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Citizens' Views about Good Local Governance

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8.1 Introduction

GOOD GOVERNANCE IS AN INCREASINGLY POPULAR TERM IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE. Since the 1990s various international organizations, like the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the World Bank, have employed this concept as the basis for evaluating the effects of development aid programs in Third World Countries (see, for example, Kaufmann et al. 2008). But the term has also been adopted for use in the context of states in the Western world. In 2002, for example, the influential German Bertelsmann Stiftung, together with municipalities from various Western countries, developed a set of criteria for assessing the quality of local governance (Pröhl 2002; Wegener 2002). Typically, the criteria for good (local) governance provide a mix of standards that focus on both the input side and the output side of the political (sub)system.¹ On the input side good governance is associated with Lincoln's notion of 'democracy by the people', which implies an essentially *procedural* requirement, that is, that "collectively binding decisions should derive from the authentic expression of the preferences of the constituency in question" (Scharpf 2000: 103). On the output side good governance, as an expression of Lincoln's 'democracy for the people', implies a *functional* requirement, that is, that the system is effective and efficient in dealing with the collective problems and needs of the constituency (Scharpf 2000).

Although the above illustrates that there is an extensive literature about what policymakers and academics would like to consider as good governance, there is little direct empirical evidence about what citizens consider important in evaluating their systems of governance. This is remarkable because there is widespread consensus that citizens' views should provide a primary reference point in defining

the quality of governance in a democratic system. In this chapter we will therefore first ask:

1. *How important are procedural and functional considerations for people's assessments of the quality of local governance?*

In answering this question we will not only gain some insight into central tendencies in people's assessments, but also into the variations, if any, that may be found with respect to such assessments. In the second part of the chapter we will try to explain any such variations, focusing on our second research question:

2. *What factors explain variations in how citizens think about and assess good local governance?*

We will answer these questions on the basis of evidence from two national surveys conducted in the Netherlands and Norway as part of a broader international research project about the quality of local government. In these surveys citizens were asked how important they considered various conditions or characteristics of good local governance to be, conditions pertaining both to the procedures of local political decision making and to functional criteria regarding the outputs of local government. The reasons for concentrating on the Netherlands and Norway are primarily pragmatic – namely the availability of data. It would be presumptuous to make any strong claims based on findings for these two countries alone, not least because they are rather atypical in a number of respects. Both Norway and the Netherlands are small democracies, they have a rather similar political culture, they are characterized by a high degree of post-materialism (cf. Inglehart 1977, 1997), and have rather comparable systems of local government (see Sellers and Lidström 2007). Both countries also rank high in various international comparisons with respect to aspects of good governance as well as public satisfaction with democracy and the provision of public goods and services (see, for example, Campbell and Pözlbauer 2010). Although it is therefore hard to say exactly what the answers to our research questions will tell us about citizens' ideas about local governance more generally, results from our inquiry will at least provide a starting point for further empirical research into this largely unknown territory.

8.2 Citizens' views about governance: normative perspectives

Thomassen (1995), based on previous work by Sabine (1952) and Pennock (1979) among others, has distinguished between two normative theories that are relevant for conceptualizing good democratic governance: collectivism and individualism. Differences between these two normative theories relate to a number of dimen-

sions (Thomassen 1995: 386). In the following we focus on two of these dimensions. The first dimension refers to how democracy is conceived. In the collective view 'true' democracy is essentially direct or participatory democracy. In the individualist conception, by comparison, democracy is essentially representative democracy and politics should in general "be left to politicians" (Thomassen 1995: 390). This first distinction, in other words, pertains to the proper procedures of (democratic) governance.

The second dimension relates to what is the proper role of government. In the collectivist view the goals of government pertain to the broad aims of "directing societal development and taking care of people's welfare" (Thomassen 1995: 389). In the individualist view, on the other hand, "government intervention should be limited to a minimum" (Thomassen 1995: 389). During the rise of the welfare state this latter position was not very widely endorsed, but after the rise of neo-liberalism as manifested by Reaganomics and Thatcherism in the 1980s, this minimalist view of the scope of government appears to have grown in popularity.

On the basis of these two dimensions we seek to describe citizens' views on good (local) governments in terms of the following two perspectives:

- 1 how the notion of 'government by the people' should be institutionalized either as representative or as participatory democracy (the procedural dimension);
- 2 what 'governance for the people' should mean: a minimal state that only takes care of a limited number of key tasks or a welfare state that is responsible for the solution of community problems and provides goods and services to enhance the welfare of its citizens (the functional dimension).

In the political science literature different arguments can be found regarding the dominance of views on good governance among mass publics. For citizens' views regarding the *procedural dimension*, there are at least two interpretations. On the one hand there is the widely held view that due to individual modernization, citizens have developed new participatory demands whereby they seek more direct channels of political involvement (see, for example, Inglehart 1977; Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a, 1995b; Dalton et al. 2003). On the other hand Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) have argued that this idea is misguided. They argue that – at least US citizens – are rather politics-averse: "The last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision making. They do not want to make political decisions themselves; they do not want to provide much input to those who are assigned to make these decisions" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002: 1). In other words: "their ideal system is one in which they themselves are not involved, but where they can be confident that decision makers will be motivated by a desire to serve the people" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002: 227).

One also finds considerable disagreement in the literature regarding the *functional dimension*. On the one hand there is the view that people's evaluations of political officeholders and political institutions critically depend on their evalu-

ations of the actual *performance* of governments and whether societal conditions are favorable (see, for example, Crozier et al. 1975; Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Denters et al. 2007). This view implies that citizens are primarily interested in the outputs of the political process rather than in the quality of the process as such. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse again hold a dissenting view. These authors argue that the empirical evidence in support of a performance-based perspective is scarce (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002: 25). Alternatively, they claim that people's inclinations are primarily to view and evaluate politics in *procedural* rather than in substantive, policy-oriented terms (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002: 39). For Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, moreover, procedural standards do not include stipulations regarding extensive citizen involvement. Rather they argue that citizens, based on a strong dislike of politics as they see it – that is, as being discordant, oriented to special interests and self-serving – have preferences that emphasize the character of politicians, politicians who should preferably be “empathetic, non-self-interested decision makers (ENSIDS)” (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002: 216).

8.3 Citizens' views about governance: empirical evidence

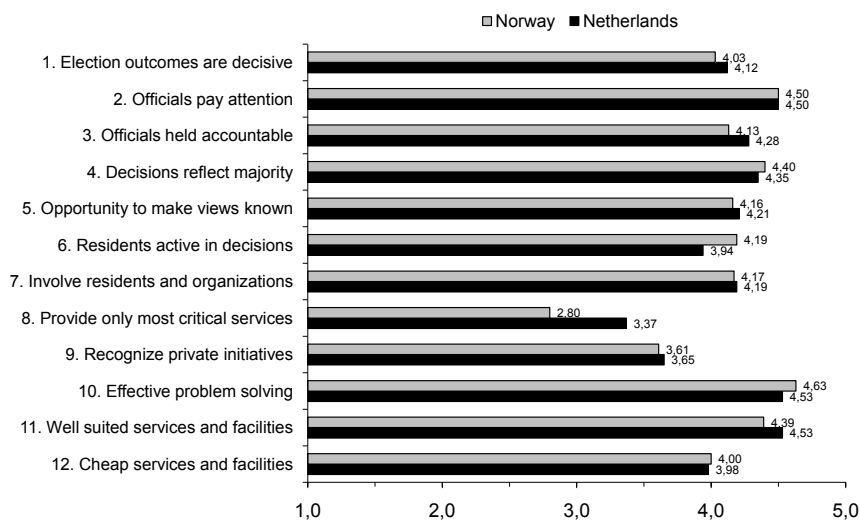
The national surveys conducted in Norway and the Netherlands in 2001 contained questions which allow us to explore citizen views on good local governance. Using two batteries of items, citizens were asked how important they considered key elements of local democracy to be and how local governance should be conducted on a day-to-day basis. Of interest for our present purposes are the following twelve items contained in these two batteries:²

- 1 that the outcome of local elections is decisive for determining municipal policies;
- 2 that local elected officials pay attention to the views of residents;
- 3 that local (elected) officials can be held accountable to residents for their actions and decisions;
- 4 that municipal decisions reflect a majority opinion among residents;
- 5 that all residents have ample opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are taken;
- 6 that residents participate actively in making important local decisions;
- 7 that the municipality seeks to involve residents, voluntary organizations and private business in finding solutions to local problems;
- 8 that the municipality provides only the most critical services and leaves the provision of additional services to others;
- 9 that the municipality recognizes that for many problems private initiatives provide better solutions than government;
- 10 that the municipality is effective in solving local problems;

- 11 that the municipality provides services and facilities that are well suited to the needs of residents;
- 12 that the municipality seeks to provide services and facilities as cheaply as possible.

The mean values of responses to these items given by citizens in both countries are presented in Figure 8.1. Two observations are in order regarding the results displayed. First, virtually all of the considerations are typically perceived to be of relatively high importance by citizens in both countries. On a response scale ranging from 1 ('of little importance') to 5 ('very important'), the means values are, with only two exceptions, roughly 4 or higher. The two exceptions are items 8 and 9, both of which are items relating to the distribution of responsibility for service provision between public and private actors. But even for these items the mean values are typically around 3 or above. Second, with only one exception, responses of citizens in both countries are very much alike.³ Only with respect to views on the extent to which municipalities should only provide the most critical services and leave the provision of additional services to others is there a marked (and statistically significant) difference, with Norwegians on average seeing this as being less important than Dutch citizens.

Figure 8.1 Mean values of citizen views on 12 characteristics of good local governance by country



Note: Scale values range from 1 ('of little importance') to 5 ('very important').

Source: National surveys in Norway and the Netherlands

A next step in the analysis is to move from consideration of the individual items to the underlying dimensional structure which these items may tap. In light of Thomassen's conceptualization of relevant democratic value orientations, we expected to find that the twelve items could be grouped into four distinct (though not necessarily mutually exclusive) sets of normative citizen orientations vis-à-vis local government. Thus, with respect to *procedural orientations* we expected to find a distinction between:

- *voter* orientations: based on normative expectations in which the desirability of representative democracy with decisive elections is emphasized (items 1-4); and
- *activist* orientations: based on normative expectations in which the desirability of broader non-electoral, participatory democracy is emphasized (items 5-7).

Similarly with regard to *functional orientations* we expected to find a distinction between:

- *privateer* orientations: based on normative expectations in which the desirability of limited (or minimal) government intervention is emphasized (items 8-9); and
- *consumer* orientations: based on normative expectations in which the desirability of effective and efficient public policies and services is stressed (items 10-12).

Principal components factor analyses essentially corroborate this fourfold categorization of the twelve items.⁴ We therefore constructed four additive indices based on these subsets of items and these indices are used in the analyses reported in the remainder of this chapter.⁵ Descriptive statistics for these indices are presented in Table 8.1.

The conclusions to be drawn on the basis of Table 8.1 reflect in large part trends already observed with respect to the individual items. First, as indicated by mean values of more than four, citizens in both countries typically assign a great deal of

Table 8.1 Distribution characteristics for 4 scales regarding citizen views of good local governance, by country (1 = Of little importance, 5 = Very important)

Scale	Norway			Netherlands		
	Mean	Std. dev.	N	Mean	Std. dev.	N
Voter	4,27	,641	1575	4,32	,681	988
Activist	4,17	,724	1600	4,11	,723	995
Privateer	3,22	1,088	1564	3,52	,948	959
Consumer	4,34	,583	1603	4,35	,632	1021

importance to three of the four dimensions of good governance identified here. This is the case for representative democracy (voter dimension), participatory democracy (activist dimension) and for effective and efficient governance (consumer dimension). The idea of 'limited government' (privateer dimension), by comparison, is not nearly as strongly endorsed as the other three value orientations, but even in this instance the mean index value is above 3 for citizens of both countries.

Second, the rank order of the aggregate value priorities among citizens in the two countries is essentially the same. Consumerist values rank first and are closely followed by voter orientations in both countries (in the Netherlands the aggregate mean values for these two orientations are virtually equal) whereas activist or broader based participatory orientations rank third and what we have termed a 'privateer' value orientation is clearly deemed to be of least importance. Differences in the between country means for these indices are only statistically significant for the 'Activist' dimension (somewhat more important among Norwegians than among the Dutch) and 'Privateer' dimension (clearly more important for the Dutch than for the Norwegians). These findings serve among other things to refute the conjecture of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), who claim that citizens would not appreciate opportunities for direct civic participation. Although the 'activist' orientations are somewhat less strongly endorsed than the 'voter' orientations, citizens in both countries not only expect a well-functioning representative democracy, but at the same time also see opportunities for non-electoral modes of civic engagement as being important for good local governance.

Third, we can also observe that within country variation for these dimensions, especially for the three most important orientations, is modest at best. Not only is the relative variation for the 'consumer', 'voter' and 'activist' indices small in each country, it is also quite similar when compared for each index across the two countries. Only for the fourth 'privateer' index is the relative variation larger, especially in the case of Norway, but even here the variation is not overwhelming.⁶ It is important to keep this limited variation in mind when, in the second part of this contribution, we focus on the explanation of these variations.

In combination these findings confirm the results from other recent research on a related topic, viz. citizens' conceptions of good citizenship (see Rose 1999; Rose and Pettersen 2002; Denters et al. 2007; Van Deth 2007; Dalton 2008). Most critically the findings indicate that citizens in both countries hold a mix of value orientations (value pluralism), a mix in which individualist ('voter') and collectivist ('activist' and 'consumer') value orientations are most predominant.⁷ Moreover, these findings also imply that citizens, when evaluating the political process, are not one-sided: they do not markedly emphasize functional, output-related criteria as some have apprehensively suggested (see, for example, Habermas 1994), nor are they biased towards more procedural criteria as assumed by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002).

That citizens should see all of the considerations as being relatively important is of course not entirely surprising. There is a well-known Winnie the Pooh effect

(“Yes, thanks, both milk and honey”) with respect to a series of rating items, all of which may be of a positive character (see, for example, Sniderman et al. 1991: 22). Clearly most, if not all of the characteristics involved in the individual items have a positive valence. It is, therefore, not illogical or inconsistent for citizens to express favorable attitudes regarding all of these characteristics. What is more noteworthy is the apparent homogeneity of citizen value orientations across the two countries, at least at the *aggregate* level. The question that remains is whether or not there, nonetheless, are differences to be found with respect to value orientations at the *individual* level, and if so, whether any such differences are common to the residents of both countries.

8.4 Explaining differences in orientations: a theoretical model

Citizen norms and values are not innate ideas; they are the result of processes of political socialization. In understanding political socialization it is generally assumed that the conditions prevailing in the period individuals grew up are of crucial importance. Based on this presumption, Inglehart has developed his well-known theory of value change laid out in his book *The Silent Revolution* (1977). Since then many scholars have explored the impact of generational differences on norms and value orientations (see, for example, Van Deth and Scarbrough 1995; Rose and Houlberg 2002; Rossteutscher 2004; Denters et al. 2007; Denters and Van der Kolk 2008). Expectations regarding generation effects rest on the presumption that sharing common historical experiences has an impact on people’s understandings, valuations and orientations. In an increasingly internationalized world such crucial historical events (or watersheds) tend to be transnational rather than nation-specific, coinciding with major wars and the ups and downs of the world economy. To explore this thesis in this chapter we have adapted Rossteutscher’s fourfold classification of generations in which three historical watersheds in recent European history serve as generational ‘breaking points’: the end of the Second World War, the ‘Cultural Revolution of 1968’, and the crisis of the welfare state marked by the watershed election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in the UK in 1979 (Rossteutscher 2004; see also Denters and Van der Kolk 2008).⁸ Based on these events we distinguish between four generations:

- 1 War Generation (those born before 1935): the generation that experienced World War II;
- 2 Children of the Revolution (those born after 1935 but before 1958): the generation that experienced the ‘cultural revolution’ of the late 1960s;
- 3 Lost Generation (those born in 1958 or thereafter, but before 1969): the generation that experienced the crisis of the welfare state, the economic crisis of the 1980s and the rise of neo-liberalism;

- 4 New Kids on the Block (those born in or after 1969): the generation living in the period of economic recovery and the end of the Cold War.

Thus, whereas there may be a general consensus among Norwegian and Dutch citizens, a number of interesting questions remain. For example, do more recent generations increasingly take representative democracy for granted and do they therefore place less importance on indirect democratic criteria ('voter' value orientations) than the war generation? Is firm support for 'activist' values a distinguishing feature of the 'children of the revolution' that sets this cohort apart from previous and subsequent generations, or is a high degree of support for activist values also characteristic for subsequent generations? Likewise, one can ask whether the neo-liberal era has left a (unique) stamp on value orientations of the 'lost generation' in the sense that they, more than other generations, endorse privateer values. And what about 'consumerist' orientations? Are these functionally oriented values especially important for the 'materialists' of the war generation, or are such orientations also embraced by later generations? Are the children of the revolution, for example, not as demanding or even more demanding in making claims on their governments as problem-solvers?

But generational affiliation is by no means the only factor that might have an effect on variations in citizens' conceptions of good local governance. In our analyses we also consider three other clusters of factors. First, it is important to recognize that political socialization is not restricted to people's younger days but continues in later life in a variety of social contexts. In the literature, three contexts are regarded to be of crucial importance: associational networks, the workplace and the school. In recent years the relevance of people's inclusion in *associational networks* of associations and voluntary organizations has in particular received much attention (e.g. Denters et al. 2007; Denters and Van der Kolk 2008). It has been argued that such networks provide a training ground for acquiring values, norms and civic skills that are essential for a well-functioning democracy (De Tocqueville 1994 [1837]; Almond and Verba 1963; Verba et al. 1995). Putnam (1993, 2000) has revived this traditional idea in his social capital theory. In this theory, people's involvement in social networks provide them with trust in their fellow citizens and inculcate norms of reciprocity that are essential for making democracies work. On the basis of such arguments we include a number of variables in our analytical models: associational membership, active engagement in voluntary work, active involvement in religious communities, and trust in one's fellow citizens (social trust).

In addition to these factors we also investigate the effect of employment and education. *Employment* not only provides people with a work-related social environment, but is also an important form of social inclusion, linking individual citizens in a meaningful way to society and providing a context for acquiring civic skills as well as sharing and testing civic orientations with others. As for *education*, educational opportunities, the content of public education and rates of educational achievement have obviously changed over time. In one respect, therefore, education,

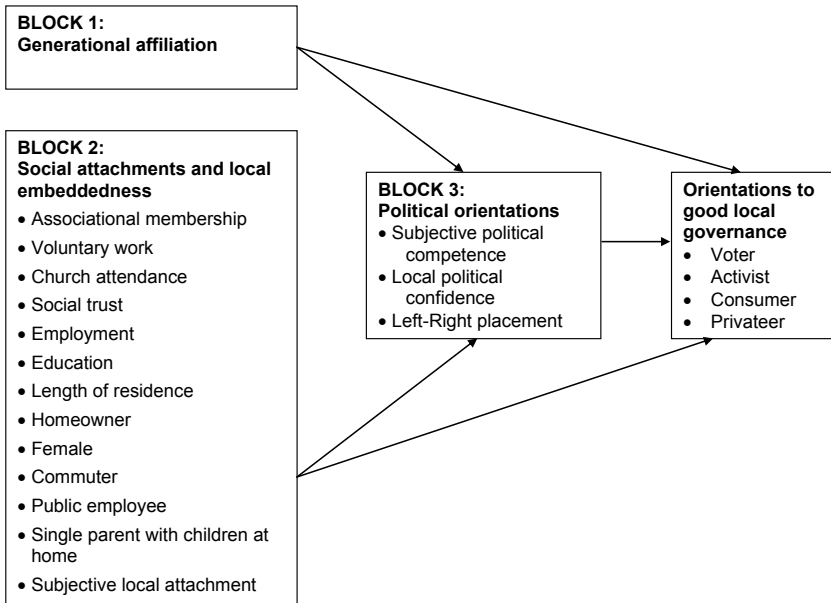
especially on the aggregate level, contains a certain generational component in its own right. But for the individual, education is every bit as much a life-cycle phenomenon, offering an important context for acquiring civic values, norms and orientations and acquiring civic skills. Hence, in order to identify generational effects as distinct from life-cycle effects, education must also be taken into account.

Factors like associational involvement, employment and education may actually have a twofold effect. On the one hand these settings provide contexts in which a set of general civic norms, values and civic skills are acquired and developed. On the other hand they also provide links through which citizens are included in social life and hence serve as forms of social inclusion that can have a more specific impact on people's orientations towards the political community and its governments. In the latter sense there may be a number of additional factors that link citizens to their local communities and help shape their views on good local governance by providing them with relatively strong *objective and subjective attachments to the local community* and its government. It is commonly assumed, for example, that objective attachments to the locality are stronger for people who have spent a larger part of their life living in the locality (length of residence as a percentage of age), who are homeowners (rather than tenants), and who do not commute outside the municipality to their place of work. Moreover it is also assumed that women, because of their traditional gender role, are more strongly attached to their place of residence (e.g. Hayes and Bean 1993; Verba et al. 1997). Similarly those who are likely to be more reliant on public services (such as single parents with children in the household) or who are employed in the public sector may also develop specific orientations towards (local) government. In addition to these objective factors it is also reasonable to include people's subjective sense of attachment to the municipality as a potentially relevant factor in our model.

Third, we also consider the relevance of three political orientations. These orientations may either act as intervening variables in the relation between some of the previously discussed factors and our dependent variables, or have an effect that is independent of these factors. For one thing, we assume that people's political self-confidence (*subjective political competence*) matters. This confidence refers to both their belief about being able to understand (local) politics and government and their perceived capacity to act competently in this context. In the same vein it is also important to consider how citizens perceive local government. People who are generally confident about the responsiveness, integrity and competence of local government (*local political confidence*) may well have different views on what constitutes good governance than do others. Finally, we also expect that ideological orientations in terms of left-right self placement may have an effect on notions of good (local) governance. A political ideology, after all, provides a general conception of the good society and the most important means (including government policies) to achieve such a society (see e.g. Downs 1957: 96).

These various factors are summarized in the analytical model presented in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 An analytical model regarding citizen orientations to local government



8.5 Explaining differences in orientations: empirical findings

In order to analyze the relative impact of the three major blocks of explanatory factors, we estimate three versions of the empirical model in a block wise fashion. In step 1 only the generational dummy variables are included, using the oldest, pre-1935 generation as a reference category. Social attachment and local embeddedness factors are subsequently added in step model 2, and finally the political orientations variables are included in step 3. In order to assess whether the impact of these different factors are similar in the two countries, two separate sets of OLS regression analyses have been carried out, one for each of the two countries. Results from these analyses for each of the four dependent variables are displayed in Tables 8.2 to 8.5.⁹

Findings presented in Tables 8.2 to 8.5 provide the basis for a number of general observations. To begin with, the explanatory power of the full models (found in the columns for model 3) for all four dependent models is very limited. The adjusted R^2 ranges from 6 percent ('voter' and 'consumer' orientations) to 18 percent ('privateer' orientation) in Norway and from 5 percent ('consumer' orientation) to 10 percent ('privateer' orientation) in the Netherlands. Only for 'privateer' orientations in both countries does the adjusted R^2 clear a 10 percent hurdle. These results are by no means exceptional. In previous work on citizen views on good citizenship, R^2 values

Table 8.2 OLS regression results for a voter orientation index

	Norway (N = 1200)						Netherlands (N = 568)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p
Generation 2	-,14	,002	-,08	,129	-,09	,087	,006	,931	,05	,578	,04	,603
Generation 3	-,19	,000	-,16	,004	-,16	,003	,004	,955	,02	,764	,04	,668
Generation 4	-,17	,000	-,16	,001	-,16	,001	-,072	,213	-,03	,653	-,01	,861
Membership			-,04	,267	-,03	,302			,05	,321	,05	,293
Volunteering			-,06	,066	-,06	,063			-,06	,174	-,09	,066
Church attendance			,00	,942	,01	,768			,10	,018	,11	,013
Social trust			-,07	,019	-,05	,106			-,01	,894	,01	,853
Paid employment			-,08	,020	-,08	,029			-,06	,251	-,07	,194
Education (medium)			,04	,265	,04	,264			,07	,151	,06	,280
Education (high)			-,02	,633	-,02	,622			,05	,370	,03	,603
Local attachment			,07	,029	,08	,013			,06	,159	,06	,196
Gender			,12	,000	,12	,000			,12	,005	,14	,001
Single parent			,01	,686	,02	,618			-,02	,631	-,02	,667
Public sector worker			,01	,687	,02	,625			,05	,238	,05	,262
Length of residence			-,06	,056	-,06	,046			-,04	,334	-,04	,363
Homeownership			,01	,802	,00	,959			-,02	,640	-,02	,734
Commuter			,05	,113	,04	,133			-,05	,273	-,04	,361
Internal efficacy					,04	,233					,11	,016
Political confidence					-,10	,001					-,14	,001
Left-right					,03	,324					,05	,278
Adjusted R ²	2%		5%		6%		0%		3%		6%	

have also been in the same range of magnitude (see Denters et al. 2007; Denters and Van der Kolk 2008).

A second observation pertains to the contribution that various blocks of variables make to the overall explanation of variation in citizen conceptions of good local governance. The contribution that generational differences make to an explanation, for instance, is very small – indeed no more than three percent at best. When block 2 variables reflecting different aspects of social inclusion and local embeddedness are included in the model, we observe that they tend to increase the explanatory power of the model more in Norway than is the case in the Netherlands. The opposite, however, is true when the final block of variables tapping selected political orientations is included: these variables increase the explanatory power of the model more in the Netherlands than in Norway. Relatively speaking, in other words, political orientations seem to have a greater impact on citizen values relating to good local governance in the Netherlands than they do in Norway.

Table 8.3 OLS regression results for an activist orientation index

	Norway (N = 1200)						Netherlands (N = 568)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p
Generation 2	-.05	,257	-.02	,711	-.04	,474	,00	,955	,00	,918	,01	,878
Generation 3	-.16	,000	-.11	,036	-.12	,030	-.03	,665	-.04	,604	-.00	,956
Generation 4	-.14	,000	-.09	,060	-.08	,075	-.13	,025	-.12	,066	-.08	,217
Membership			,02	,595	,01	,847			,04	,409	,02	,525
Volunteering			,04	,189	,02	,509			,05	,333	,00	,938
Church attendance			,02	,422	,03	,269			,05	,255	,08	,088
Social trust			,05	,094	,05	,070			-.04	,386	-.04	,345
Paid employment			-.02	,687	-.01	,771			,03	,592	,00	,917
Education (medium)			,00	,976	-.00	,921			,10	,058	,06	,245
Education (high)			-.06	,078	-.08	,016			-.02	,763	-.08	,165
Local attachment			,13	,000	,12	,000			,09	,050	,06	,202
Gender			,14	,000	,16	,000			,00	,907	,05	,220
Single parent			-.01	,685	-.02	,563			,04	,303	,04	,316
Public sector worker			,00	,930	-.01	,784			,04	,317	,04	,388
Length of residence			,02	,625	,02	,503			-.03	,521	-.02	,742
Homeownership			,00	,908	,00	,984			-.06	,191	-.04	,309
Commuter			,03	,401	,02	,392			-.07	,128	-.05	,314
Internal efficacy					,11	,000					,26	,000
Political confidence					-.04	,226					-.08	,055
Left-right					-.03	,244					,00	,997
Adjusted R ²	2%		6%		7%		1%		2%		8%	

If we look at the more detailed results regarding the impact of specific variables within each block of variables¹⁰ we can first of all note that except for privateer orientations, generational differences in Norway tend to have a direct effect on citizen values (see betas in the columns for model 3). Compared with the oldest generation, members of the lost generation (generation 3) and new kids on the block (generation 4) are less inclined to emphasize various criteria for good local governance as being important. These generations apparently take a well-functioning democracy (both in procedural and functional terms) for granted.¹¹ In the Netherlands, however, we do not find a similar effect. Here, the initial effects evident in betas for model 1 disappear once there is a control for variables in block 2. This suggests that the initial effects are probably related to life-cycle differences rather than generational differences.

Looking at the variables in block 2, we may first of all observe an easily overlooked ‘negative’ finding, viz. that various aspects of people’s social inclusion and socio-economic status are not systematically related to differences in their concep-

Table 8.4 OLS regression results for a consumer orientation index

	Norway (N = 1200)						Netherlands (N = 568)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p
Generation 2	-,11	,014	-,09	,108	-,09	,093	-,06	,383	-,01	,897	-,01	,871
Generation 3	-,19	,000	-,14	,007	-,14	,007	-,15	,031	-,09	,252	-,08	,311
Generation 4	-,20	,000	-,14	,002	-,14	,003	-,18	,002	-,12	,068	-,10	,121
Membership			-,06	,053	-,07	,040			,01	,785	,01	,760
Volunteering			,05	,107	,04	,198			-,10	,041	-,12	,011
Church attendance			,03	,347	,03	,382			,03	,558	,04	,449
Social trust			,03	,297	,03	,343			,02	,709	,03	,507
Paid employment			,01	,737	,01	,791			-,05	,310	-,06	,240
Education (medium)			-,04	,190	-,05	,143			-,02	,743	-,04	,479
Education (high)			-,06	,070	-,08	,030			-,11	,042	-,13	,015
Local attachment			,14	,000	,14	,000			,07	,140	,06	,183
Gender			,07	,022	,08	,009			-,03	,524	-,00	,951
Single parent			-,03	,281	-,03	,286			-,00	,940	-,00	,978
Public sector worker			,07	,030	,06	,036			,04	,305	,04	,336
Length of residence			,02	,492	,03	,385			-,00	,936	,00	,999
Homeownership			,02	,588	,01	,654			,02	,601	,03	,510
Commuter			,04	,196	,04	,229			,01	,906	,02	,744
Internal efficacy					,06	,048					,12	,011
Political confidence					,02	,595					-,14	,001
Left-right					,02	,534					,05	,289
Adjusted R ²	3%		6%		6%		2%		2%		5%	

tions of good governance. This finding provides further corroboration of one of the major conclusions from this study and previous studies of a similar character – namely that value pluralism does not necessarily imply fragmentation and polarization between different social groupings. There are only a few minor exceptions. First, women in both Norway and the Netherlands are inclined to consider certain criteria somewhat more important than men in five of the eight analyses. Moreover, in both countries respondents with the highest level of education, when compared with those in the lowest educational category, consider functional or output criteria of good local government as found in the consumer and privateer value dimensions to be of somewhat lesser importance.

A further observation is also in order here. In previous studies it has been found that forms of involvement in voluntary associations and social trust (or in Putnam's words social capital) were systematically related to differences in citizen's conceptions of good citizenship (cf. Denters et al. 2007; Denters and Van der Kolk 2008). Denters and his associates, for example, concluded that "social trust and forms

Table 8.5 OLS regression results for a privateer orientation index

	Norway (N = 1200)						Netherlands (N = 568)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p	beta	p
Generation 2	-,10	,026	-,06	,299	-,03	,519	-,12	,092	-,06	,493	-,04	,637
Generation 3	-,10	,013	-,06	,298	-,04	,415	-,20	,005	-,12	,154	-,11	,175
Generation 4	-,07	,064	-,06	,175	-,07	,107	-,17	,004	-,08	,215	-,07	,301
Membership			-,11	,000	-,08	,006			,02	,697	,02	,680
Volunteering			-,00	,915	,02	,472			-,06	,193	-,08	,101
Church attendance			,08	,007	,05	,070			,03	,453	-,01	,805
Social trust			-,07	,022	-,04	,192			-,01	,882	,00	,913
Paid employment			-,02	,653	-,03	,334			-,05	,302	-,05	,361
Education (medium)			,01	,752	-,00	,933			-,01	,803	-,01	,780
Education (high)			-,10	,004	-,08	,011			-,14	,010	-,15	,006
Local attachment			-,03	,353	-,03	,335			,05	,266	,06	,189
Gender			,03	,378	,04	,156			,09	,039	,12	,006
Single parent			-,04	,230	-,00	,882			-,06	,123	-,06	,137
Public sector worker			-,10	,001	-,05	,064			,02	,584	,03	,499
Length of residence			,07	,021	,08	,011			,05	,276	,04	,327
Homeownership			,01	,654	-,01	,749			,04	,370	,02	,602
Commuter			,06	,044	,03	,215			-,05	,271	-,05	,248
Internal efficacy					,01	,694					,08	,081
Political confidence					-,06	,024					-,09	,031
Left-right					,34	,000					,22	,000
Adjusted R ²	1%		7%		18%		2%		8%		13%	

of associational involvement make a modest contribution to the shaping of civic norms in many of the countries under analysis” (Denters et al. 2007: 106). It is noteworthy that in the present analyses similar effects of social capital factors on citizens’ normative conceptions of what constitutes good local governance are not found.

For the third block of variables we find that in six of eight instances a high degree of subjective political competence makes people more inclined to consider criteria for good governance as (very) important. Moreover, in six of eight instances we also find that the more people have local political confidence, the *less* they are inclined to consider various criteria of good local governance as important. This suggests that Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002: 216) may be right when they claim that more than anything people basically want honest, trustworthy, and competent politicians. If they are confident that politicians indeed satisfy this one basic requirement, then other criteria apparently matter (much) less.

A final observation to be made is that the three sets of values regarding good local governance that matter most for citizens ('voter', 'activist' and 'consumer' criteria) are unrelated to the political left-right dimension. This is yet another confirmation of our earlier conclusion that differences in norms of good governance among the mass publics in both countries are essentially unrelated to major socio-economic and political cleavages. The (only) exception to this is a relatively strong ideological effect seen in both countries regarding the fourth dimension – i.e. that which we have termed 'privateer' orientations. This, however, is the dimension that was found on aggregate to be considered the least important among respondents in both countries and where the variation among respondents was found to be greatest.

8.6 Conclusions

The principal conclusion to be drawn from the results presented here is very straightforward. Despite some variation, overall the findings point to considerable value consensus among the Norwegian and Dutch populations regarding (selected) criteria for good local governance. Foremost in the minds of most individuals are criteria emphasizing values of representative local democracy and local government with high functional capacity, local government that is an effective problem solver and provider of a variety of (public) goods and services. Stated in another fashion, citizens in both countries place greatest emphasis on 'caring representative institutions' rather than more direct say in a weaker form of the local welfare state.

Such a set of value orientations, while quite logical, is highly noteworthy for at least two reasons. For one thing it is contrary to policies pursued in several European countries, such as Germany, for example, where recent reforms of local government have involved a retrenchment of the local welfare state and a weakening of local municipal councils combined with a strengthening of different forms of direct democracy (see Wollmann 2003: 91-95; Gabriel and Eisenmann 2005: 133-5). Every bit as noteworthy, however, is the fact that results from our regression analyses indicate that views regarding good local governance do not vary greatly across social and political groupings and cleavages. Whereas some have argued that a mix of individualization, social differentiation and immigration might lead to fundamental differences in key political value orientations and cultural fragmentation, in the Norwegian and the Dutch case we find widespread consensus on what citizens see as 'good (local) governance.' If there is a crisis of democratic governance in these polities, in other words, this is not a crisis that is likely to be the result of *conflicting demands* on government made by different segments of the population. Rather, the challenge of good local governance will be one of satisfying the *widely endorsed* view that government should meet both functional and procedural criteria as a condition for acquiring and maintaining both output and input legitimacy. To be sure, as Sniderman and his associates (1996) have shown, value consensus may break down

in particular situations inasmuch as the implications of values for action and choice may be interpreted differently. But to date there is little to indicate that this is happening either in Norway or the Netherlands.

Notes

- 1 It is probably more appropriate to say that the criteria not only refer to the input and output side, but also pertain to what in systems theory is referred to as the throughput dimension of the political system, referring to values of transparency and accountability. This is particularly evident in the six criteria used in the World Bank assessment procedures (Kaufmann et al. 2008; see also Haus and Heinelt 2005).
- 2 The format of the batteries and follow-up questions in which respondents were also asked to rank the relative importance of items within each of the batteries are available upon request.
- 3 It may be noted that these similarities occur irrespective of the use of rating scales or a ranking of items. When citizens were asked in follow-up questions to rank the various items by their respective importance, the findings again reflected a high degree of similarity of attitudes among citizens in the two countries.
- 4 A forced four factor solution produced results that were consistent with our theoretical expectations. In a pooled analysis eigenvalues for the four factors were 3.74 (Voter); 1.53 (Activist); 1.21 (Consumer); 0.93 (Privateer), and loadings of all items on relevant factors were > 0.40 . Results of separate country analyses revealed similar findings. The item 'involve residents, organizations and business in solving local problem solving' loaded on two factors (both 'consumer' and 'activist' factors), the loading on the first factor being somewhat higher. On the basis of conceptual considerations, however, we decided to include this item in the 'activist' dimension because it clearly refers to the process of governance (co-production or output participation) rather than to the functional (output oriented) dimension. Further details about the factor analyses are available upon request. A 13th item ("That municipal decisions are based on the best available knowledge") was also contained in the batteries of items presented, but in light of an assessment of its relevance with respect to the normative distinctions discussed here, it was ultimately set aside. This decision was confirmed by principal components analyses in which this professionalism/ technocracy item loaded weakly on all four factors.
- 5 Indices were computed as the mean value of the respective items (allowing for one missing value per case). In the light of the limited number of items per index, the internal consistency of these indices was satisfactory. Cronbach's alphas for the four dimensions were: 0.73 (Voter; 4 items); 0.66 (Activist; 3 items); 0.61 (Privateer; 2 items); 0.67 (Consumer; 3 items). In countrywise analyses similar results were found.
- 6 For assessing *relative* variation the coefficient of variation (computed as $cv = \text{standard deviation} / \text{mean}$) can be used. For the three indices the cvs were between 0.13 and 0.17. For the privateer index the cvs were .37 (Norway) and .26 (Netherlands).

- 7 This value pluralism regarding conceptions of good governance is also confirmed by the correlations between the various orientations. This indicates that in larger parts of the Dutch and Norwegian publics various notions of good local governance go hand-in-hand (see also Denters et al. 2007: 95). The bivariate correlations for the voter index were: 0.51 (with 'activist'), 0.34 (with 'consumer') and 0.18 (with 'privateer'). The bivariate correlations for the activist index were: 0.39 (with 'consumer') and 0.14 (with 'privateer'), and the bivariate correlation between 'consumer' and 'privateer' was 0.22. All these correlations were highly statistically significant
- 8 Rossteutscher, in her categorization, was interested in the German case where the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 was obviously a watershed. For the countries under study in this chapter, however, we have assumed that the economic crisis of the 1980s and the rise of neo-liberalism may have been more important, especially for attitudes regarding the second dimension identified here regarding conceptions about proper role of government.
- 9 In order to facilitate comparisons between the four models per country we have used only those cases that had valid scores for all the four dependent variables. Therefore the country N's for all four dependent variables are identical.
- 10 In considering the effects of single factors we use an alpha of 5 percent for the Norwegian case (two-tailed test) and an alpha of 10 percent (two-tailed test) for the Dutch case. The more lenient criterion for the Dutch sample was chosen in order to compensate for the smaller N of the Dutch sample.
- 11 This interpretation of a generational effect is corroborated by the finding that initial effects (see betas in model 1) do not disappear when we control for variables in block 2 (see betas in model 2). This suggests that these initial effects are probably not an effect of life-cycle related to differences in lifestyle and prosperity.

Appendix: Operationalization of variables

Independent variables	Coding
Generation	<p>Set of dummy variables based on the following categories:</p> <p>Generation 1 = born before 1935 (1 = Yes)</p> <p>Generation 2 = born between 1936-1958 (1 = Yes)</p> <p>Generation 3 = born between 1959-1969 (1 = Yes)</p> <p>Generation 4 = born after 1970 (1 = Yes)</p>
Associational membership	<p>Based on responses to a question asking respondents to indicate in how many voluntary associations, clubs or organisations (not including a political party) they were members. The variable was recoded as follows:</p> <p>0 = No (none)</p> <p>1 = Yes (one or more)</p>
Volunteering	<p>Based on responses to a question asking respondents to indicate how many hours a week they on the average used doing voluntary (unpaid) organizational work for political parties or other associations, clubs and organisations during the last 12 months. The variable was recoded as follows:</p> <p>0 = None</p> <p>1 = One or two hours</p> <p>2 = Three or more hours</p>
Church attendance	<p>Based on responses to a question asking respondents to indicate how often (apart from weddings, funerals and christenings) they attend religious services. The variable is coded:</p> <p>0 = Never</p> <p>1 = Less than once a year</p> <p>2 = At least once a year</p> <p>3 = At least once a month</p> <p>4 = At least once a week</p>
Social trust	<p>This variable is a composite index based on a the mean score of responses to the following two questions:</p> <p>* Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Indicate your opinion on a scale from 0 ('You can't be too careful') to 10 ('Most people can be trusted').</p> <p>* Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves? Indicate your opinion on a scale from 0 ('People mostly look out for themselves') to 10 ('People mostly try to be helpful')</p>
Paid employment	<p>0 = Not presently employed</p> <p>1 = Employed</p>

Education	<p>Set of three dummy variables based on the following categories:</p> <p>1 = Primary and lower secondary school</p> <p>2 = Upper secondary school</p> <p>3 = College/University/Postgrad</p>
Local attachment	<p>This variable is a composite index based on a the mean score of responses to a question asking them to indicate, using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means 'No attachment at all' and 10 means 'Very strong attachment', their sense of attachment to:</p> <p>* The neighbourhood or village in which they lived</p> <p>* The municipality in which they lived</p>
Gender	<p>0 = Men</p> <p>1 = Women</p>
Single parent	<p>This variable indicates whether the respondent is a single parent with responsibility for children in the household.</p> <p>0 = No, 1 = Yes</p>
Public sector worker	<p>Is respondent employed in the public sector?</p> <p>0 = No, 1 = Yes</p>
Length of residence	<p>This variable is based on the percentage of the respondent's life (s) he has lived in the present municipality.</p> <p>0 = minimum, 100 = maximum</p>
Home ownership	<p>0 = Rent, etc.</p> <p>1 = Own</p>
Commuter	<p>This variable indicates whether the respondent commutes to a place of work located outside the municipality.</p> <p>0 = No, 1 = Yes</p>
Subjective political competence	<p>This variable is measured by a composite index based on a mean score of responses to four questions, the first three of which are the following agree-disagree items:</p> <p>* I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in local politics.</p> <p>* I feel that I could do as good a job as a member of the municipal council as most other people.</p> <p>* I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing my municipality.</p> <p>The fourth question is the following:</p> <p>* How well informed do you feel you are regarding that which happens in municipal politics? Would you say that you are very well informed, well informed, somewhat informed, only slightly informed, or not at all informed?</p> <p>All questions were recoded so high scores reflected high efficacy and the index was rescaled with a theoretical scale ranging from 0 to 100.</p>

Political confidence

Political confidence is measured by a composite index based on the mean score of responses to a total of seven questions reflecting three different sub-dimensions – perceived integrity, competence and responsiveness of elected representatives.

Two questions tapping perceived integrity are as follows:

* How often do you think that elected representatives in this municipality set their personal interests aside in making local political decisions?

* If you consider the situation in the municipality where you live, how many of the elected representatives do you think misuse their power for personal gain?

One question tapping perceived competence is the following:

* Imagine a situation where two persons (A and B) are discussing municipal politics and they present the two viewpoints below. Please indicate whether you are most in agreement with the viewpoint expressed by A or that expressed by B.

A) Most of the elected representatives in this municipality are competent people who usually know what they are doing.

B) Most of the elected representatives in this municipality don't seem to know what they are doing.

Four questions tapping perceived responsiveness are two agree-disagree items and two other questions.

* Local councilors do not care much about the views of the people in this municipality.

* Political parties in this municipality are only interested in our votes, (and) not in our opinions.

* How much do you feel that having elections makes the municipal council in this municipality pay attention to what the people think. Would you say not at all, very little, somewhat, quite a bit or very much?

* Generally speaking how much attention do you feel the mayor and aldermen (council representatives) in this municipality pay to what the people think when they decide what to do? Would you say not at all, very little, somewhat, quite a bit or very much?

Responses to all questions were recoded so high scores reflected high confidence and the index was rescaled with a theoretical scale ranging from 0 to 100.

Left-right placement

Based on responses to a question asking respondents to place themselves on a left-right scale, where 0 = 'Left' and 10 = 'Right.'

Good local government
indices

These indices were constructed by taking the average of three sets of items identified by factor analyses of responses to questions posed regarding the importance respondents attached to different aspects of local democracy and how local government should operate on a day-to-day basis. Wording of the questions and response patterns for the Danish and Norwegian samples are found in the main text and relevant footnotes.