moderation of risk-taking perceived by the civil servants, the less they are likely to agree with the disadvantages blamed for the cooperatives. On the contrary, it was found that the higher the levels of performance standard within their organization perceived by the civil servants, the more they tend to agree with cooperative weaknesses. Finally, concerning the civil servants' perception of their clients, the more favorably their clients are perceived, the less are they likely to believe in the weaknesses of agricultural cooperatives. Please consult Table 57 and Table 58 for the summary of the findings.

Table 57 and Table 58 also support the researcher's suggestion that attitude formation and change are complicated in their nature. So instead of relying on only socio-demographic factors as was done in past research on the bureaucracy, knowledge from other social science disciplines should be incorporated to probe for other factors that might also affect the civil servants' attitudes. As expected, two indicators of proximity to agricultural life, drawn from findings in Social Psychology, are related to attitudes.

In particular, as the civil servants work for bureaucratic agencies that are formal organizations, almost all organizational factors were found to be associated with their attitudes toward cooperatives.

**Table 57 :** Summary of Statistical Tests on Relationships between Socio-Demographic, Proximity Factors and Attitude toward Cooperatives

Variable	Attitude Toward Cooperative Benefits	Attitude Toward Cooperative Weaknesses
<u>Socio-demographic variables</u>		
Sex	-	X
Age	X	-
Birth-place	-	-
Educational Level	X	X
Field of Study	X	-
Father's occupation	X	-
Position classification	X	X
Salary	X	X
<u>Proximity indicators</u>		
Rural-life experience	-	-
Friends or relatives in agriculture	X	-
Cooperative course attendance	-	X
Cooperative work- relatedness	-	-

Note: X signifies the acceptance of the relationship

Table 58: Summary of Statistical Tests on Relationships between Organizational Factors and Attitude toward Agricultural Cooperatives

Variable	Attitude Toward Cooperative Benefits	Attitude Toward Cooperative Weaknesses
<u>Organizational climate factors</u>		
Organizational constraint	X	X
Individual responsibility	X	X
Organizational warmth	X	-
Organizational support	X	X
Organizational reward	X	X
Conflict toleration	X	X
Performance standard	X	X
Organizational identity	X	-
Moderation in risk-taking	X	X
<u>A "task" environment factor</u>		
Perception of clients	X	X

Note: X signifies the acceptance of the relationship

## 7.2 Discussion and Suggestions

### 7.2.1 The Significance of Thai Civil Servants' Attitudes toward Agricultural Cooperatives

There are a number of reasons to believe that Thai agricultural cooperatives cannot be fully developed without the involvement as well as the commitment of the bureaucracy, which has a long tradition of control, and on whom Thai farmers depend for

encouragement and support. Concerning the country's long tradition of bureaucratic control, Riggs' conception of Thailand as bureaucratic polity (1) has been widely accepted. Although, as a result of recent capitalist development within the country, businessmen have gained increasing significance in Thai politics and society, the bureaucratic predomination is still a prevalent fact. A noted Thai political scientist has even criticized Thai bureaucracy for exploiting the development ideology as the *raison d'être* to further expand its functions, size, as well as power (2). Regarding the farmers' dependent culture, there are studies that confirm this proposition. For example, Yatsushiro and his co-researchers argued that many villagers in some North-eastern provinces were "extremely desirous" of having the civil servants visit them as frequently as possible (3). Rubin similarly noted that villagers in some Northern provinces were psychologically dependent upon the civil servants; accordingly, he proposed a theory of development interaction which suggested that villagers who were the inferiors felt that their development activities were bound to fail. To prevent that failure, the benevolent superiors - the civil servants - were required to appear at the project sites to provide support and control to the villagers (4). At present, the atmosphere of dominant-dependent interaction between the civil servants and the villagers still prevails in the case of agricultural cooperatives. To be able to identify the attitudes, as well as their determining factors, of the civil servants who work at certain

levels with the cooperatives is significant for the progress or failure of the cooperative movements. If cooperative performance is to be improved, the involved civil servants must have confidence in the cooperatives, a condition that presupposes a belief in the benefits of the cooperatives. Without such confidence, Rubin's "development interaction" can hardly take place. However, given the civil servants' faith in the cooperatives, the positive attitude of the civil servants by itself does not guarantee the success of agricultural cooperatives. The dependent attitude of the farmers has to be changed also, since the end-product of cooperative development is self-reliance. In this regard, Rogers and Shoemaker's sequence of change agent's roles is relevant since the civil servants who attempt to institutionalize the cooperatives act as change agents. According to the authors, there are seven sequences of the roles: (1) to develop the need for change; (2) to establish the change relationship; (3) to diagnose the problem; (4) to create the intent to change in the clients; (5) to translate the intent into action; (6) to stabilize the change; and (7) to achieve a terminal relationship (5). To promote successfully the cooperative institutions, the civil servants have to establish a change relationship with farmers, through which they can urge them to see the need and then to develop the intent to form a cooperative. The civil servants have to assist the farmers in forming the cooperative. Finally, they should terminate their relationship with the farmers after the cooperative is stabilized. Although many agricultural cooperatives have been



established by the government and the civil servants have thus far played a great role in promoting their activities, the last two stages of Roger and Shoemaker's innovation, the stabilization of the cooperatives and the termination of the relationship between the civil servants and the farmers in regard to the cooperative activities, are still far from realized. Actually, to stabilize or institutionalize the cooperatives implies relationship termination. However, the present Department of Cooperative Promotion might obstruct the realization of this final stage because the cooperatives are not strong enough for the relationship to be terminated. The civil servants' pessimistic attitude toward the cooperatives, as might be reflected in their attitude toward the cooperative weaknesses in this research, could also retard the cooperative development process. If the civil servants believe in the weaknesses of the cooperatives, it is likely that they will take greater control of the cooperatives in the hope of reducing such weaknesses. To tighten the control over cooperative activities is self-defeating since it interferes with the final goal of cooperative self-reliance. Therefore, one can say that to be able to measure the civil servants' attitudes toward the cooperatives and to identify the independent factors that might affect the attitudes will be an important step toward working out a program to push for the progress of the cooperative movement. This is what this dissertation research has tried to do.

7.2.2 To Create Positive Attitudes of the Civil Servants  
toward Cooperatives through Organizational Factors

The significance of organizations is nowadays recognized. So many activities of human beings are created and managed by organizations that few purely personal events remain untouched by some forms of organizations (6). For civil servants who are organizational men par excellence, it means that they are spending most of their lives within the bureaucracy and are thereby influenced by its formal and informal arrangements. Accordingly, the effects of these organizational factors will have more or less impact upon their personality, behavior, and attitudes. This fact was well anticipated by the founding father of the pure type bureaucracy, Max Weber, who expressed his fear that organizations could destroy individual personality and subject it to the "dehumanizing regimentation." (7). However, as most fears of the bureaucracy are groundless because they are based on misunderstanding of the undesirable effects expected to follow from Weber's description of the bureaucratic pure type, attributes which, to a large extent, are unrealistic and cannot be achieved, lives in organizations are not necessarily bound to be so dehumanizing, and alienated. As men have continued to try to improve organizational life and to make organizations enjoyable places to work in, the fact which is testified by increasing volume of literature on the subject, certain positive aspects of the organizations have to be acknowledged as well. The positive and negative impacts of the organizations upon individual members are confirmed by the data of this research.

It was found, for example, that when the civil servants perceived less structural constraint but higher responsibility, greater warmth, increased support, better reward, strong sense of identity, and moderation in risk-taking, they tended to agree more with the cooperative benefits but less with the cooperative weaknesses. If these perceptions of organizational climate can be taken as indicators of organizational health, they could also reflect the psychological health of the organizational members. Working in perceived healthy organizations, one might be conditioned to be optimistic or positive about the world in general. This optimism can, in turn, be reflected in positive attitudes such as the attitudes toward the benefits or weaknesses of agricultural cooperatives as demonstrated in this research.

If positive attitudes of the civil servants toward agricultural cooperatives are a necessary prerequisite for the success of the cooperatives, they appear to be partly influenced by organizational factors. Most socio-demographic variables are more or less fixed. To believe that the civil servants' behavior is dependent on these attributes is incorrect. Organizational factors can be controlled or changed. This can be initiated especially on the part of the organizational leadership. Litwin and Stringer, for example, demonstrated in their simulated experiment that different leadership styles could, within less than two weeks, induce different organizational climates (8). Therefore, in the case of Thai agricultural cooperatives, if the right types of

leadership can be identified and trained to head the bureaucratic offices which are involved in cooperative activities, appropriate dimensions of organizational climate can accordingly be created. Consequently, the civil servants can develop positive attitudes toward agricultural cooperatives. Based also on the experiment by Litwin and Stringer, we might be able to propose that the leaders who are high in need for achievement and affiliation but low in need for power seem to be able to induce favorable organizational climate. Filley and House who reviewed research on leadership styles also concluded that "supportive" leadership that emphasized consultative decision making, general supervision, and consideration for subordinates, was related to greater cooperation, less intragroup conflict, lower rates of turnover and grievances, and the possibility of having greater productivity (9). However, from a considerable amount of research on leadership and organization, no simple conclusions can be made and the findings are somewhat inconsistent (10). It is possible that no one style of leadership is effective across different times and places (11). This fact suggests that more research is needed to find out the relationships between leadership styles and the induced dimensions of organizational climate. According to Meyer, more detailed information on leadership is required and the focus of leadership studies should be on both the leaders' sociological background and leadership position, particularly, organizational and extraorganizational networks in which the leadership roles are imbedded (12).

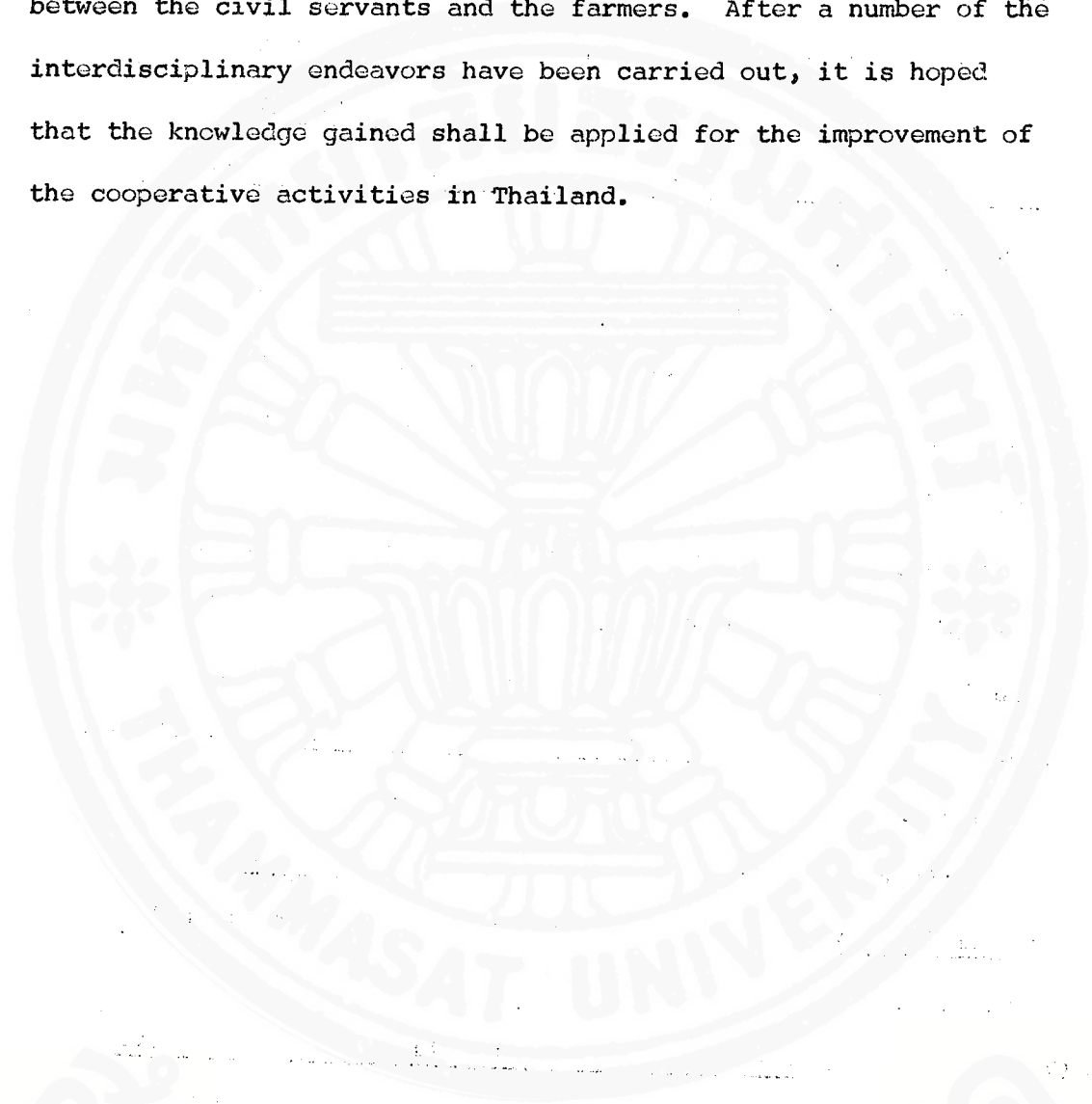
### 7.2.3 Some Suggestions for Further Research

Although the statistics used in this research - one way analysis of variance and the eta coefficient - are believed adequate to study the relationships between the independent variables and the attitudes, they are still simple and less powerful owing to their bivariate nature. But they serve the purpose of this research, which is exploratory. Nevertheless, due to the afore-mentioned bivariate nature of the statistics, only zero order relationships between the independent and dependent variables can be ascertained. Therefore, the research findings suffer from at least two limitations: (1) It cannot be known, from a methodological standpoint, whether the relationships found are in fact spurious or not. A third uncontrolled variable which is strongly related to both the independent and dependent variables might be the cause of the spuriousness; (2) Owing also to the bivariate nature of the statistics used in this research, it is difficult to know whether and to what extent the independent variables are inter-correlated. A high degree of correlation would reduce their overall power to predict the attitudinal variance. Going over the research findings, one might be able to speculate that there is a considerable degree of correlation among these variables. For example, it is likely that the civil servants' educational level, position classification level, and the salary level are interrelated. Besides, many

organizational factors seem to be interrelated, e.g., the perceptions of warmth, support, reward, and identity. It is suggested that, for future research on the similar topic, some multivariate techniques such as multiple regression or multiple classification analysis should be incorporated in order to look for the interrelationships as well as to avoid spuriousness of interpretation.

In addition, it should be noted that, drawing upon findings from various social science disciplines, the researcher works at a certain level of analysis hoping to integrate as many knowledge and research techniques to study Thai civil servants' attitudes and their determinants, toward agricultural cooperatives as possible. For example, knowledge from Social Psychology was utilized to create the composite attitude scales and to identify a variable which might affect the civil servants' attitudes, i.e., proximity to agricultural life. Organizational theories were used to find out the organizational related factors which were proved to be related to the attitudes. Therefore, the research demonstrates that knowledge as well as findings from many branched of social sciences contribute toward the understanding of the relationship between the civil servants and agricultural cooperatives. This fact calls, in the future, for a real interdisciplinary approach to the subject. We need, for example, organizational theorists to study as well as to offer some suggestions regarding the types of leadership and organizational attributes that are conducive to the civil servants' positive attitudes toward agricultural cooperatives.

Anthropologists are also helpful to observe the actual interactions between the civil servants and the farmers. After a number of the interdisciplinary endeavors have been carried out, it is hoped that the knowledge gained shall be applied for the improvement of the cooperative activities in Thailand.



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## Notes For Chapter Seven

- (1) Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of Bureaucratic Society
- (2) Chai-anan Samudavanija, "Toward Democratic Development : A Critique of the Transformation of the Bureaucratic Polity," Paper prepared for the seminar on National Development of Thailand: Economic Rationality and Political Infeasibility, organized by the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 6-7 September 1983.
- (3) Toshio Yatsushiro et al., "Village Attitudes and conditions in Relation to Rural Security in Northeast Thailand: An intensive Resident Study of 17 Villages in Sakon Nakorn and Mahasarakham provinces," A Study Promoted by USOM/Research Division, Bangkok, May 1967, p. 17.
- (4) Rubin, "The Dynamics of Development in Rural Thailand."
- (5) Roger and Shoemaker, Communication of Innovation, pp. 229-30.
- (6) Louis H. Orzack and Jack Oldham, "Toward a Theory of New Organizations," in Baidya Nath Verma, ed., The New Social Science (Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 198.
- (7) Max Weber, Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Translated by Ephraim Fishhoff et al., and edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), pp. 956-1005.
- (8) Please see Litwin and Stringer, Jr., Motivation and Organizational Climate, pp. 93-118.



- (9) Alan C. Filley and Robert P. House, Managerial Processes and Organizational Behavior (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1969), pp. 399-402.
- (10) Marshall W. Meyer, Change in Public Bureaucracies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 97-127.
- (11) Richard H. Hall, Organizations: Structure and Process, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), pp. 237-69.
- (12) Meyer, Change in Public Bureaucracies, p. 125

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