

Formulating Good Governance and Moving Forward: Navigating Transparency or Reinforcing Authority and Power?

Loo-See Beh, Faculty of Economics & Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia.

Email: lucybeh@um.edu.my

In reshaping and strengthening the state in its exercise of wide-ranging influences by entrenched interests either by the state, bureaucrats or for the citizens, there is confounding complexity made more so by the rapid expansion of networking and social media. Governance, more so of good governance is primarily driven by the constant interaction between government agencies and highly organized interests of those involved directly or indirectly. This is evident at every level of government – national, state, and local government. These relationships are interlocked and dominated by sets of well-organized special interests. The manifestation of good governance in ensuring an acceptable level of economic prosperity as well as in navigating transparency especially among citizenry is evident, at least expected so in the eyes of citizens today by the functions of public bureaus.

This paper will deal with this dynamism in the system of governance and public policy in the administration of Malaysia that features highly bureaucratized organizations, state, and non-state engaged in pursuing their respective goals that are evident and occasionally absent of good governance given the clashes or even collusions as they cooperate along with their purposes that direct them. Such actions constitute and exert control in policy-administration process and public policies that is in constant contact with the forces of networking that is largely authoritative but found to be facilitating interactions in favor of those that could be of private interests which might/not be discovered much later. Thus, how does the state move forward in balancing the representation of interests in the administrative process and how at times violations of sensitivity could be compromised without being known but becomes acceptable at the end of the administrative process in the making of public policy? How does the state navigate better transparency for better governance? Is mainstream media or even social media a tool for the government's regulation? Or is the state and its institutions more interested in reinforcing and consolidating authority and power instead of power delegation or decentralization of power in the public policy making and programs of development?