

Thai Public Views on International Issues



The Asia Foundation

Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

© Copyright The Asia Foundation 2024



Thai Public Views
on International Issues

JUNE 2024

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Method	5
Findings – General Impressions	8
Thailand’s trajectory	8
Southeast Asia’s trajectory	9
Sense of unity among Thai people	9
Trust in news sources	10
Openness to trade	11
Openness to migrant workers	12
Optimism about the future	13
Thailand’s Relations with External Powers	15
How is the geopolitical context changing?	15
Most important countries for Thailand’s future	17
Most influential countries in Asia	18
Relations with foreign countries: Friendly or taking advantage?	21
Mutually beneficial relations or one-sided relations: U.S., China, and Australia	22
How Thailand benefits from U.S., China, and Australia?	23
Great Power Competition	27
Alignment with a great power	27
What should Thailand do if there is a great power conflict?	28
Impact of China and the U.S. on peace and security	29
Impact of China and the U.S. on economic prosperity	30
Studying abroad preferences	31
Cooperation on Democracy	33
Are Thai people satisfied with Thai democracy?	33
Western support for democracy in Southeast Asia	35
Impact of external influence on Thai democracy	36
Russian invasion of Ukraine	38

ASEAN and Neighboring States	39
Does Thailand benefit from ASEAN membership?	39
Trust levels with ASEAN member states	40
Thai leadership in ASEAN	41
Thai support for neighboring countries	42
Foreign Policy Priorities for the New Thai Government	44
Ranking of foreign policy priorities	44
Climate Change	45

Figures

Figure 1: Percentage of IR-informed respondents from general public	6
Figure 2: Thailand heading in the right (or wrong) direction	8
Figure 3: Southeast Asia heading in the right direction	9
Figure 4: Unity (or division) of Thai people	10
Figure 5: Trust (or distrust) selected news sources	11
Figure 6: Views on trade liberalization	12
Figure 7: Increase (or decrease) flow of foreign workers into Thailand	13
Figure 8: Situation in Thailand will improve (or deteriorate) in the coming year	14
Figure 9: Context for International Relations changing (or more of the same)	15
Figure 10: Foreign powers most important for Thailand's future	18
Figure 11: Most influential major powers in Asia today	19
Figure 12: Most influential major powers in 10 years from now	19
Figure 13: Comparison of most influential powers: today and 10 years in future	20
Figure 14: Countries who are friendly to (or taking advantage of) Thailand	21
Figure 15: Relations mutually beneficial (or one-sided)	23
Figure 16: How Thailand benefits from the United States	24
Figure 17: How Thailand benefits from China	26
Figure 18: How Thailand benefits from Australia	26
Figure 19: Should Thailand change its policy of positive relations with China and U.S.	27
Figure 20: Thailand's choice if there is armed conflict	28

Figure 21: Net impact of China and U.S. on peace and security	29
Figure 22: Net impact of China and U.S. on peace and security: Age comparison	30
Figure 23: Net impact of China and U.S. on economic prosperity	31
Figure 24: Comparison of countries as destination for education	32
Figure 25: Satisfaction with Thai democracy	33
Figure 26: How democratic is Thailand	34
Figure 27: Support for democracy	35
Figure 28: Foreign support for democracy in Thailand	36
Figure 29: Impact of foreign influence on democracy in Thailand	37
Figure 30: Views on Russia's invasion of Ukraine	38
Figure 31: Benefit from ASEAN membership	39
Figure 32: Trust levels with ASEAN member states	40
Figure 33: Thailand's regional leadership	41
Figure 34: Thailand assistance for Myanmar	42
Figure 35: Thailand assistance for Cambodia	43
Figure 36: Thailand assistance for Laos	43
Figure 37: Priorities for Thai foreign policy	44
Figure 38: Importance of climate change	45
Figure 39: Policy priorities for addressing climate change	46

Tables

Table 1: Filtering questions to determine "IR-informed" respondents	6
Table 2: Income and education levels of respondents	7
Table 3: How is international relations context changing	17

Executive Summary

What do Thais think about foreign policy? Understandably, this question assumes that any response would come directly or indirectly from Thai officials, policymakers, or politicians, and that such answers can be readily found in an array of documents, public statements, news articles, etc. But what about “ordinary” Thais affected by regional and global developments and by their leaders’ efforts to anticipate, manage, and react to them?

From July to November 2023, The Asia Foundation conducted a national survey in Thailand on key issues of foreign policy and regional cooperation. The survey included face-to-face interviews with 1,650 adult Thai citizens living in urban districts in every region of the country. The survey also included a high percentage of respondents who are knowledgeable on international issues, which allowed for more advanced questions.

The urban Thai population is almost evenly split on the direction in which their country is heading: half believes Thailand is heading in the wrong direction, compared to 46 percent who think it is heading in the right direction. At the same time, four out of five respondents believe that Southeast Asia is heading in a positive direction, with an overwhelming 97 percent believing that ASEAN membership is beneficial for Thailand. Roughly half would like to see Thailand take a greater leadership role in the region.

Thailand is increasingly affected by growing geopolitical competition. Thai people generally see the United States and China as having a similar – and largely positive – impact on peace and security in Asia. More than three quarters of respondents think that the U.S. (77 percent) and China (76 percent) do more good than harm for peace and security in the larger region. The percentages are even higher concerning their positive role in creating and maintaining economic prosperity.

When asked to compare the level of influence of key external powers, however, a clear majority of respondents (66 percent) sees China as the most influential country in Asia today, followed – at a dramatic distance – by the U.S. (22 percent), Japan, and South Korea. Thais believe that China (92 percent) and the United States (83 percent) will be the two most important countries for Thailand’s future, but they also anticipate a widening gap between them over the next ten years: 72 percent think that China will be the most influential compared to only 15 percent who think the U.S. The only other country seen to be (modestly) growing in influence in Thailand is Japan.

Respondents were also asked whether they see relations with key foreign countries as mutually beneficial or largely benefiting one country at the expense of the other. Relations with the U.S. (79 percent), China (77 percent), and Australia (75 percent) are all seen as either mutually beneficial or mostly beneficial to Thailand.

How Thailand benefits from these relationships yielded unexpected responses, however, especially concerning military/security assurances and models of effective governance, two areas likely seen by the U.S. as reasons for foreign countries to deepen their engagement with the U.S. Only 16 percent of respondents rank military and security assurances in their top three areas where Thailand benefits from its U.S. relations, and only 12 percent (the lowest of all options) do so regarding models of governance. Most Thais see the main benefits of relations with the U.S. coming from economic links, tourism, and education.

Most Thais support Thailand's official policy of maintaining positive relations with both the U.S. and China and avoiding alignment with either. Only 19 percent think that Thailand should choose to align with either great power. One-third of respondents think that Thailand should strengthen relations with other countries in response to U.S.-China competition. If there is armed conflict between the U.S. and China in the future, Thai people overwhelmingly (86 percent) prefer neutrality.

Respondents view three countries more as taking advantage of Thailand than as benign or friendly: 48 versus 25 percent in the case of Cambodia, 45 versus 24 percent in the case of Myanmar, and (more narrowly) 27 versus 23 percent in the case of Russia. Thais believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was unjustified by a ratio of nearly four to one. The countries with the highest net positive gap are Laos (64), Japan (56), Malaysia (43), Australia (42), and the United Kingdom (37).

The survey included a series of questions to gauge perceptions on foreign efforts to support democracy in Thailand. A slight majority of respondents are unsatisfied with Thai democracy; a significant majority sees it as "somewhat democratic" or "a little democratic." At the same time, Thai people overwhelmingly see democracy as the best form of governance, with 90 percent of young people believing democracy is "always the best way".

In contrast to prevailing assumptions, a clear majority (66 percent) of respondents indicate that Western countries could do more to promote democracy in Thailand. Few think external influences are negative for Thai democracy, while a plurality believes that external influences can help Thai democracy.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify their highest priorities for Thai foreign policy under the new Pheu Thai-led government. Unsurprisingly, economic growth and national security are the highest priorities by a wide margin. An overwhelming majority of Thai people thinks climate change is important or extremely important, ranking it just below the air/haze situation as the fourth highest priority for the new Thai government.

Three areas often seen by foreign experts as crucial for Thailand – the U.S.-China rivalry, the Myanmar crisis, and the Mekong River – are rated as very low priorities by Thais. Remarkably, the Myanmar crisis is a top priority for only 2 percent of respondents, and only 9 percent believe Thailand should prioritize helping Myanmar citizens fleeing civil war.

However, only a tiny minority of respondents believe Thailand should not assist neighboring countries. For Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, Thais believe that the best strategy would be to deepen economic links; 20 percent of respondents would like to see the government aid migrants from these countries.

Introduction

Thailand's role in Southeast Asia, and its foreign policy more broadly, is entering a new phase.

Thailand's gradual return to democracy, despite some setbacks, is likely to influence foreign policy in new ways in the coming years. The May 14, 2023, national election was highly competitive, and some international issues were included in the campaigns. The Move Forward Party, which won the largest share of votes and seats in the lower house, included a political platform calling for important new directions in foreign policy. The Pheu Thai-led coalition that eventually formed a government in August 2023 brought an entirely new group of foreign policy leaders, with a strong focus on reviving Thailand's economic relations.

During the period of military rule after the 2014 coup d'état, Thailand was largely inward-looking, but with the new administration Thailand will seek to play a more visible role in geopolitics. In early 2024, Thailand attracted renewed international attention with a series of significant developments. The Thai Government has sought to play a more active role in the Myanmar crisis and launched an ASEAN-endorsed program to provide humanitarian assistance in the conflict-affected broader regions in April. In early February, U.S. and Chinese leaders met in Bangkok, providing an opportunity for the new Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin to hold bilateral meetings with U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, followed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. During his first six months in office, Prime Minister Srettha met the prime ministers of Japan, Canada, Australia, as well as U.S. President Joe Biden, and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

At this likely turning point, it is particularly important to understand how the Thai people would like to see Thailand's role in the region evolve, and how they perceive geopolitical dynamics. In a country where foreign policy is dominated by technocratic and business elites, there is limited understanding of the public's views. Yet, as Thailand moves towards an increasingly competitive democratic future, and as Thailand is inevitably drawn into major regional challenges and future crises, the importance of public perceptions and preferences will grow. As Thailand faces difficult foreign policy choices in the future, political leaders will need to pay attention to Thai public views on key issues such as ASEAN, the Myanmar crisis, the Mekong subregion,, climate, migration, and economic competitiveness.

Changes in Thailand's foreign policy and regional leadership will be highly consequential for mainland Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and geopolitics more broadly. As the second largest economy in ASEAN and economic and geographic center of the Mekong subregion, Thailand routinely influences security, migration, energy, and economic integration of neighboring countries. While Thailand is formally a U.S. ally, its foreign policy positions and stated strategic interests are not always aligned with U.S. positions. China has been deepening relations with Thailand for decades, yet has also been frustrated by Thailand's refusal to align on key interests such as the Mekong River. Thailand's position on Myanmar has been controversial in other parts of ASEAN and outside the region.

Thai public views on these critical regional and domestic issues are largely unknown. While Thailand has a robust polling industry, the vast majority of surveys conducted focus on domestic politics, local challenges, and consumer preferences. While Thailand is one of the few countries in mainland Southeast Asia that permits regular public polling, there have been very few efforts to utilize surveys to understand foreign policy public perceptions. Given the strategic importance of this region, and the high level of competition by external powers to gain influence in the region, this type of public perception survey will also help to understand how geopolitics are interpreted by the wider population.

Furthermore, western diplomats and officials often hold misplaced assumptions about Thai public perceptions. For example, many western visitors have been surprised by the lack of concern about Chinese influence, or the mixed sentiments concerning Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. Public polling can provide a window into the sentiments of the Thai people to improve understanding and identify areas of common interest.

From July to November 2023, the Foundation conducted a national survey on key foreign policy and regional cooperation issues. The Foundation designed the survey instrument and conducted focus group discussions to refine the questions. The questions focused on the following issues: Thailand's role in the region; US-China competition; Thailand's relations with key external powers; ASEAN; Myanmar crisis; climate change; Russia-Ukraine conflict; level of trust in various external powers; migrant workers and immigration; democracy and human rights promotion; economic competitiveness; and Thai assistance to neighboring countries. The survey also asked respondents to rank foreign policy priorities for the new government and express their preferences for key policy questions. The survey enumeration was conducted by MI Advisory, a leading Thai company specializing in public perception surveys, including pilot testing of the questionnaire, enumeration, tabulations, quality control, and verification of the data.

Funding for this project was provided through The Asia Foundation's Innovation Fund, drawing on appropriated funds from the United States Congress.

Method

The Asia Foundation supported face-to-face interviews of 1,650 Thai citizens over 18 years old from every region of Thailand.

The survey was designed to gauge perceptions of those segments of the Thai population that regularly track international issues and foreign policy. In several recent surveys in Southeast Asia that included a fully randomized national sample (including rural areas), the majority of respondents admitted to rarely following international news and low levels of awareness of international issues, which undermined the credibility of the survey results. This survey utilized a sampling method that included two elements to improve the percentages of Thai citizens who are well informed on international issues.

First, the survey focused on the urban population, or those who live in “Thesaban Nakhon” (เทศบาลนคร), which are districts of over 50,000 people. The decision to focus on the urban population was based on the assumption that urban residents would be better informed on international issues, have greater access to information about international issues, and more regularly follow developments related to foreign policy. Thailand’s population in urban areas is 8,576,544, and includes 30 Thesaban Nakhon districts, along with the special municipalities of Bangkok and Pattaya.

Second, the survey included a booster sample of people who were considered to be well-informed on international issues.

For this sample, instead of randomization, respondents were selected based on the required characteristics (i.e., level of knowledge of international issues). The survey team designated eligible respondents for the booster sample as Thai adults who had lived or worked in the sampling area longer than 90 days and those aware of international relations issues.

The survey team used a two-stage sampling method. The first stage was a randomized selection of 1,200 respondents from urban regions of Thailand. This sample is referred to as the “general public” because it is a fully randomized sample of the general population in urban areas. Interviews of this sample were conducted from August to September 2023. The population sample was drawn from every region and demographic group in Thailand, with appropriate weighting to reflect current population figures. The survey has a margin of error of 3 percent and is representative of the Thai urban population with a confidence level of over 95 percent. The second stage included the booster sample of 450 respondents and was conducted from September to November.

The survey used a filtering method to determine who was considered informed on international issues (or “IR-informed”). The survey questionnaire included five questions to gauge the level of knowledge of the respondent. If the respondent answered three questions correctly, they were considered “IR-informed.” The five questions are below:

Table 1: Filtering questions to determine “IR-informed” respondents

Question	Options	Percentage of randomized population who answered correctly
Which country is at war with Ukraine? (ประเทศอะไรที่กำลังสงครามกับยูเครนอยู่ในขณะนี้)	Poland, Russia , Turkey	85%
Which country was the chair of ASEAN in 2019? (ประเทศใดที่ทำหน้าที่เป็นประธานอาเซียน (ASEAN) ในปี 2019 หรือ พ.ศ. 2562)	Thailand , South Korea, China	38%
Which country in ASEAN experienced a coup d'état (military takeover) in the last 3 years? (ในระยะ 3 ปีที่ผ่านมา ประเทศใดในอาเซียน (ASEAN) ที่มีการก่อรัฐประหาร (โดยทหาร/กองทัพเข้ายึดอำนาจการปกครอง])	Vietnam, Philippines, Myanmar	80%
From which country did the most tourists come to Thailand before COVID? (นักท่องเที่ยวจากประเทศใดที่เดินทางเข้ามาท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทยมากที่สุดในช่วงก่อนเกิดการแพร่ระบาดของโควิด (COVID - 19])	Sweden, China , Russia	87%
Which of the following is NOT an example of soft power? (ข้อใดต่อไปนี้ที่ไม่จัดเป็นตัวอย่างของการสร้างกระแสซอฟต์พาวเวอร์ (Soft power])	Starbucks, Cobra Gold exercises , K-pop	26%

From the fully randomized sample, 73 percent of Thai urban citizens answered at least three questions correctly and were identified as “IR-informed” for the purposes of this survey. The table below illustrates some of the characteristics of the IR-informed population.

Figure 1: Percentage of IR-informed respondents from general public

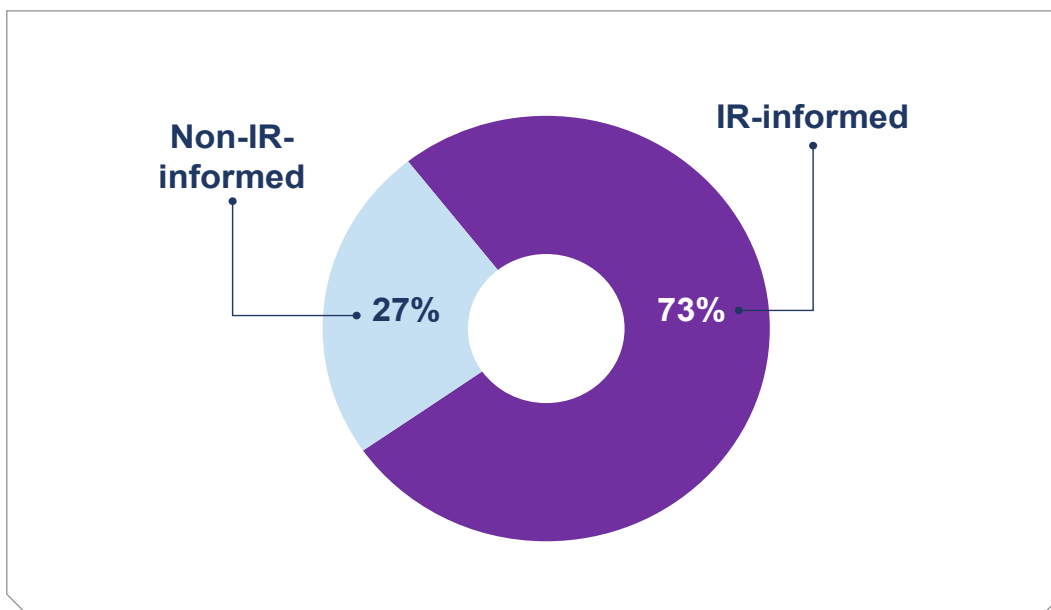


Table 2: Income and education levels of respondents

	Total IR-informed (Random + Booster)		
	TOTAL IR-informed	Random	Booster
IR-informed	1,330	880	450
Education			
No formal education	0%	1%	0%
Primary school and below	7%	9%	2%
Junior high school	7%	10%	1%
Senior high school	15%	20%	5%
Diploma/vocational	17%	22%	9%
Bachelor's degree and higher	53%	38%	83%
Monthly household income			
15,000 Baht or less	10%	14%	2%
15,001-30,000 Baht	25%	33%	9%
30,001-50,000 Baht	21%	28%	9%
50,001 Baht and more	44%	25%	81%

It will also be important to improve This survey was designed for a more informed population, which enabled more advanced and specific questions. However, in general, the survey found very few significant differences between the IR-informed and non-IR-informed

respondents. This report includes comparisons of the total randomized population and the IR-informed population for multiple survey questions, illustrating that there is very little difference in views between those who are informed and the general public.

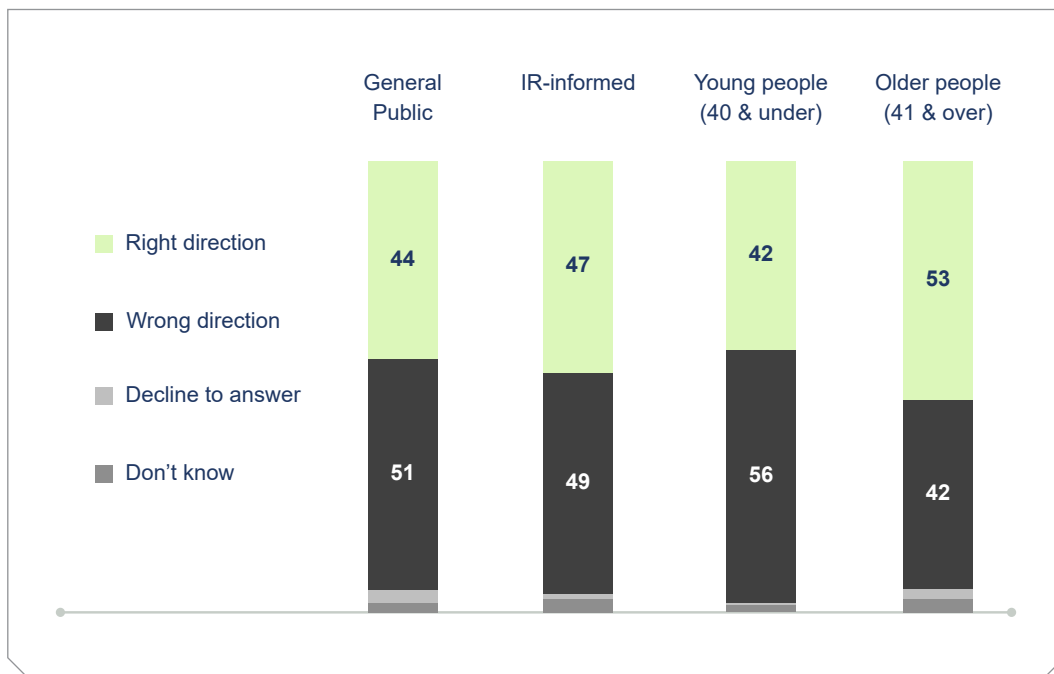
Findings – General Impressions

Thailand's trajectory

The urban Thai population is almost evenly split on the direction that the country is heading. As seen in Figure 2, half (50 percent) of the general public believes that the country is heading in the wrong direction, compared to 46 percent of those who think it is heading in the right direction. The IR-informed group of respondents have a similarly even split. However, younger people are more likely to think that the country is heading in the wrong

direction. For those people aged 40 years and younger, 56 percent think the country is getting worse. For those between 18 and 29 years old, 67 percent think the country is heading in a negative direction. Older people (41 and over) are more likely to think the opposite, as the majority (53 percent) thinks the country is heading in a positive direction, while 42 percent think it is heading in a negative direction. For those people 60 and older, only 35 percent think the country is heading in the wrong direction.

Figure 2: Thailand heading in the right (or wrong) direction



Q.1

Generally speaking, do you think things in Thailand today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?

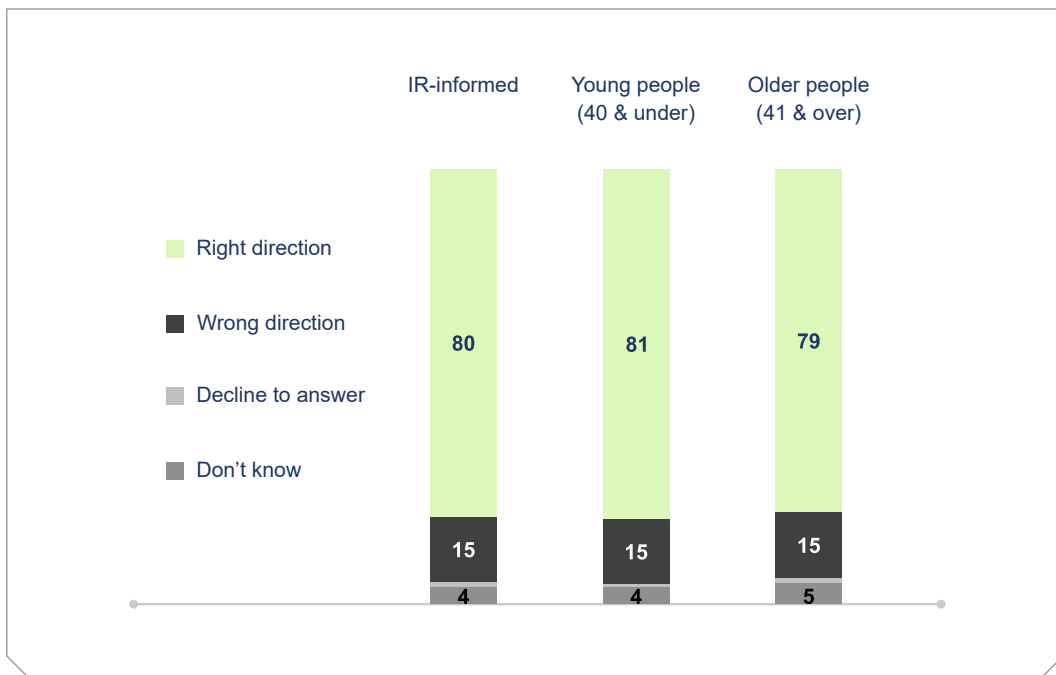
เมื่อพิจารณาทิศทางโดยรวมแล้วคุณคิดว่าสิ่งต่างๆในประเทศไทยทุกวันนี้กำลังไปในทิศทางที่ถูกต้องหรือคุณคิดว่ากำลังไปในทางที่ผิด

Southeast Asia's trajectory

While Thai people are mixed on the trajectory that Thailand is heading, they are largely in agreement on the trajectory of Southeast Asia. There is an overwhelming sense that the region is rising, with 80 percent of IR-informed respondents indicating that they see

a clear positive direction, and 74 percent of the general public agreeing. Given that four out of five respondents believe that Southeast Asia is heading in a positive direction, with no significant variation between groups, it is clear that most Thai people think they live in a dynamic and rising region.

Figure 3: Southeast Asia heading in the right direction



Q.4

Generally speaking, do you think things in Southeast Asia today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?

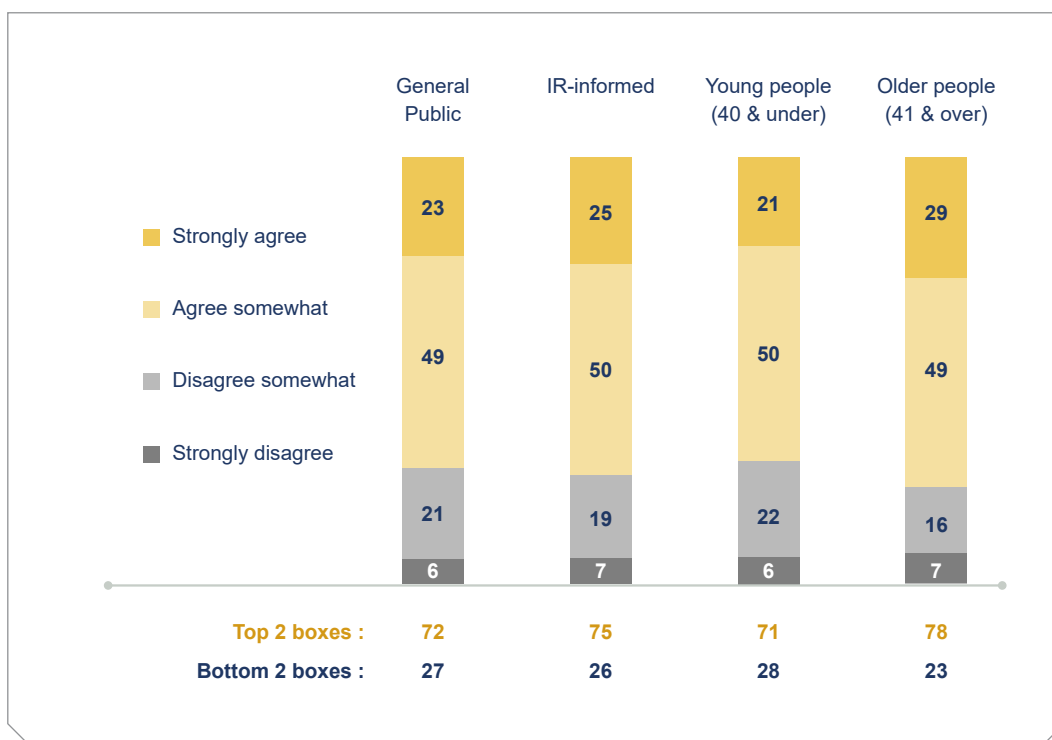
เมื่อพิจารณาโดยรวมแล้ว คุณคิดว่าในทุกวันนี้เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้กำลังพัฒนาไปในทิศทางที่ถูกต้องหรือทิศทางที่ผิด

Sense of unity among Thai people

Despite a recent history of political divisions, there is a strong sense of unity among Thai people. Figure 4 indicates that three-quarters of IR-informed people (75 percent), and 72

percent of the public agree that there are shared values that unite all Thais, despite some differences. Most young people agree (71 percent), though they feel slightly less connection compared to older people (78 percent).

Figure 4: Unity (or division) of Thai people



Q.5

Despite our differences, as Thais, we have many values that unite us. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

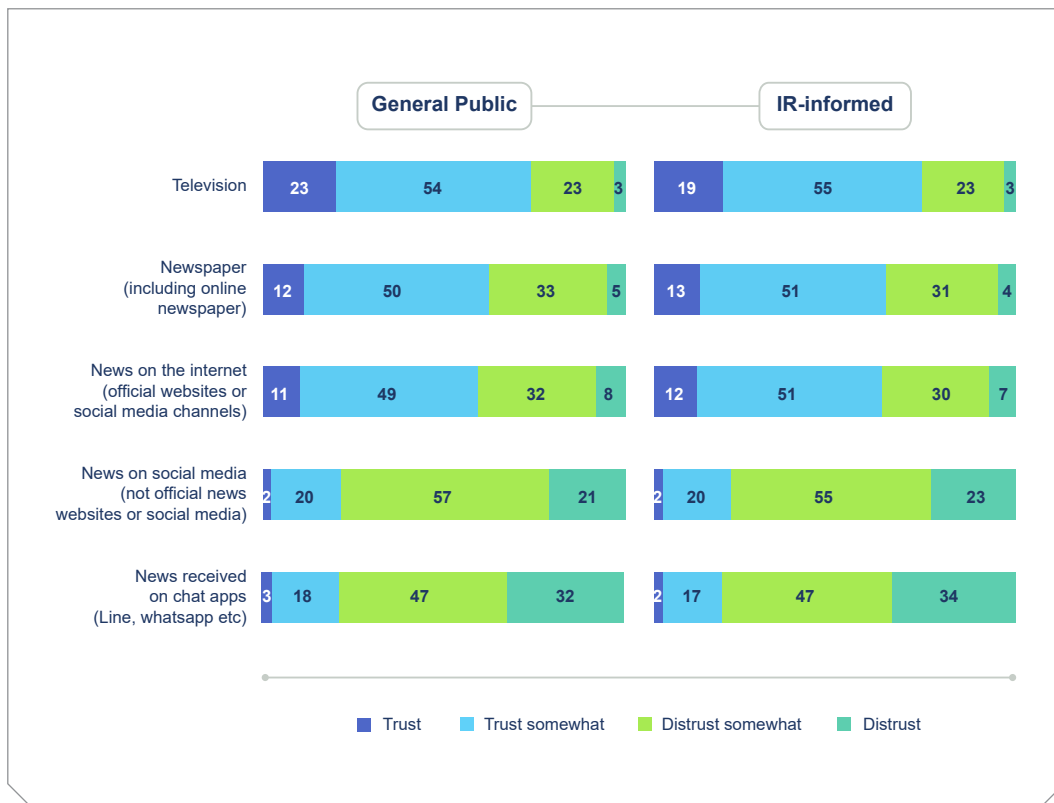
“ถึงแม้ว่าเราคนไทยจะมีความแตกต่างกัน แต่เราความเป็นอันหนึ่งอันเดียวกัน” คุณเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับข้อความนี้ในระดับใด

Trust in news sources

The Thai public receives news and information on international issues from many sources, including television, online sources, and social media. Figure 5 shows that respondents have widely varying levels of trust based on the source and platform they are using. The general public has considerably higher trust in news and information from television (74 percent) and newspapers (62 percent). When receiving news from online sources, the Thai public differentiates between official sources (i.e., government or well-established companies and organizations) and unofficial

sources (unknown, personal, or unclear status). 60 percent of the public and 63 percent of IR-informed respondents trust (or somewhat trust) news from official sources, while only 22 percent (general public and IR-informed) believe news from unofficial sources. News received over chat via social media applications is the lowest, as only 21 percent of the public, and 19 percent of IR-informed, have confidence in these sources. These findings indicate that Thai people regularly scrutinize the source of news and make judgements on its validity based on the source.

Figure 5: Trust (or distrust) selected news sources



Q.14

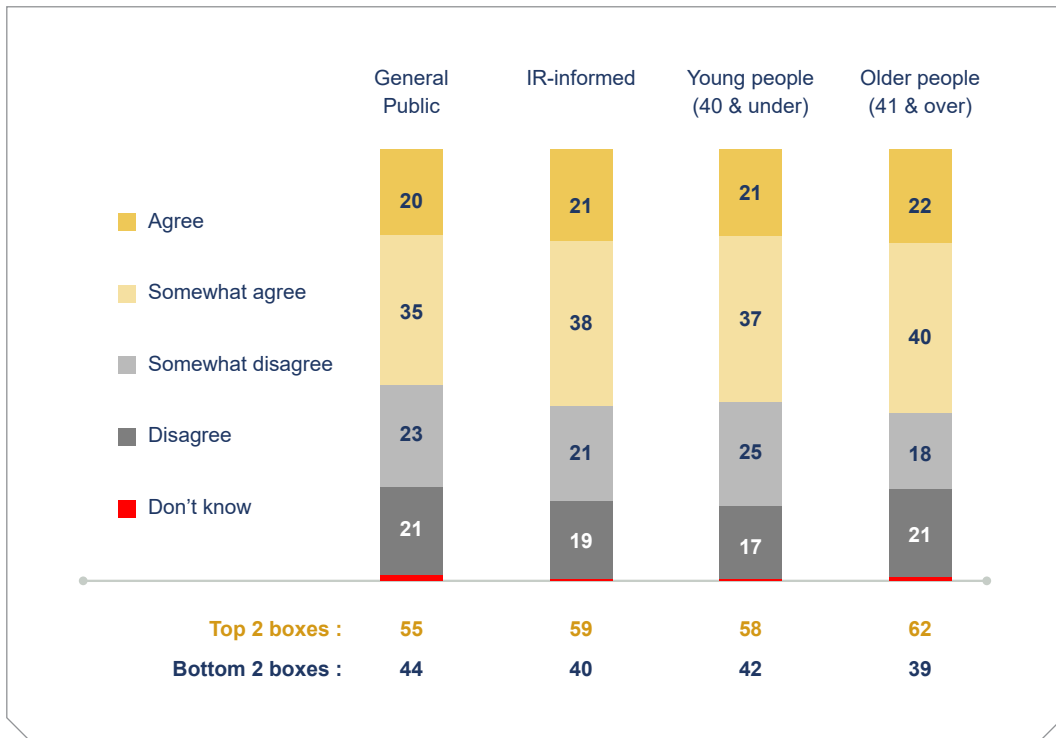
How much trust do you have in each of the following to sources of news?
 คุณเชื่อมั่นและไว้วางใจข่าวสารข้อมูลที่ได้รับจากสื่อที่เป็นแหล่งข้อมูลต่างๆ ต่อไปนี้มาก น้อยแค่ไหน
 โดยจะขอกถามทีละสื่อดังต่อไปนี้

Openness to trade

The Thai public is moderately pro-trade. Respondents were presented with the trade-offs that come from trade liberalization - more open trade policy will produce winners and losers, and the losers are often Thai small

businesses, farmers, and workers. Figure 6 shows that 59 percent of IR-informed respondents support a more open trade policy, despite potential consequences. The general public is slightly more skeptical, with 55 percent supporting a more open trade policy.

Figure 6: Views on trade liberalization



Q.26

To what extent do you agree-disagree with the following statement? - Thailand should do more trade with other countries even if the rise of the trade might harm our farmers, workers, and small businesses.

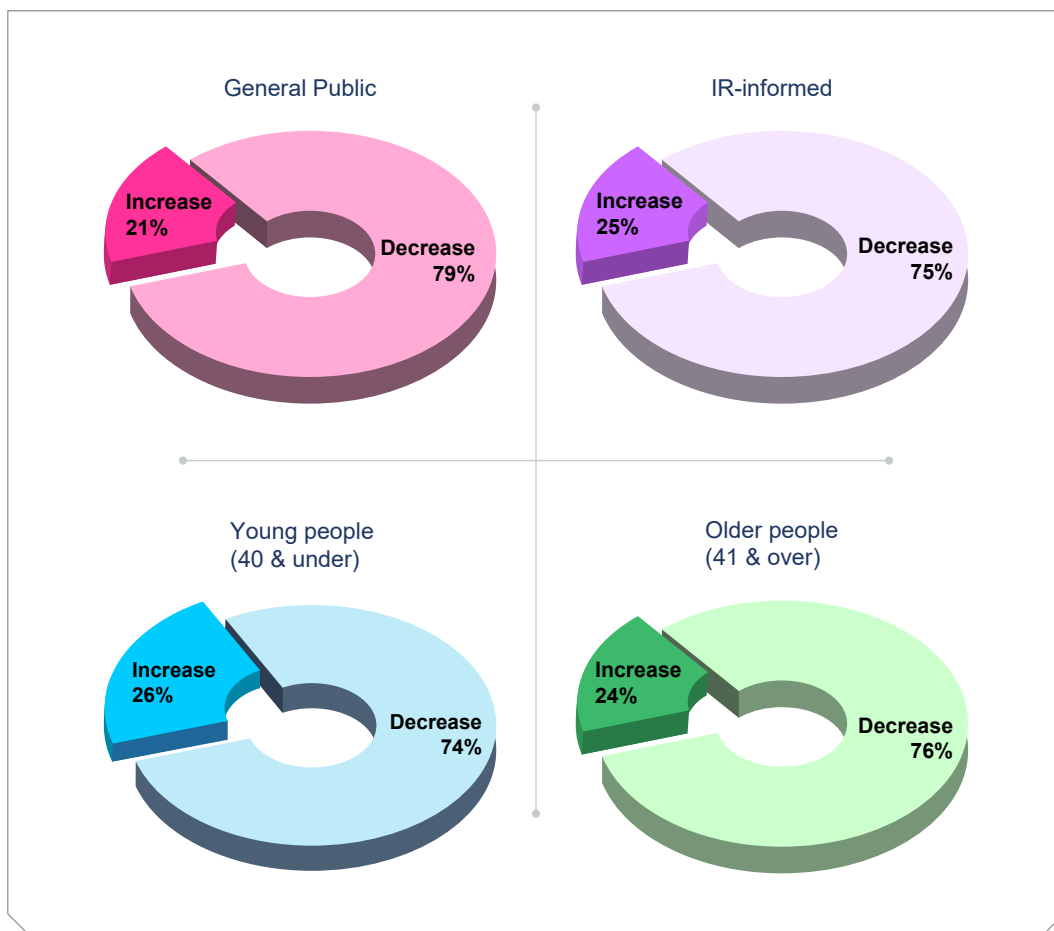
ประเทศไทยควรส่งเสริมการค้ากับประเทศต่างๆมากขึ้น แม้ว่าการส่งเสริมนี้จะส่งผลกระทบต่อเกษตรกรไทย แรงงานไทยและผู้ประกอบการธุรกิจขนาดย่อม(SME) คุณเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับข้อความนี้ในระดับใด

Openness to migrant workers

Migrant workers play a crucial role in Thailand’s economy, yet there is widespread concern among the Thai population about migrant workers. As shown in Figure 7, a strong majority (79 percent) of the urban Thai public prefers to see fewer foreign workers coming to

Thailand, while only slightly fewer IR-informed respondents (75 percent) agree. This position is generally consistent among younger and older populations (within the margin of error). Furthermore, women (75.4 percent) and men (74.5 percent) have nearly identical views that the flow of migrant workers should be reduced.

Figure 7: Increase (or decrease) flow of foreign workers into Thailand



Q.27

Do you think the government should increase or decrease the inflow of foreigners who come to work in Thailand?

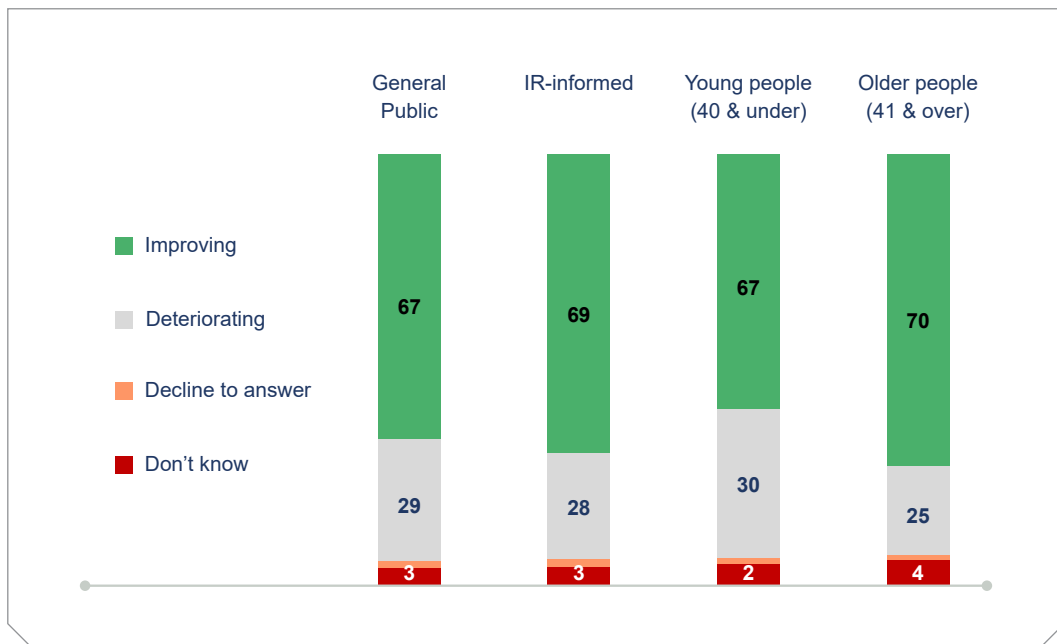
คุณคิดว่ารัฐบาลไทยควรส่งเสริมให้เพิ่มหรือควรลด การหลั่งไหลเข้ามาทำงานในประเทศไทยของชาวต่างชาติ

Optimism about the future

Despite worries about the direction that Thailand is heading (Figure 2), according to Figure 8, two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents in urban areas think that the

situation may improve in Thailand over the next year. There is no significant difference between the young and older, or between the general public and the IR-informed on this question.

Figure 8: Situation in Thailand will improve (or deteriorate) in the coming year



Q.3

Thinking about the future, do you see the situation in Thailand improving or deteriorating over the next year

ลองนึกถึงภาพอนาคตของประเทศไทย คุณมองว่าสถานการณ์ในประเทศไทยจะมีการพัฒนาไปทางที่ดีขึ้นหรือแย่ลงในปีหน้า

Thailand's Relations with External Powers

How is the geopolitical context changing?

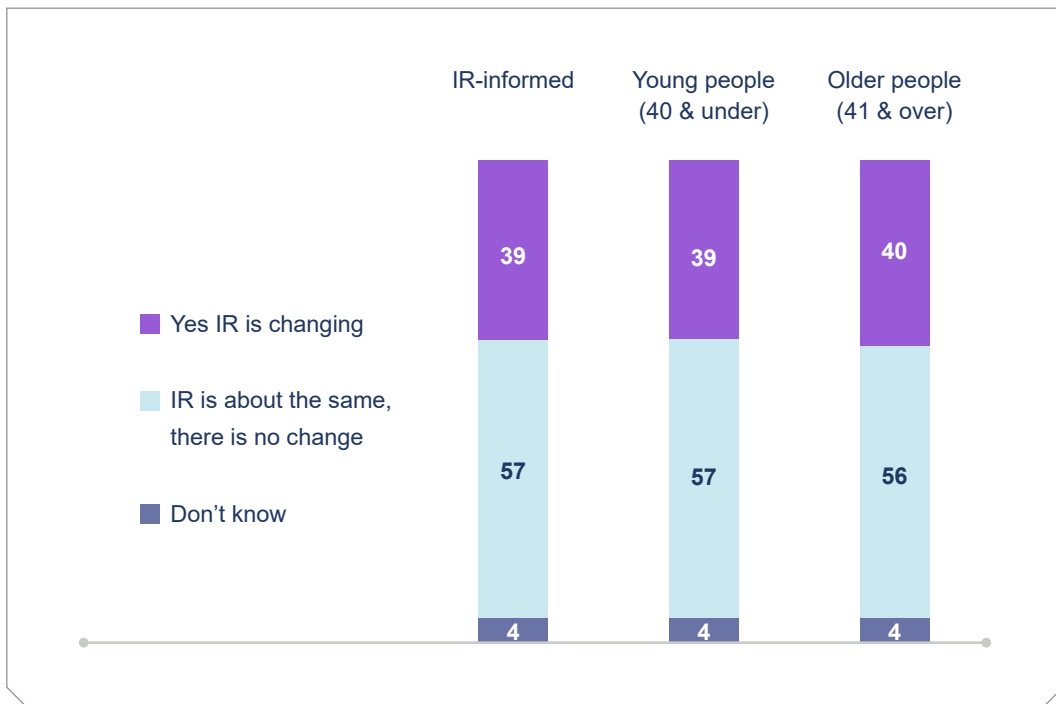
The survey included a question designed to gauge public views on whether they perceive any significant changes in the geopolitical environment. Given the growing importance of China over the past decade, and the accompanying deterioration of relations between the U.S. and China, most international experts would argue that there has been a profound shift. But do Thai people agree?

In fact, a clear majority of Thais does not think that relations between countries are

changing. According to Figure 9, only 39 percent of IR-informed respondents perceive a notable shift in the international context, while 57 percent see continuity with the past as the defining characteristic. While not shown in Figure 9, an even greater percentage (61 percent) of randomly sampled general public respondents see no change in the international environment, though 9 percent selected "Don't know" indicating lower levels of knowledge.

For this question, enumerators used the term "international relations" instead of geopolitics, to avoid overly technical language.

Figure 9: Context for International Relations changing (or more of the same)



Q.22

Some people say that international relations is changing across Southeast Asia, others disagree that it's changing. What is closer to your view:

บางคนกล่าวว่าแนวทางความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้กำลังเปลี่ยนแปลง ในขณะที่บางคนไม่คิดเช่นนั้น ข้อความใดต่อไปนี้ใกล้เคียงกับความคิดเห็นของคุณมากที่สุด

- Yes, IR is changing ใช่ แนวทางความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้กำลังเปลี่ยนแปลง
- IR is about the same, there is no change แนวทางความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ยังคงเหมือนเดิมไม่มีการเปลี่ยนแปลง
- Don't know ไม่ทราบ

Q.23

(Only those respondents to say IR is changing) You say IR is changing, in what way do you say it is changing?

คุณกล่าวว่าแนวทางความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้กำลังเปลี่ยนแปลง คุณคิดว่าการเปลี่ยนแปลงนี้จะเป็นไปในแนวทางใด

For those people who argued that international relations are changing, the survey included a follow up question asking the respondent to indicate how it is changing. This question was open-ended – as opposed to a pre-set list of responses. Enumerators recorded a brief summary of the verbal response from each interviewee, and then grouped the responses based on similar meaning.

Remarkably, as seen in Table 3, the overwhelming majority (81 percent) of IR-informed respondents who see a changing international context see movement in

a positive direction. The most common explanations are that there are more economic opportunities (59 respondents) and greater cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States (50 respondents). Of those respondents who see the context moving in a negative direction, very few seem to point to the U.S.-China rivalry. Responses included: the region is becoming more divided (15 respondents); there is fragmentation of international relations (7 respondents); and international relations are becoming more dangerous (6 respondents).

Table 3: How is international relations context changing

	General Public	IR-informed	Young People (40 & under)	Older People (41 & over)
Base:	362	532	253	270
	%	%	%	%
Positive (net)	81	81	81	82
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating more economic opportunities • Cooperation among ASEAN countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation on Economics, Trades, and Investment - Cooperation on Culture and Tourism - Cooperation on Clean Energy and Technology - Cooperation on Other Aspects • Becoming more integrated • Increased regionalism • Role of Other Countries Towards ASEAN Countries regarding Economic, Trades, and Investment • Becoming safer • Role of China on ASEAN Countries 	61 45 32 7 3 4 24 7 7 6 6	59 50 36 8 3 6 28 11 8 8 8	57 55 40 7 4 7 31 11 6 8 8	60 46 32 9 3 4 25 10 9 7 10
Negative (net)	21	22	23	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming more devided • Impacts on ASEAN countries from International Relation being fragmented • Economy, Trades, and Investments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The outlook for economic change appears to be worsening - Economic competitions among ASEAN countries become higher • Becoming more dangerous • Impacts of International Relations with neighboring countries on Thailand 	15 7 7 3 3 5 4	15 7 7 3 3 6 3	16 6 7 3 2 5 6	14 7 7 3 3 6 1

Most important countries for Thailand's future

Unsurprisingly, Thai people believe that China and the United States will be the most important countries for Thailand's future. As indicated in Figure 10, 92 percent of IR-informed respondents believe that China will be very important (56 percent) or important (36 percent). The U.S. is seen as the second most important foreign power, with 83

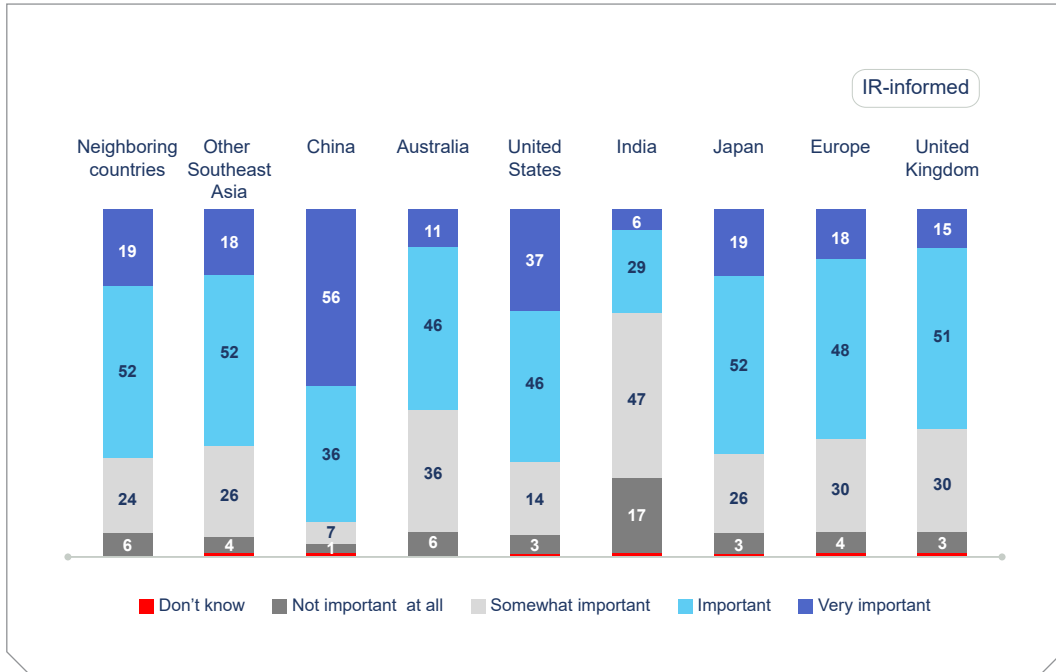
percent of IR-informed respondents believing the country will be very important (37 percent) or important (46 percent).

Beyond the two great powers, Thais see Japan and other ASEAN countries as the next most important. Japan (71 percent); neighboring countries Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Malaysia (71 percent); and the rest of Southeast Asia (70 percent) are statistically tied.

Remarkably, most respondents do not think that India is an important country for Thailand's future. Only 35 percent see India as either very important (6 percent) or important (29 percent), while 64 percent see India as

unimportant. Australia is the second lowest, but even in this case, a clear majority (57 percent) still sees Australia as important or very important.

Figure 10: Foreign powers most important for Thailand's future



Q.30

Now I am going to read a list of countries and regional groups, please tell me if you think they are important or not important for Thailand's future.

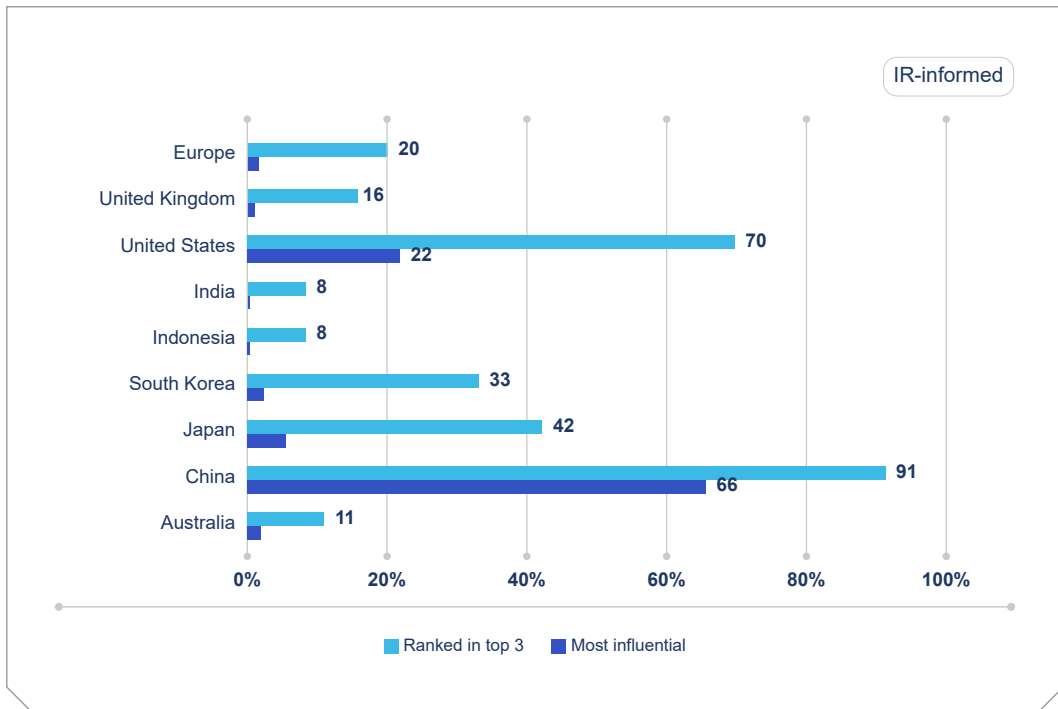
ต่อไปนี้ ดิฉัน/ผม จะอ่านรายชื่อประเทศและกลุ่มประเทศในภูมิภาคต่างๆ เมื่อดิฉัน/ผม อ่านแต่ละรายชื่อจบลง ขอให้คุณบอกหน่อยว่าประเทศและกลุ่มภูมิกษานั้นมีความสำคัญต่ออนาคตของประเทศไทยมาก-น้อยแค่ไหน

Most influential countries in Asia

The survey included questions to determine which countries are perceived to be the most influential in Asia. Respondents were asked to differentiate between the current context and what they expect to see ten years from now. Respondents were asked to choose the most important country and to rank those in the top 3. Figures 11 and 12 show the percentage of respondents identifying each foreign country as the most influential in Asia (darker shade), and the percentage including the country in the top 3 of most influential countries in Asia (lighter shade).

A clear majority of respondents (66 percent) see China as the most influential country in Asia today. Figure 11 also shows that the overwhelming majority (91 percent) of IR-informed respondents see China in the top 3. The U.S. is also seen as highly influential, though considerably less so than China. 70 percent of respondents rank the U.S. in the top 3, while only 22 percent see the U.S. as the most influential. Japan (42 percent in top 3) and South Korea (33 percent in top 3) are also seen as influential, though well behind the two great powers. India and Indonesia rank the lowest of the countries listed, with only eight percent each ranking them in the top 3.

Figure 11: Most influential major powers in Asia today

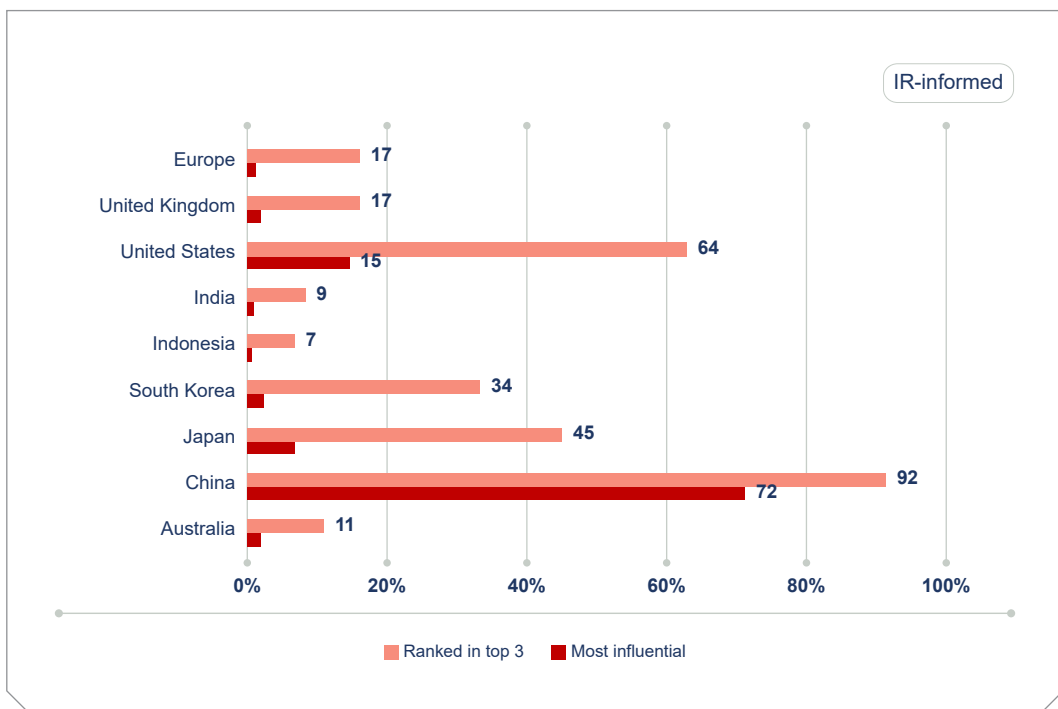


Q.28

Which country has the most influence in Asia?
ประเทศใดมีอิทธิพลมากที่สุดในเอเชีย

Respondents were also asked to predict who will be the most influential countries in 10 years from now. Figure 12 illustrates the findings from this question.

Figure 12: Most influential major powers in 10 years from now

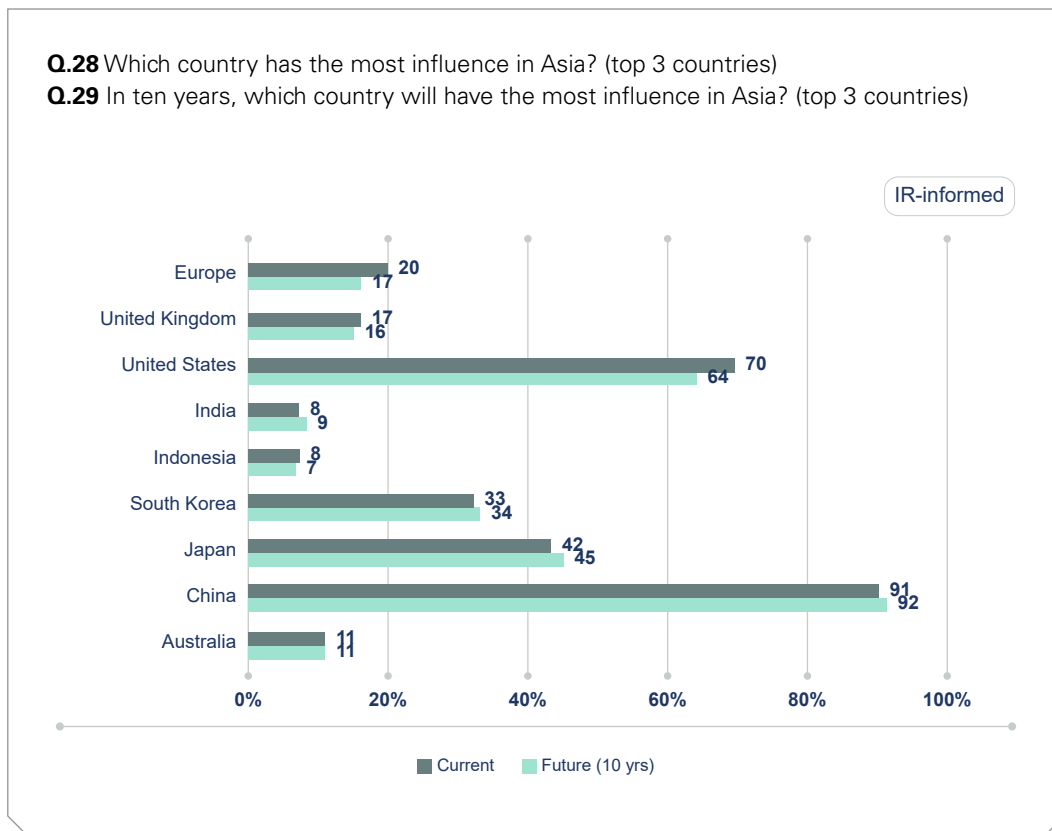


Thai people perceive a widening gap between China and the U.S. in the future. Figure 13 compares responses from Figures 11 and 12 to illustrate how respondents think the relative influence of foreign powers is likely to change over the next decade. While 70 percent of respondents see the U.S. among the top 3 most influential countries today, this falls to 64 percent when people were asked to predict the context 10 years from now. Also, while 22 percent of IR-informed Thai people think the U.S. is the most influential country today, only 15 percent think it will be in 10 years. Conversely, the percentage of people who see China as the most influential country increases when asked about 10 years in the future. 66 percent of IR-informed respondents

think that China is the most influential today, and 72 percent think it will be the most influential in 10 years. The percentage of respondents who think China is in the top three is about the same (91 percent today, 92 percent in 10 years).

The only other country that is seen to be growing in influence is Japan, though only by 3 percent more in 10 years (42 percent compared to 45 percent). The United Kingdom, India, and South Korea have barely noticeable increases of one percent each. The European Union is the only foreign power, besides the United States, to see a clear decline in perceived influence over time (20 percent today, 17 percent in ten years).

Figure 13: Comparison of most influential powers: today and 10 years in future



Relations with foreign countries: Friendly or taking advantage?

Thai respondents generally have positive perceptions of foreign countries' intentions towards Thailand, though there are a few exceptions. The survey included a question that asked respondents to indicate how such countries interact with Thailand. For each country listed, respondents could indicate that the country was "friendly to Thailand," "taking advantage of Thailand," or "neutral towards Thailand." This question provides some indication of whether Thais see a foreign country as generally benign or antagonistic towards Thailand.

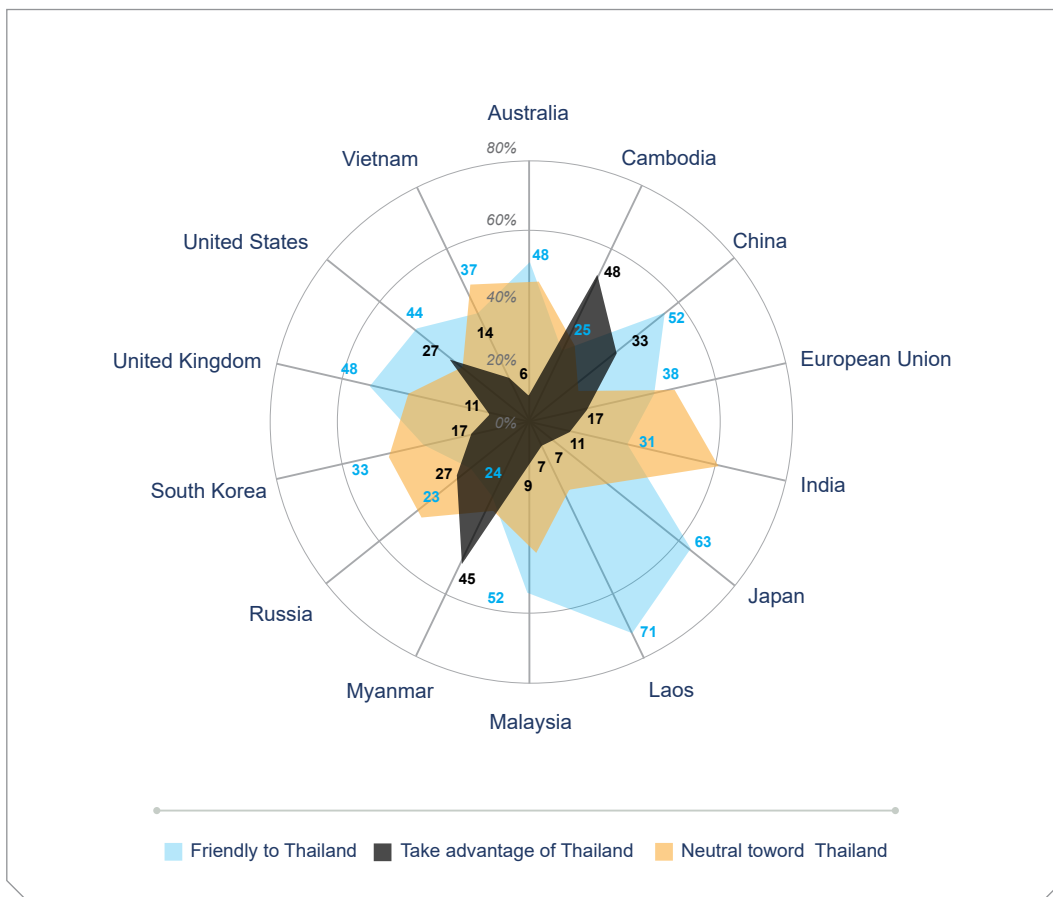
One important finding is that both China and the U.S. are seen as generally benign (or friendly) towards Thailand. As illustrated in Figure 14, 52 percent of IR-informed respondents think that China is friendly to Thailand, compared to 33 percent who think China takes advantage of Thailand. This is a net positive gap of 19 percentage points. The U.S. has a similar net positive gap of 17 percentage points, as 44 percent see the U.S. as friendly, while 27 percent see it as taking advantage of Thailand.

There are three countries that Thai respondents view as antagonistic towards Thailand (i.e., those with a higher percentage of respondents claiming the country is taking advantage of Thailand compared to acting friendly towards Thailand). Cambodia has a net negative gap of 23, as 48 percent believe the neighboring country takes advantage of Thailand compared to 25 percent who see it as friendly.

Similarly, Myanmar has a net negative gap of 21, with 45 percent indicating that the country takes advantage of Thailand compared to 24 percent who see it as friendly. Russia has a much smaller net negative gap of 4, with 27 percent viewing Russia as taking advantage of Thailand compared to 23 percent who see it as friendly. Notably, Russia has a much higher percentage of respondents (45 percent) who see the country as neutral towards Thailand.

The rest of the countries listed are all seen as generally benign in their approach towards Thailand. The countries with the highest net positive gap are Laos (64), Japan (56), Malaysia (43), Australia (42), and the United Kingdom (37).

Figure 14: Countries who are friendly to (or taking advantage of) Thailand



Q.31

Now, I am going to list a number of countries, for each how would you describe their relations with Thailand

ต่อไปนี้ ดิฉัน/ผมจะอ่านรายชื่อประเทศต่างๆ สำหรับแต่ละประเทศ ขอให้คุณใช้ข้อความบนการ์ดนี้อธิบายความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศนั้นๆ กับประเทศไทย

- Friendly to Thailand ใจ เป็นมิตรต่อประเทศไทย
- Taking advantage of Thailand เอาเปรียบประเทศไทย
- Neutral towards Thailand วางตัวเป็นกลางต่อประเทศไทย

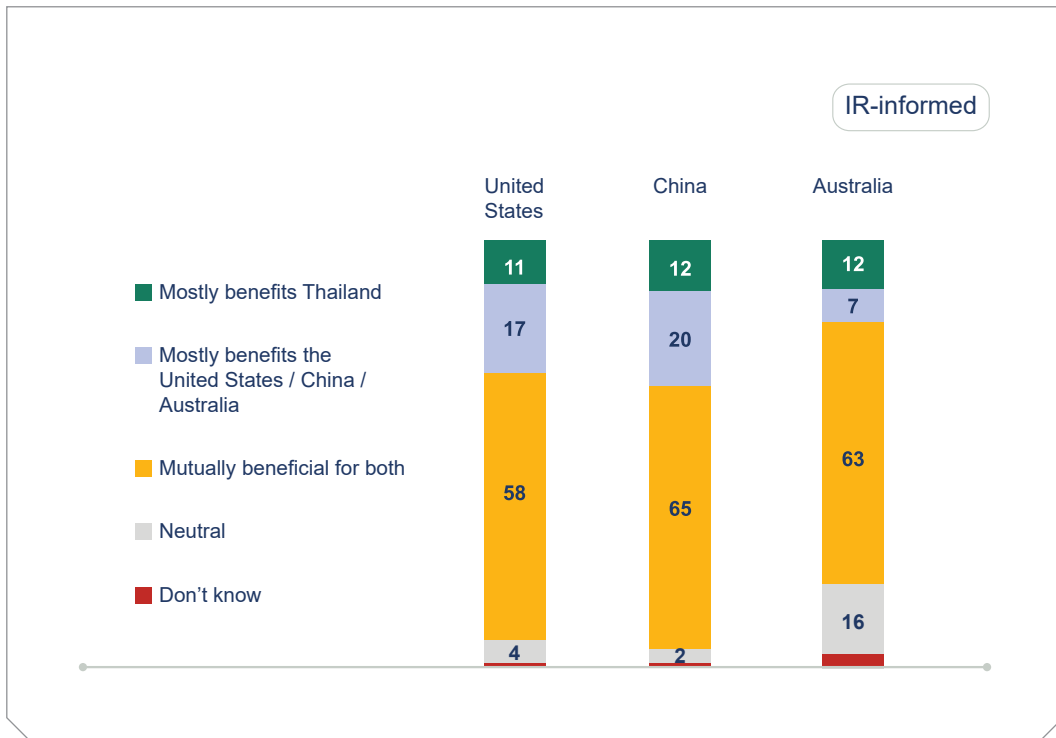
Mutually beneficial relations or one-sided relations: U.S., China, and Australia

Respondents were also asked whether they see relations with key foreign countries as mutually beneficial, or largely benefiting one country at the expense of the other. Similar to Figure 14, this question measures the extent to which a foreign power is seen as taking advantage of Thailand. The survey included this question for the United States, China, and Australia.

For all three countries, current relations are seen as mutually beneficial by a clear majority. As indicated in Figure 15, around two-thirds of IR-Informed respondents see relations as mutually beneficial. By combining the respondents who see the relationship

as mutually beneficial and those who see the relationship mostly benefiting Thailand, we can determine the total percentage who see the relationship as overall positive for Thailand. Through this lens, the relations with the United States are seen as the most beneficial, with 79 percent indicating mostly beneficial for Thailand or mutually beneficial. Only 17 percent see the relationship mostly benefiting the U.S. By comparison, China-Thailand relations are also seen as largely beneficial (77 percent), with only 20 percent indicating that the relationship primarily benefits China. Australia is seen in a similar light, with 75 percent viewing Australia-Thai relations as beneficial for Thailand, compared to only 7 percent who see the relationship primarily benefiting Australia.

Figure 15: Relations mutually beneficial (or one-sided)



Q.37/39/41

How would you describe Thailand's relationship with the United States/China/Australia?

เมื่อนึกถึงความเจริญรุ่งเรืองทางเศรษฐกิจในทวีปเอเชีย คุณคิดว่าสิ่งต่างๆที่สหรัฐอเมริกา/จีน/ออสเตรเลียทำนั้นมีผลดีหรือผลเสียต่อประเทศในทวีปเอเชีย

How Thailand benefits from U.S., China, and Australia?

If respondents indicated that bilateral relations with a foreign country were beneficial for Thailand (from Figure 15), then they were also asked how Thailand benefitted. In this question, respondents were given a list of eight options and asked to indicate their top three areas.

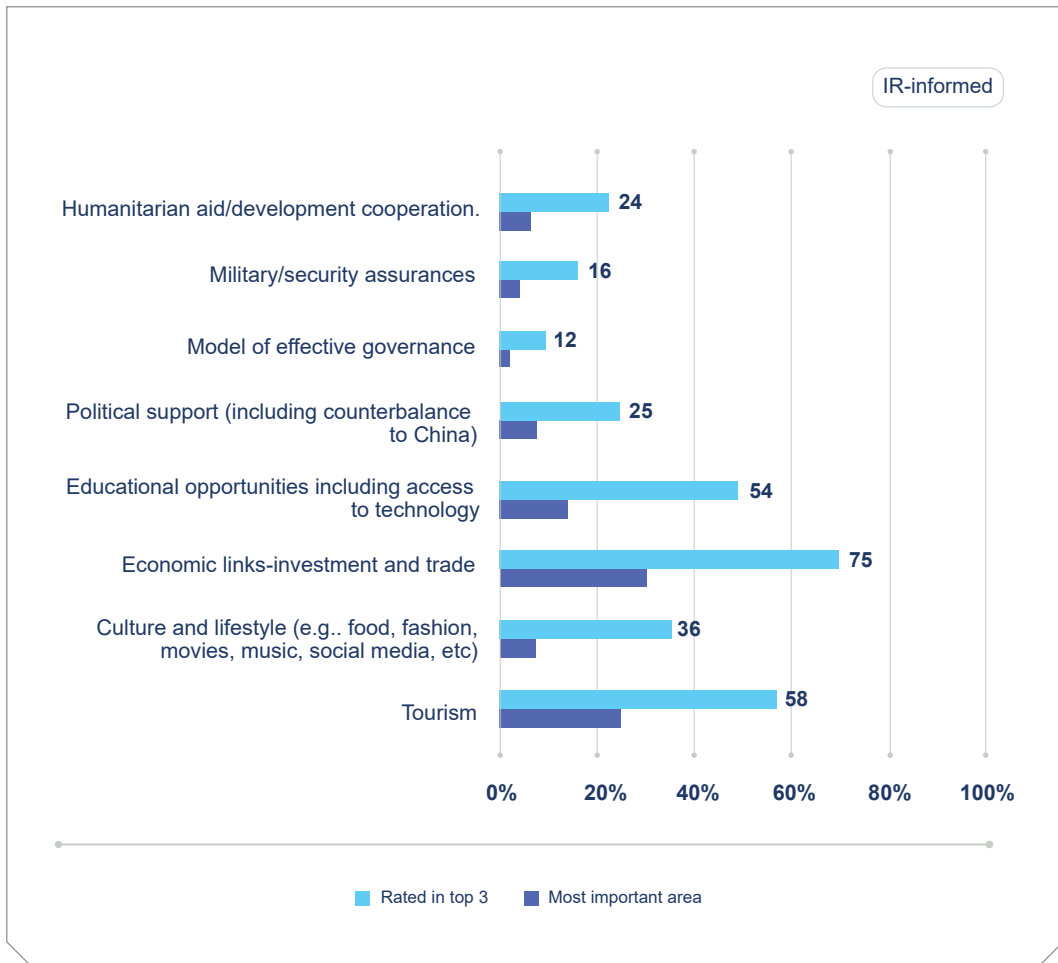
The major finding from this question is that Thai respondents do not see much benefit from military/security assurances or from models of effective governance. This is important, especially for the United States. These two areas would likely be seen by U.S. experts and officials as key arguments for foreign countries to deepen engagement with the U.S. However, only 12 percent (lowest of all options) of IR-informed respondents rank the U.S. model of governance in their top three areas where Thailand benefits from

relations with the U.S. Even more surprisingly given that Thailand is a Major Non-NATO Ally of the U.S., military and security assurances is seen as important (i.e., rated in the top three benefits) by only 16 percent of respondents.

One option was U.S. political support as a counterbalance of China. 9 percent of IR-informed Thai respondents choose this option as the most important benefit for Thailand, which this is the third highest area. 25 percent rate this area in their top three benefits that Thailand receives from the U.S.

Most Thai respondents see the main benefit from relations with the United States coming from economic links (particularly investment and trade), tourism, and education. As indicated in Figure 16, 75 percent of respondents put economic links in the top three areas, and 31 percent identify this as the most important area.

Figure 16: How Thailand benefits from the United States

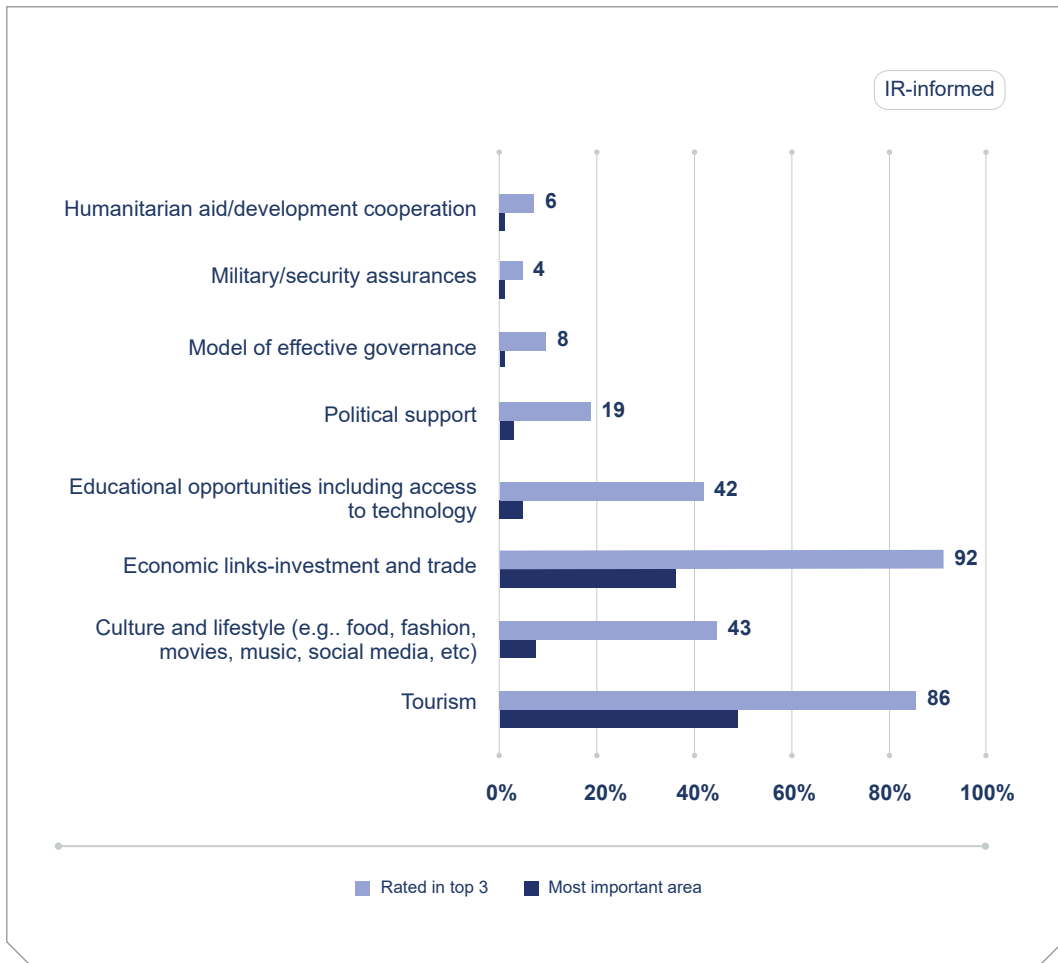


Q.38
 How does Thailand benefit most from its relations with the United States?
 ประเทศไทยได้รับประโยชน์อะไรจากการที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับสหรัฐอเมริกา

Even fewer Thai respondents identify China’s governance model (8 percent ranked in top three) and military/security assurances (4 percent ranked in top three) as the main areas in which Thailand benefits from relations with China. Unsurprisingly, economic links is seen

as the primary benefit from Thai-Chinese relations, with 92 percent rating it in the top three, and 36 percent rating it as the highest. Nearly half (48 percent) of Thai respondents see tourism as the most important area in which Thailand benefits.

Figure 17: How Thailand benefits from China



Q.40

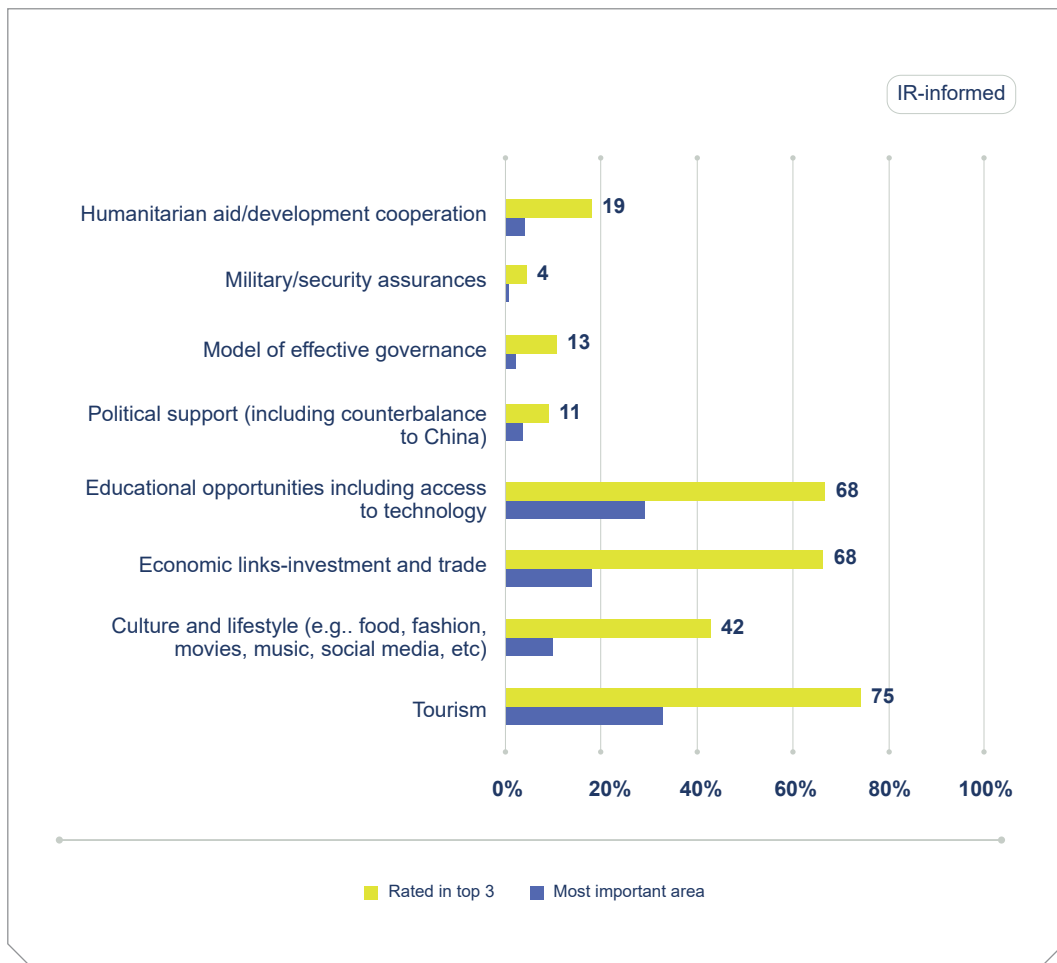
How does Thailand benefit most from its relations with China?

ประเทศไทยได้รับประโยชน์อะไรจากการที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน

For Australia, most Thai respondents see the main value of the bilateral relationship in terms of tourism (75 percent rated in top three), education (68 percent rated in top three), and economic links (68 percent rated in

top three). Culture and lifestyle are also seen as important, with a similar level (42 percent rated in top three) as China and higher than the U.S.

Figure 18: How Thailand benefits from Australia



Q.42

How does Thailand benefit most from its relations with Australia?
 ประเทศไทยได้รับประโยชน์อะไรจากการที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับออสเตรเลีย

Great Power Competition

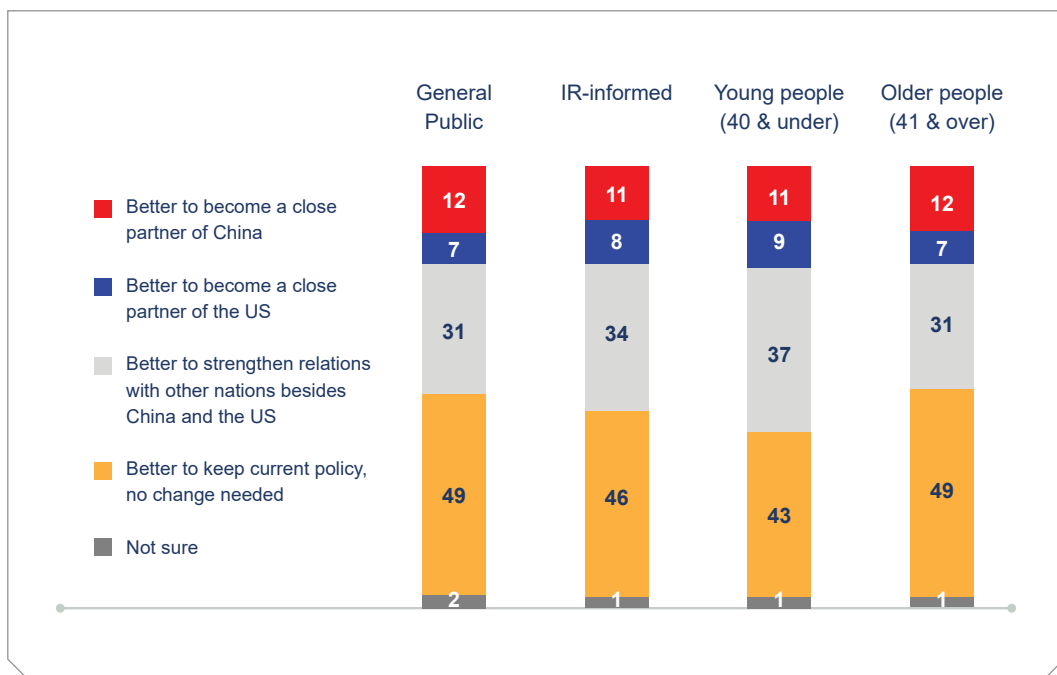
Alignment with a great power

Thailand’s official policy is to maintain positive relations with both the United States and China, and to avoid aligning itself with either great power. Based on the findings in Figure 19, this policy is also the preferred choice for most Thai respondents. Nearly half (49 percent) of the general public think that Thailand should keep its current policy, while only 19 percent think that Thailand should choose to align with either the U.S. or China. Among those who would like to see Thailand become a close partner

of either China or the U.S., there is a slight preference for China.

Roughly one-third of respondents think that Thailand should strengthen relations with other countries. Young people (37 percent) and IR-informed respondents (34 percent) are particularly supportive of this approach - compared to older people and the general public – though slightly more still prefer to maintain the current policy. This is nearly double the percentage of respondents who would like to see Thailand choose one of the great powers as a close partner.

Figure 19: Should Thailand change its policy of positive relations with China and U.S.



Q.32

Thailand's foreign policy states that it maintains positive relations with both the U.S. and China. What do you think of this policy?

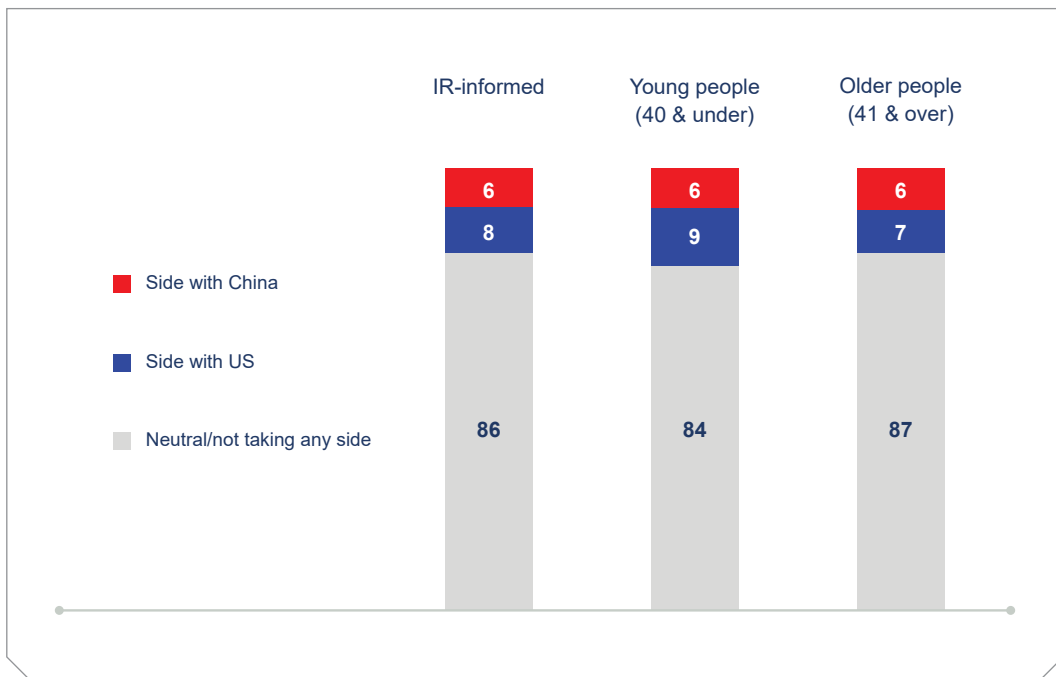
นโยบายต่างประเทศของไทยได้แถลงว่าประเทศไทยคงรักษาความสัมพันธ์ซึ่งบวกกับทั้งสองประเทศคือสหรัฐอเมริกาและสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน คุณมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรต่อนโยบายต่างประเทศนี้

What should Thailand do if there is a great power conflict?

If there is armed conflict between the United States and China in the future, Thai people overwhelmingly prefer neutrality. Among the IR-informed respondents, 86 percent indicate

that Thailand should remain neutral in a great power conflict, with only 14 percent arguing to take a side. For the tiny minority who indicated that Thailand should choose one side, there is a slight preference for aligning with the US, particularly among young people.

Figure 20: Thailand's choice if there is armed conflict



Q.43

The U.S. and China acknowledge that their relations are tense and that they are competing with each other across the world in many areas (a "new Cold War"). Some people think the competition will lead to an armed conflict. If this happens, how do you think Thailand should respond?

สหรัฐอเมริกาและสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีนต่างทราบดีว่าความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทั้ง 2 ประเทศกำลังอยู่ในภาวะตึงเครียด อันเนื่องมาจากการแข่งขันที่สูงมากระหว่างประเทศทั้ง 2 ในหลายๆภูมิภาคของโลก (ภาวะสงครามเย็นครั้งใหม่) บางคนถึงกับกังวลว่าเหตุการณ์ดังกล่าวจะนำไปสู่การเกิดสงครามระหว่างทั้ง 2 ประเทศ ท่านคิดว่าประเทศไทยควรทำอย่างไรถ้ากรณีเช่นนี้เกิดขึ้น

Impact of China and the U.S. on peace and security

One important finding from the survey is that Thai people generally see the United States and China as having a similar – and largely positive – impact on peace and security in Asia. This survey question asked whether China and the U.S. do “more good than harm” or “more harm than good” in terms of making Asia more peaceful and stable. Figure 21 compares the findings for China and the U.S. for both the general public and the IR-informed group.

More than three-quarters of respondents from the general public think that China (76 percent) and the United States (77 percent) do more good than harm for peace and security in Asia. IR-informed respondents are slightly less likely to indicate that the two great powers do more good than harm, but the findings are still very lopsided, with

73 percent for China and 72 percent for the U.S.

Figure 22 shows the results for young people and older people. Interestingly, younger people are slightly more concerned about China’s role (70 percent more good than harm) compared to the U.S. (75 percent). Older people have slightly more concern about the U.S. (68 percent more good than harm) compared to China (76 percent).

More than 80 percent of respondents see a mix of positive and negative from the great powers in their impact on peace and stability. More than four out of five respondents selected “somewhat more good than harm” or “somewhat more harm than good”; indicating that very few people see either great power as definitively positive or negative for regional peace and security.

Figure 21: Net impact of China and U.S. on peace and security

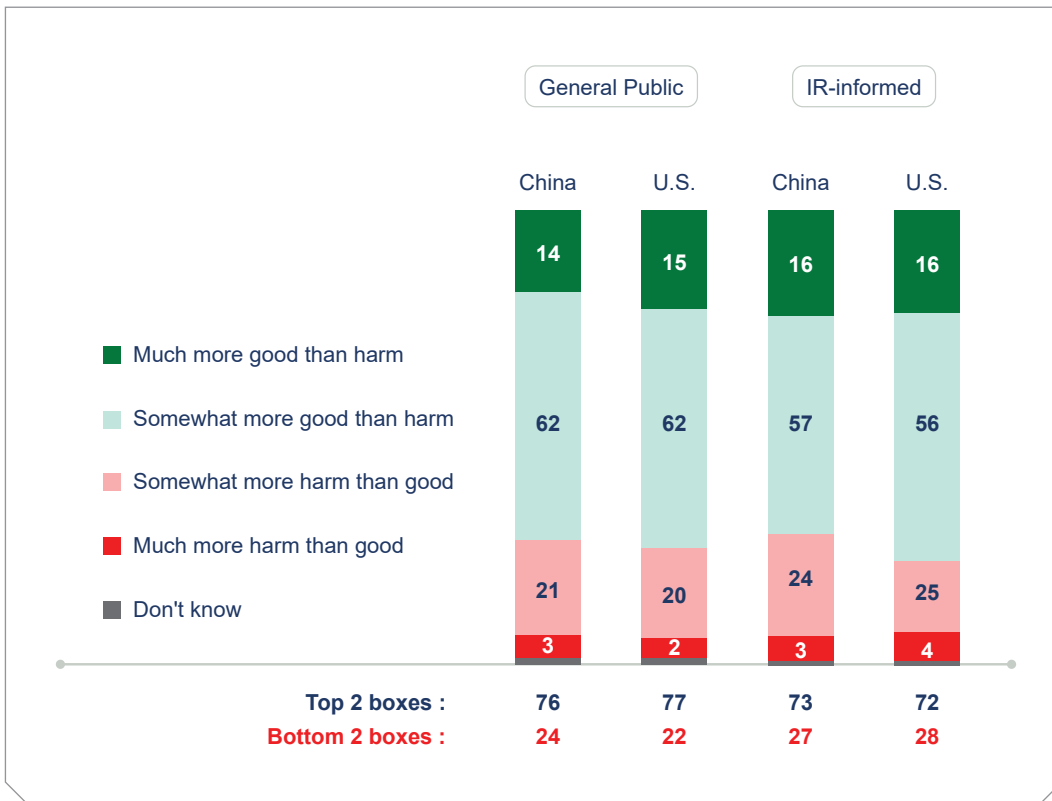
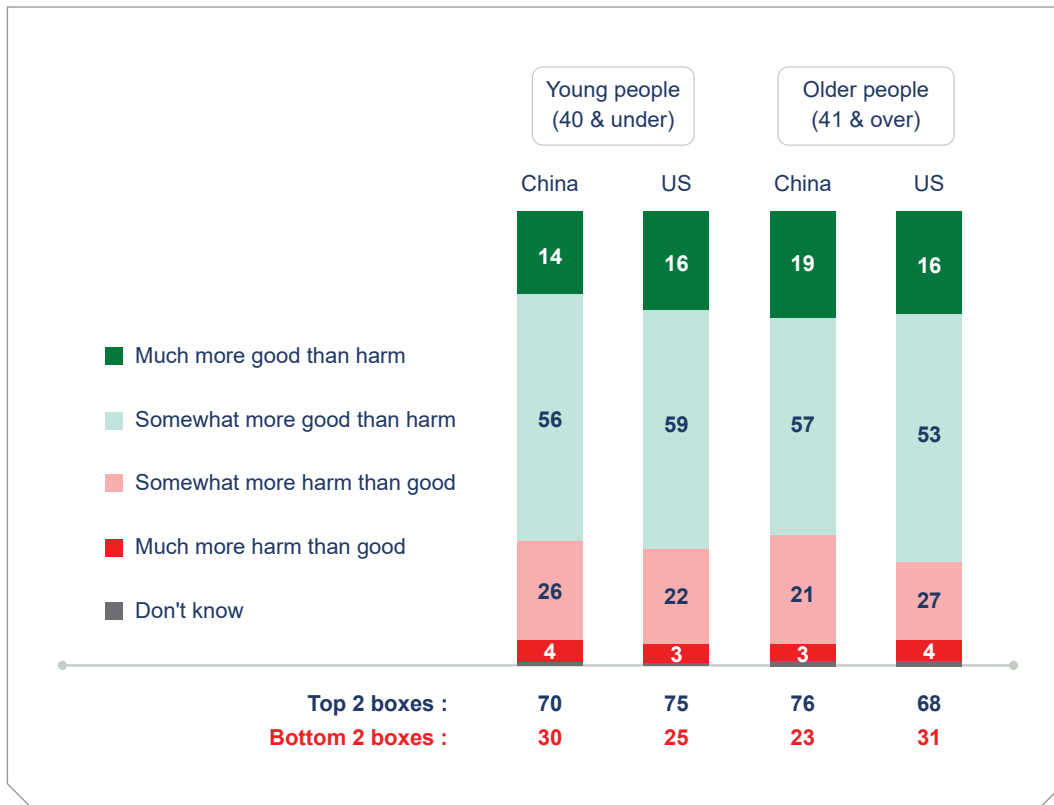


Figure 22: Net impact of China and U.S. on peace and security: Age comparison



Q.33-34

Thinking of making Asia more peaceful and stable, does China/United States do more good or harm to Asia?

เมื่อนึกถึงความสงบและมั่นคงในทวีปเอเชีย คุณคิดว่าสิ่งต่างๆที่จีน/สหรัฐอเมริกาทำนั้นมีผลดี หรือผลเสียต่อประเทศในทวีปเอเชีย

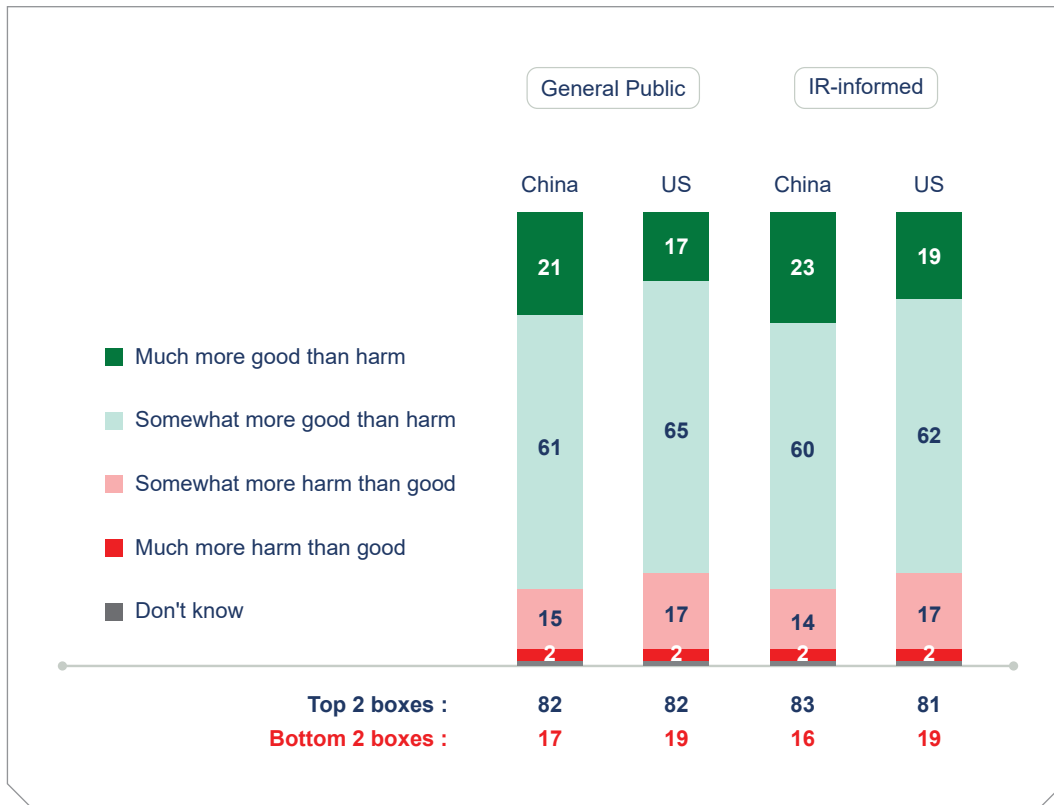
Impact of China and the U.S. on economic prosperity

Both the U.S. and China are seen as playing a positive role in economic prosperity by more than four out of every five Thai respondents. Figure 23 shows that 83 percent of IR-informed respondents see China doing more good than harm in terms of economic

prosperity, while 81 percent see the same from the United States.

Compared to the question on peace and security (Figures 21 and 22), more people see the role of China (23 percent much more good than harm) and the United States (19 percent) as definitively positive for economic prosperity.

Figure 23: Net impact of China and U.S. on economic prosperity



Q.35-36

Thinking of their role in economic prosperity, does China/United States do more good or harm to Asia?

เมื่อนึกถึงความเจริญรุ่งเรืองทางเศรษฐกิจในทวีปเอเชีย คุณคิดว่าสิ่งต่างๆที่จีน/สหรัฐอเมริกาทำนั้นมีผลดีหรือผลเสียต่อประเทศในทวีปเอเชีย

Studying abroad preferences

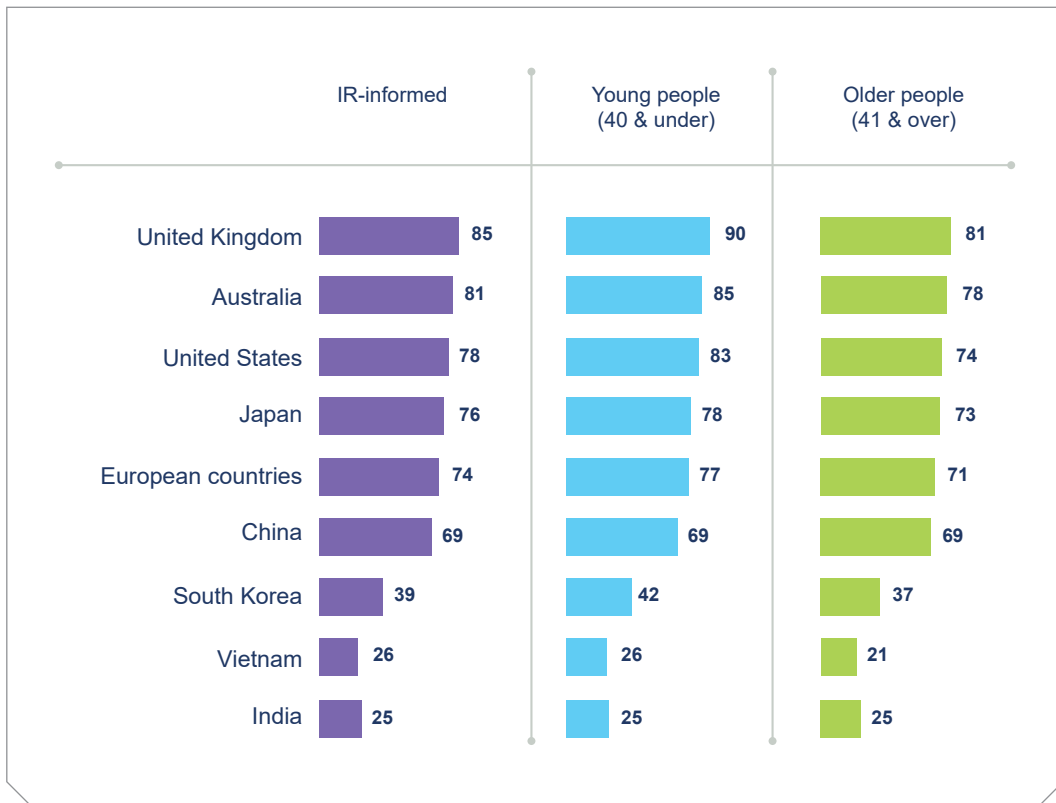
An increasing number of Thai citizens are studying in foreign countries. Today, Thai citizens have many options when deciding where to go for university. The survey included a question designed to gauge the general perception of Thai respondents on the relative attractiveness of study in foreign countries. These preferences are a useful measure of soft power attraction.

The United Kingdom and Australia are the most favored countries for studying abroad, with 85 percent and 81 percent (respectively) of IR-informed respondents indicating that

they would recommend studying in these countries to family and friends. Among young people, the percentage is even higher, with 90 percent for the U.K. and 85 percent for Australia. The United States (78 percent), Japan (76 percent), and other European Countries (74 percent) score very well, though slightly below the U.K. and Australia. China is not far behind, with 69 percent of IR-informed participants indicating that they would recommend it.

Surprisingly, South Korea (30 percent), Vietnam (23 percent), and India (25 percent) are well below the others.

Figure 24: Comparison of countries as destination for education



Q.6

Would you recommend your family or friends study in these countries?
 ขอให้คุณบอกหน่อยว่าคุณจะแนะนำให้สมาชิกในครอบครัว หรือ เพื่อนไปเรียนต่อที่ประเทศนี้หรือไม่
 (Answers are percentage of people who recommend)

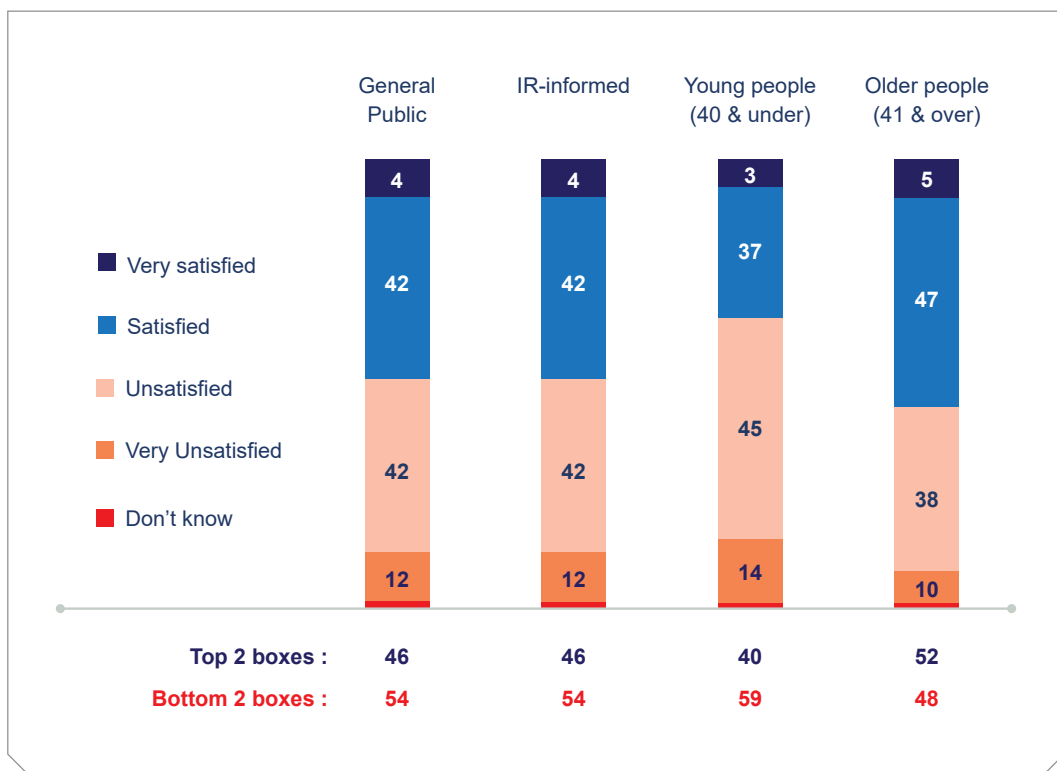
Cooperation on Democracy

Are Thai people satisfied with Thai democracy?

The survey included a series of questions to gauge perceptions on foreign efforts to support democracy in Thailand. The series began with some questions to gauge respondents' views on the state of democracy in Thailand in order to explore possible correlations between these perceptions and respondents' views on external support and influence.

Figure 25 presents the findings on respondents' overall satisfaction with Thai democracy. The data shows that a slight majority of respondents is unsatisfied with Thai democracy. The IR-informed and the general public have a similar distribution of views, with 46 percent claiming to be satisfied/very satisfied and 54 percent unsatisfied/very unsatisfied. Young people are more likely to be unsatisfied (59 percent), while older people are the only group with more respondents indicating that they are satisfied (52 percent).

Figure 25: Satisfaction with Thai democracy



Q.9

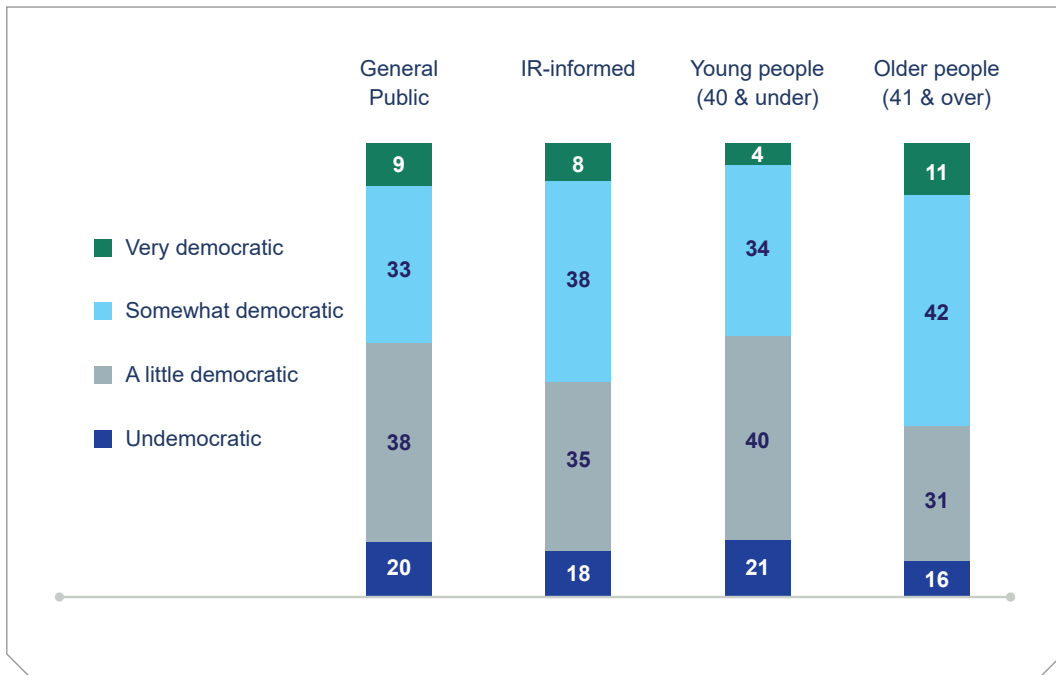
In general, would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the way democracy works in Thailand?

โดยทั่วไป คุณมีความพึงพอใจมาก พึงพอใจ ไม่พึงพอใจ หรือไม่พึงพอใจมาก ในวิธีการทำงานของระบอบประชาธิปไตยของประเทศไทย

Thai people are mixed on their views of Thai democracy, with very few respondents seeing it as very democratic or undemocratic. Figure 26 shows that a significant majority sees Thai democracy as “somewhat democratic” or “a little democratic,” including 74 percent of young people, 73 percent of the IR-informed, and 71 percent of the general public.

Young people are more disillusioned with Thai democracy, with 61 percent saying Thailand is either undemocratic or only a little democratic. By comparison, only 47 percent of older people agrees, with 53 percent seeing Thai democracy as either very democratic or somewhat democratic.

Figure 26: How democratic is Thailand



Q.7

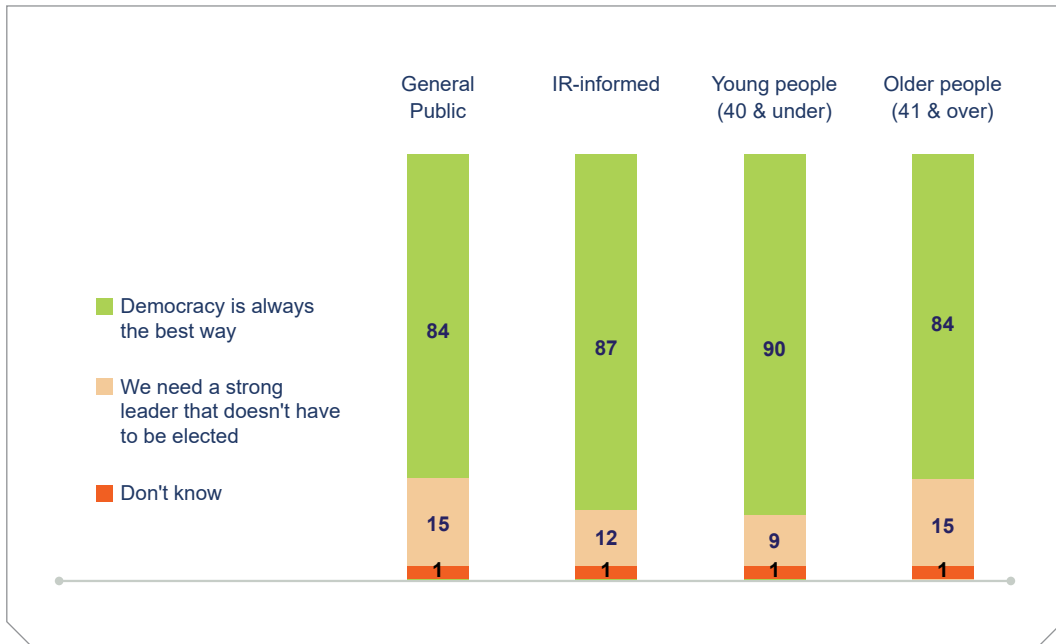
In your opinion is Thailand very democratic, somewhat democratic, a little democratic or undemocratic?

ในความคิดเห็นของคุณประเทศไทยเป็นประชาธิปไตยมากน้อยเพียงใด

Regardless of views on the current state of democracy, Thai people overwhelmingly see democracy as the best political system. As shown in Figure 27, 90 percent of young people believe democracy is “always the

best way” and 84 percent of the general public agree. Among older people, 84 percent of respondents believe that democracy is always the best way.

Figure 27: Support for democracy



Q.8

On some occasions, democracy doesn't work. When that happens there are people that say we need a strong leader who doesn't have to be elected through voting. Others say that even if things don't function, democracy is always the best. What do you think?

บางครั้งประชาธิปไตยก็ไม่ได้มีผลดี ในสถานการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นเหล่านั้นขึ้น บางคนบอกว่าเราต้องการผู้นำที่เข้มแข็งซึ่งไม่ต้องมาจากการเลือกตั้ง แต่บางคนพูดว่าแม้จะไม่ใช้ทางออกที่ให้ผลดี ผู้นำต้องมาจากการเลือกตั้งเพราะเชื่อว่าประชาธิปไตยเป็นหนทางที่ดีที่สุดเสมอ คุณมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไร

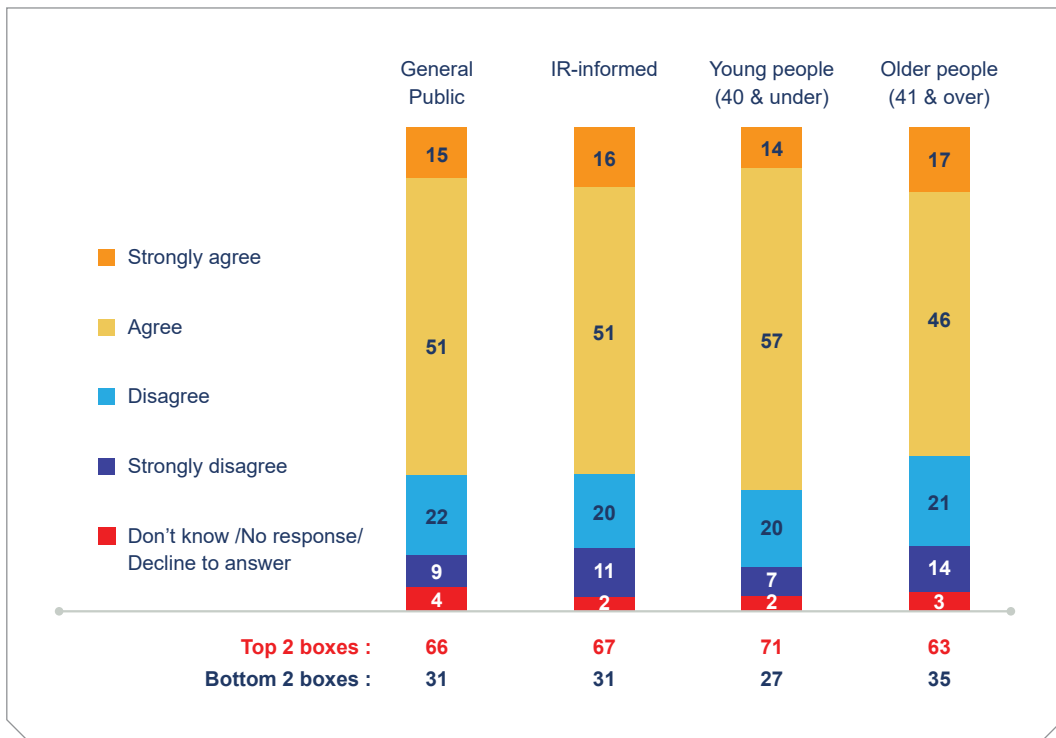
Western support for democracy in Southeast Asia

The survey asked respondents for their views on Western countries' efforts to promote democracy in Thailand. The question was framed as a statement, asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following: "The West can do more to promote democracy and human rights in Thailand." (ประเทศตะวันตกสามารถช่วยส่งเสริมประชาธิปไตยและสิทธิมนุษยชนในประเทศไทยให้ได้ดีมากขึ้น) It is important to note that the question did not ask whether Western countries should do more, which would imply support for more efforts to promote democracy in Thailand. Rather, the question asked whether western countries can do more or can promote democracy better

than they do now. If asked, enumerators explained that "Western countries" was defined as the U.S. and European countries.

A clear majority of Thai respondents agree with the statement that Western countries can do more to promote democracy in Thailand. 66 percent of the general public and 67 percent of the IR-informed respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement, as indicated in Figure 28. Young people agree the most with the statement, with 71 percent indicating that Western countries can do more to promote democracy. While older people are less likely to agree, a clear majority (63 percent) also agrees that the West can do more.

Figure 28: Foreign support for democracy in Thailand



Q.10

Do you agree or disagree with the follow statement: The West can do more to promote democracy and human rights in Thailand
 คุณเห็นด้วยหรือไม่กับข้อความต่อไปนี้ ประเทศตะวันตกสามารถช่วยส่งเสริมประชาธิปไตยและสิทธิมนุษยชนในประเทศไทยให้ได้มากขึ้น

Impact of external influence on Thai democracy

The survey also asked for respondents to share their views on whether foreign influences (อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศ) have an impact on Thai democracy. This question provided an opportunity for respondents to express concerns about external influence on Thai democracy, and whether this influence is a source of concern or is welcomed. Respondents were asked about the impact of external influences and given the following options:

- External influences can aid in improving Thailand’s democracy (อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศสามารถส่งผลต่อการส่งเสริมพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย)
- External influences have no impact on Thailand’s democracy (อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศไม่มีผลกระทบต่อการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย)

- Thailand (or Thais) should ignore external influences, particularly those that criticize its democracy (ประเทศไทย (คนไทย) ควรเพิกเฉยต่ออิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศ โดยเฉพาะกลุ่มที่วิพากษ์วิจารณ์ประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย)
- External influences harm Thai democracy and should be stopped (อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศเป็นภัยต่อประชาธิปไตยของไทยและอิทธิพลนี้ควรถูกยับยั้ง)
- Don’t know (ไม่ทราบ)

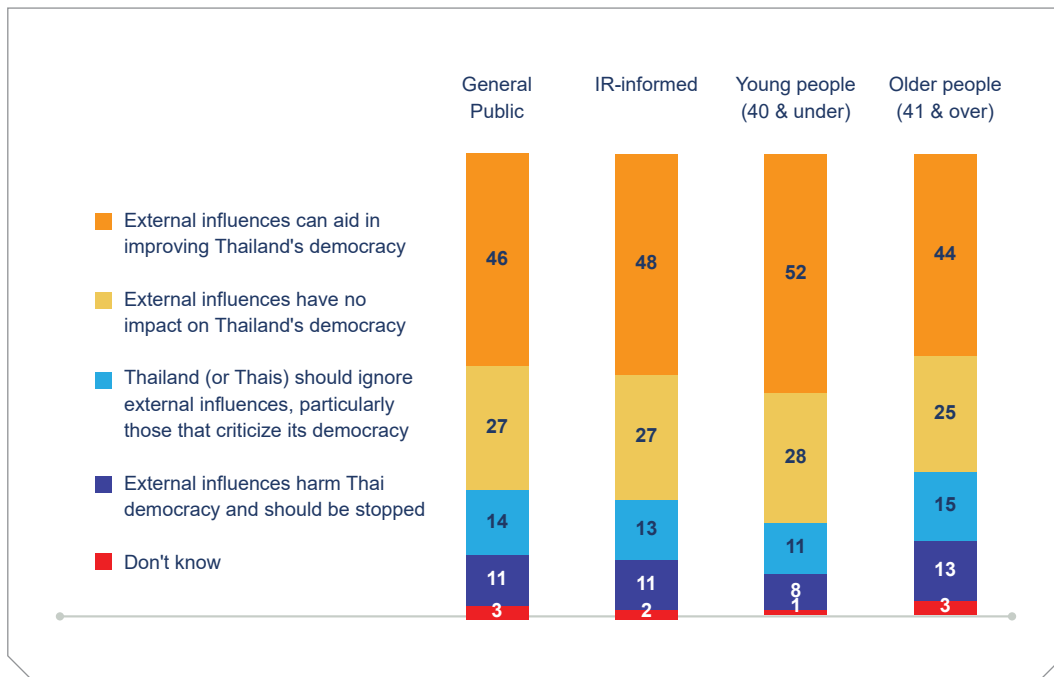
A plurality (though not a majority) of Thai respondents indicate that they think external influences can help Thai democracy, including 46 percent of the general public and 48 percent of the IR-informed. Young people are more likely to agree that external influence can be positive, with a majority (52 percent) holding this view. Older people are more skeptical of external influence, yet even amongst this

group a plurality (44 percent) sees it as helpful to Thai democracy.

Surprisingly, few respondents think external influences are negative for Thai democracy. Combining “Thais should ignore external influences, particularly those that criticize its democracy” and “External influences

harm Thai democracy and should be stopped people,” only 25 percent of the general public, 24 percent of the IR-informed, and 28 percent of older people view external influences as negative. Young people are much less likely to see external influences as negative, with only 19 percent choosing either of these two answers.

Figure 29: Impact of foreign influence on democracy in Thailand



Q.11

Which of the following statements to you most agree with:
 คุณเห็นด้วยกับข้อความใดมากที่สุด

- External influences can aid in improving Thailand's democracy
 อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศสามารถส่งผลต่อการส่งเสริมพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย
- External influences have no impact on Thailand's democracy
 อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศไม่มีผลกระทบต่อการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย
- Thailand (or Thais) should ignore external influences, particularly those that criticize its democracy
 ประเทศไทย (คนไทย) ควรเพิกเฉยต่ออิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศ โดยเฉพาะกลุ่มที่พากย์วิจารณ์ประชาธิปไตยในประเทศไทย
- External influences harm Thai democracy and should be stopped
 อิทธิพลจากภายนอกประเทศเป็นภัยต่อประชาธิปไตยของไทยและอิทธิพลนี้ควรถูกยับยั้ง
- Don't know
 ไม่ทราบ

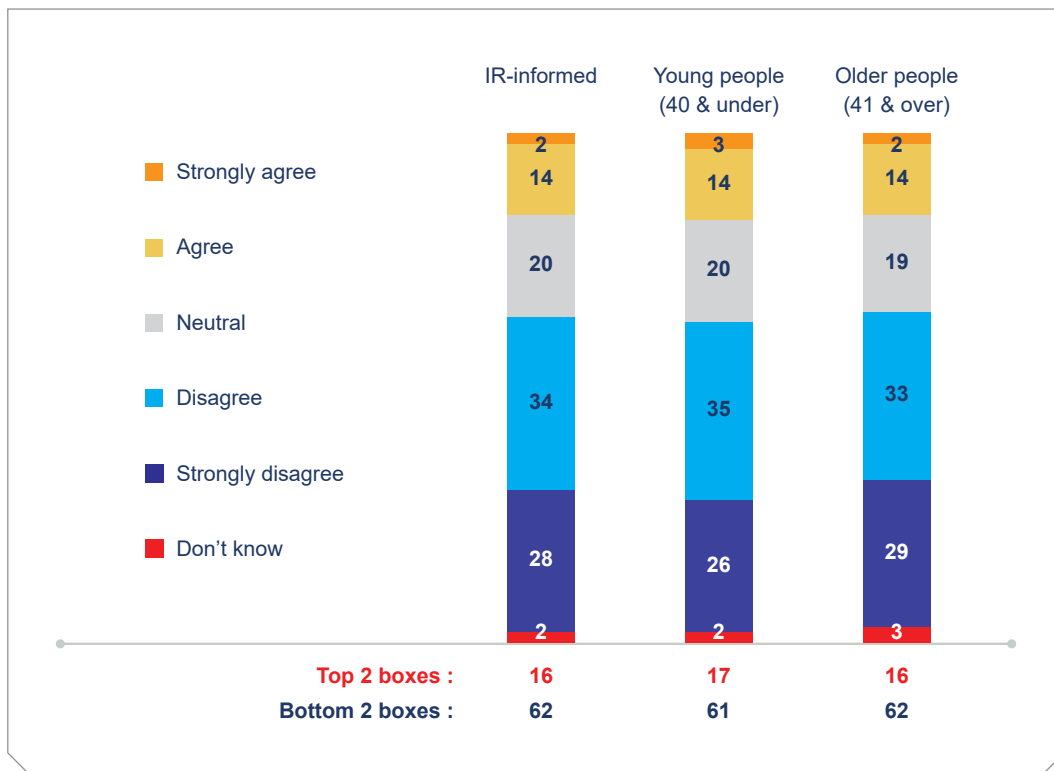
Russian invasion of Ukraine

justified) to invade Ukraine in February 2022.”

Most Thai respondents believe that Russia’s invasion was wrong. The survey included a question asking respondents if they agree with the statement that “Russia was right (or

Only 16 percent of IR-informed people think the invasion was justified, while 62 percent do not think it was justified, a ratio of nearly 4 to 1.

Figure 30: Views on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine



Q.44

Do you agree with this statement: Russia was right (or justified) to invade Ukraine in February 2022?

คุณเห็นด้วยมาก น้อยแค่ไหนกับข้อความต่อไปนี้ “ประเทศรัสเซียมีสิทธิ (มีเหตุผลเพียงพอ) ในการลงมือปฏิบัติการทางทหารกับประเทศยูเครนตั้งแต่เดือนกุมภาพันธ์ 2565”

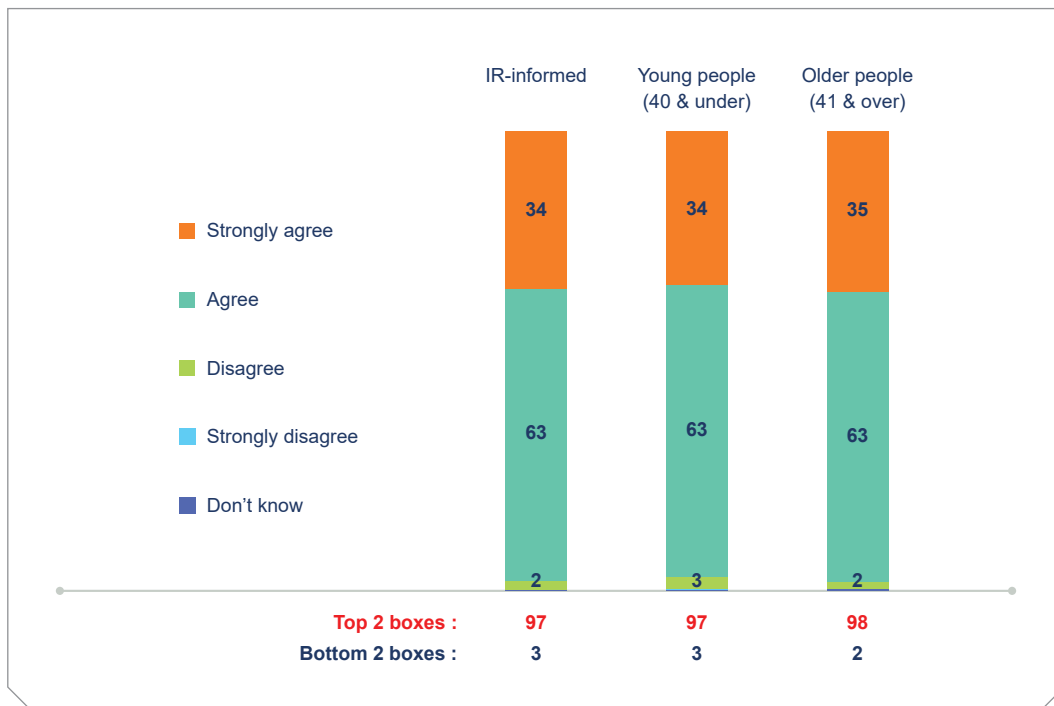
ASEAN and Neighboring States

Does Thailand benefit from ASEAN membership?

Thailand is one of the founding members (1967) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The survey included a question to explore whether the Thai public sees ASEAN membership as beneficial for Thailand.

An overwhelming proportion (97 percent) of Thai respondents believe ASEAN membership is beneficial for Thailand. More than one-third (34 percent) of IR-informed respondents strongly agree with the statement that Thailand benefits from being a member of ASEAN. There is also no significant difference between age groups on this question.

Figure 31: Benefit from ASEAN membership



Q.46

Thailand benefits from being a member of the ASEAN – What do you think?
 คุณเห็นด้วยหรือไม่ว่า ประเทศไทยได้รับประโยชน์จากการเป็นสมาชิกอาเซียน (ASEAN)

Trust levels with ASEAN member states

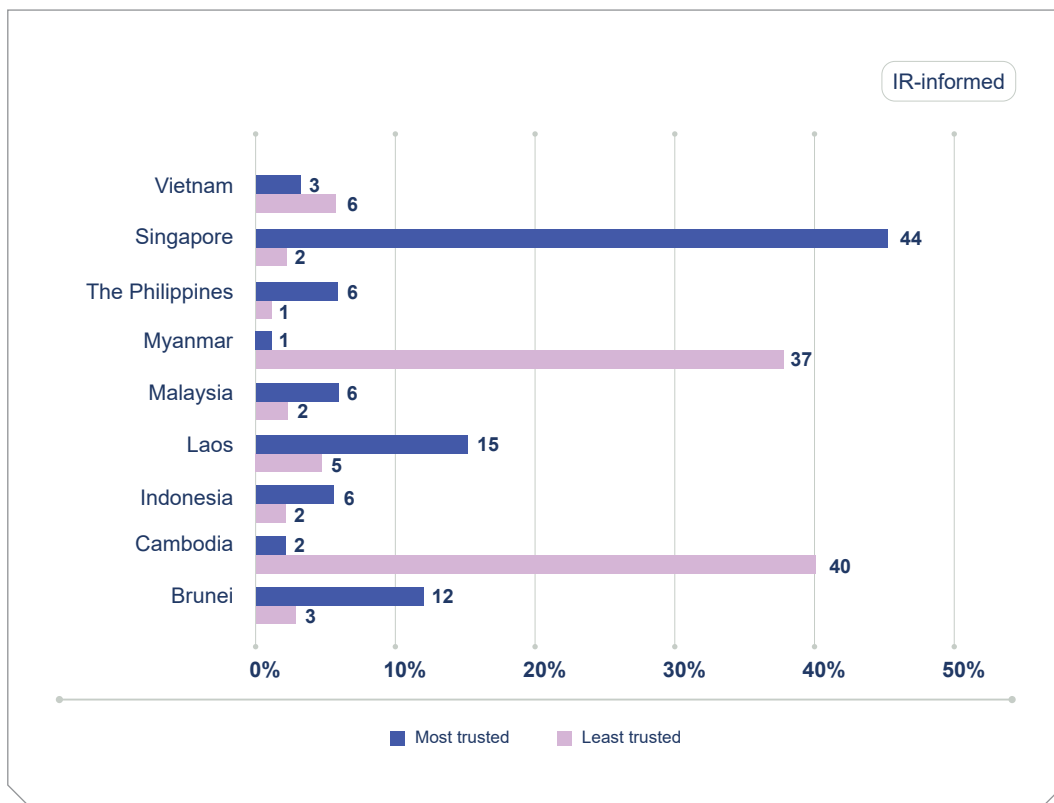
Thailand has long-standing and sometimes complex relations with other countries in Southeast Asia. The survey included a question asking respondents to rate their level of trust in the other nine ASEAN member states. Figure 32 shows the percentage of respondents who rate each country as either the most (blue) or least (purple) trusted country for Thailand.

Thai people have a remarkably high level of trust in Singapore compared to other ASEAN member states. 44 percent of IR-informed respondents identify Singapore as the most trusted country. Given that only two percent see Singapore as the least trusted, this is a positive trust gap of 42.

By contrast, respondents identify Cambodia and Myanmar as the least trusted countries. Cambodia has a negative trust gap of 38, as 40 percent of IR-informed respondents see it as the least trusted country, while only 2 percent see it as the most trusted country. Myanmar has a negative trust gap of 36, with 37 percent of respondents identifying Thailand's western neighbor as the least trusted and only one percent seeing it as the most trusted.

The low levels of trust in Myanmar and Cambodia may be a result of close proximity and of the security and political irritants that are often shared by neighboring countries. However, Laos also borders Thailand but does not suffer among respondents from close proximity. 15 percent identify Laos as the most trusted country and 5 percent as the least trusted. This gives Laos a positive trust gap of 10, second only to Singapore.

Figure 32: Trust levels with ASEAN member states



Q.47

In your opinion, which of the following ASEAN member countries are most and least trusted by Thailand.

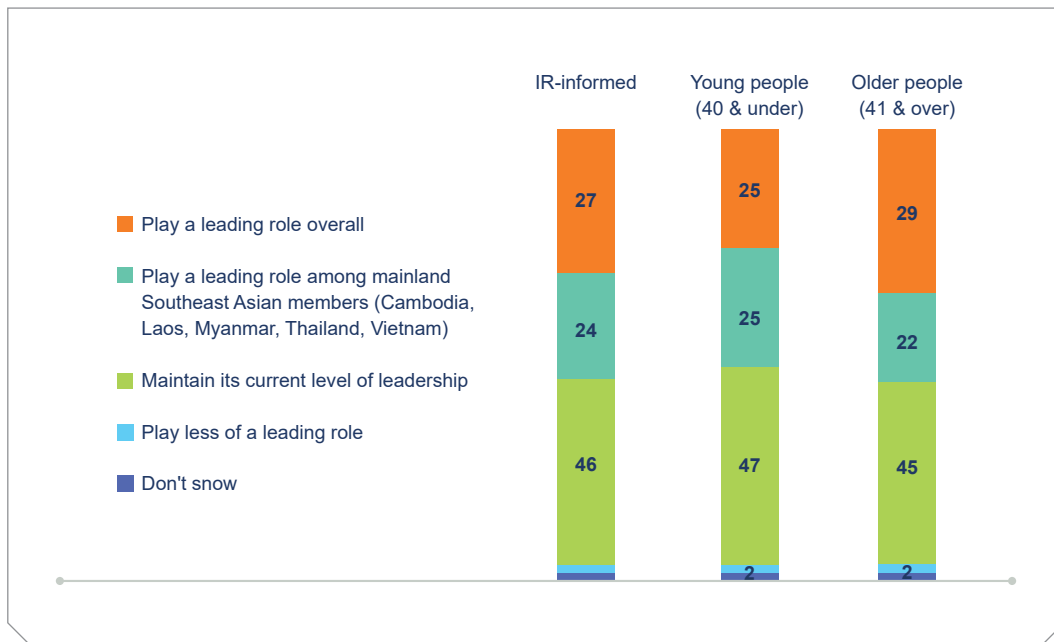
ในความเห็นของคุณ ประเทศใดในกลุ่มอาเซียนที่ ประเทศไทยให้ความเชื่อมั่นและไว้วางใจได้มากที่สุด และประเทศใดในกลุ่มอาเซียนที่ ประเทศไทยให้ความเชื่อมั่นและไว้วางใจได้น้อยที่สุด (คำตอบเดียวในแต่ละกรณี)

Thai leadership in ASEAN

Roughly half of IR-informed Thais would like to see Thailand take a greater leadership role in the region. The survey asked respondents to express their preference for the future of Thai leadership in ASEAN. While a plurality (46 percent) of IR-informed respondents would like to see Thailand maintain its

current level of leadership, 51 percent would like to see Thailand play a leading role in ASEAN (27 percent) or among neighboring countries (24 percent). Only 2 percent think that Thailand should reduce its level of leadership in the region. These findings are a clear indication that the Thai public is supportive of more engaged and meaningful Thai leadership in the region.

Figure 33: Thailand's regional leadership



Q.45

Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand should
ภายในกลุ่มประเทศอาเซียน (ASEAN), ประเทศไทยควรมีบทบาทอย่างไร

- Play a leading role overall
แสดงบทบาทเป็นผู้นำของกลุ่มประเทศในอาเซียนทั้งหมด
- Play a leading role among mainland Southeast Asian members (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)
แสดงบทบาทเป็นผู้นำในกลุ่มประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ภาคพื้นดินใหญ่ (เฉพาะประเทศที่อยู่บนแผ่นดินของคาบสมุทรอินโดจีน) คือ กัมพูชา ลาว เมียนมาร์ ไทย และเวียดนาม
- Maintain its current level of leadership
รักษาสถานะภาพระดับความเป็นผู้นำเท่าที่เป็นอยู่ในปัจจุบัน
- Play less of a leading role
ลดบทบาทของระดับความเป็นผู้นำจากที่เป็นอยู่ในปัจจุบัน
- Don't know
ไม่ทราบ (ไม่อ่าน/ไม่แสดงการ์ด)

Thai support for neighboring countries

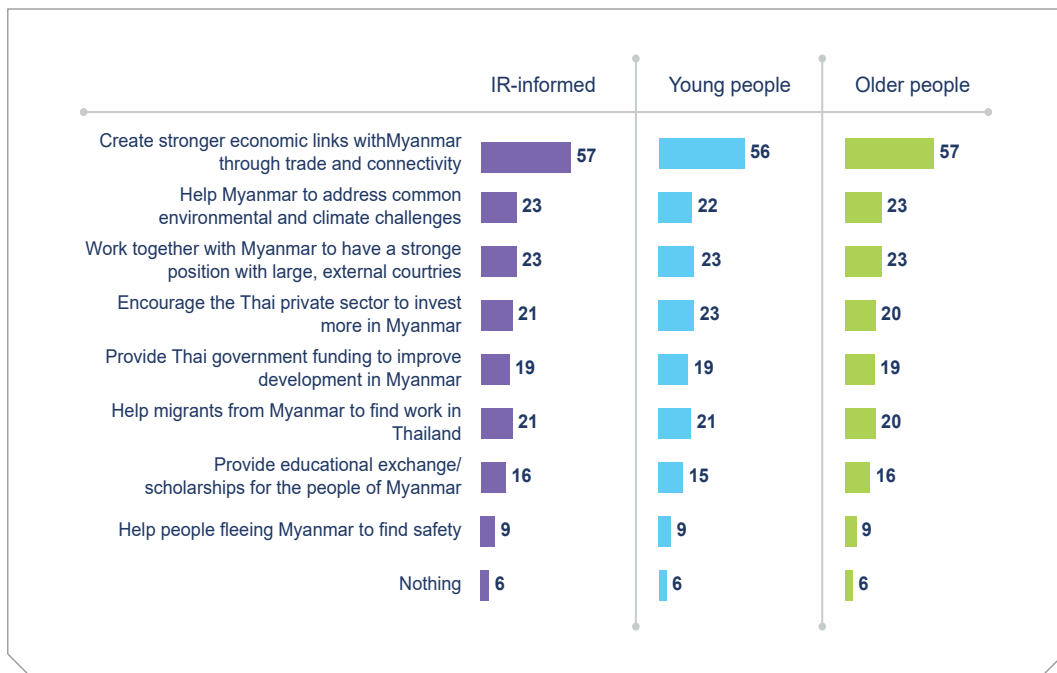
Thailand plays a crucial role in helping to support neighboring countries, such as Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. Thailand has long been an economic engine for the region, providing a moderately large market for trade and employment for millions of migrants. Thailand has also supported refugees and displaced communities for decades and has provided modest humanitarian assistance. The survey included a series of questions asking Thai respondents how the Thai Government should support neighboring countries.

Notably, only a tiny minority of respondents believe Thailand should not assist neighboring

countries; 6 percent of IR-informed respondents prefer that the Thai Government do nothing to support Myanmar. Similarly, only 11 percent of IR-informed respondents for Cambodia, and only 4 percent for Laos, would prefer that Thailand do nothing to assist.

For all three neighboring countries, Thai respondents believe that the best strategy would be to deepen economic links. Roughly 20 percent of respondents would like to see the Thai Government aid migrants from these countries, and an additional 9 percent believe Thailand should prioritize helping Myanmar citizens who are fleeing the civil war in their country.

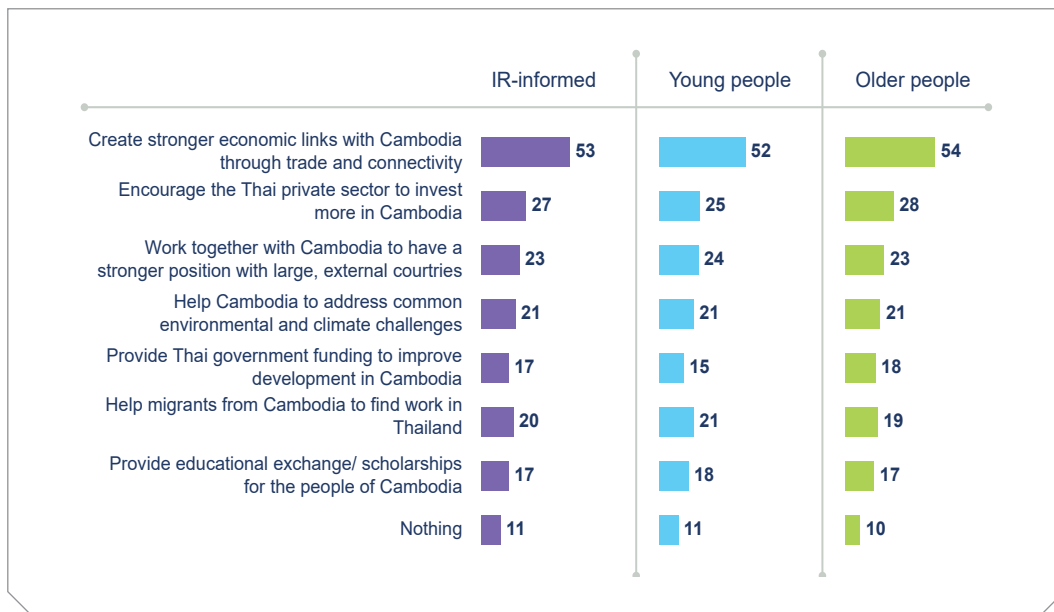
Figure 34: Thailand assistance for Myanmar



Q.50

What should Thailand do to assist neighboring countries: Myanmar (Top 2)
 ประเทศไทยควรทำอย่างไรในการที่จะให้ความช่วยเหลือประเทศเพื่อนบ้าน ขอคุณช่วย
 เลือกความช่วยเหลือ 2 รายการที่ประเทศไทยควรทำให้ประเทศเมียนมาร์

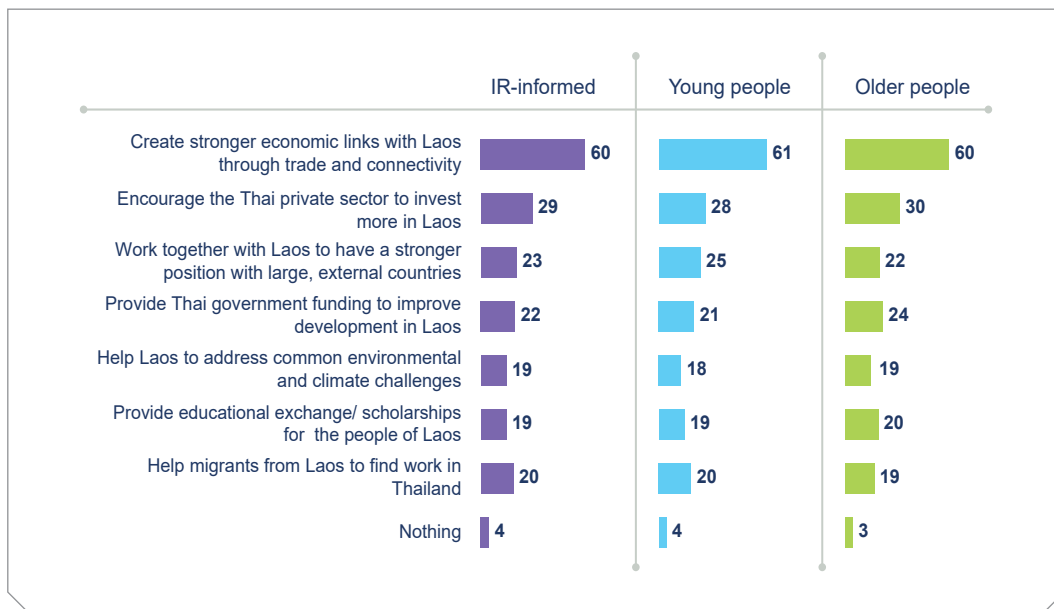
Figure 35: Thailand assistance for Cambodia



Q.50a

What should Thailand do to assist neighboring countries: Cambodia (Top 2)
 ประเทศไทยควรทำอย่างไรในการที่จะให้ความช่วยเหลือประเทศเพื่อนบ้าน ขอคุณช่วยเลือกความช่วยเหลือ 2 รายการที่ประเทศไทยควรทำให้ประเทศกัมพูชา

Figure 36: Thailand assistance for Laos



Q.50b

What should Thailand do to assist neighboring countries: Laos (Top 2)
 ประเทศไทยควรทำอย่างไรในการที่จะให้ความช่วยเหลือประเทศเพื่อนบ้าน ขอคุณช่วยเลือกความช่วยเหลือ 2 รายการที่ประเทศไทยควรทำให้ประเทศ สปป ลาว

Foreign Policy Priorities for the New Thai Government

Ranking of foreign policy priorities

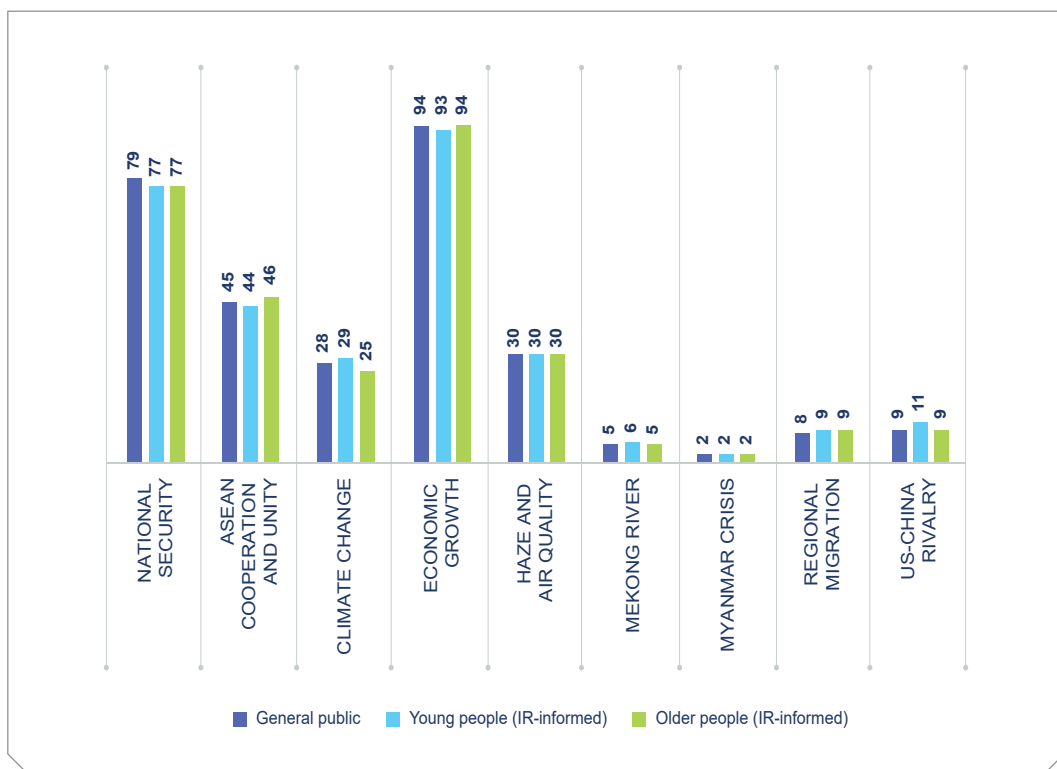
Respondents were asked to identify their highest priorities for Thai foreign policy under the new Pheu Thai-led government. Figure 36 shows the percentage of respondents who rank each area among their top three priorities.

Unsurprisingly, economic growth and national security are the highest priorities by a wide margin. 94 percent of the general public identifies economic growth as the highest priority, along with 93 percent of IR-informed respondents. This finding aligns closely with the Government’s stated priorities. 79 percent of the general public

respondents identify national security as the highest priority.

Three areas that are often seen by foreign experts as crucial for this region – the U.S.-China rivalry, the Myanmar crisis, and the Mekong River – are rated as very low priorities by respondents. The U.S.-China rivalry is a top-three priority for only 9 percent of the general public and 10 percent of IR-informed respondents. Remarkably, the Myanmar crisis is a top priority for only 2 percent of both general public and IR-informed respondents. Similarly, the Mekong River is a priority for only 5 percent of respondents in the general public and among the IR-informed.

Figure 37: Priorities for Thai foreign policy



Q.51

What do you think should be the most important foreign policy priorities for the newly elected Thai government (top 3 choices)

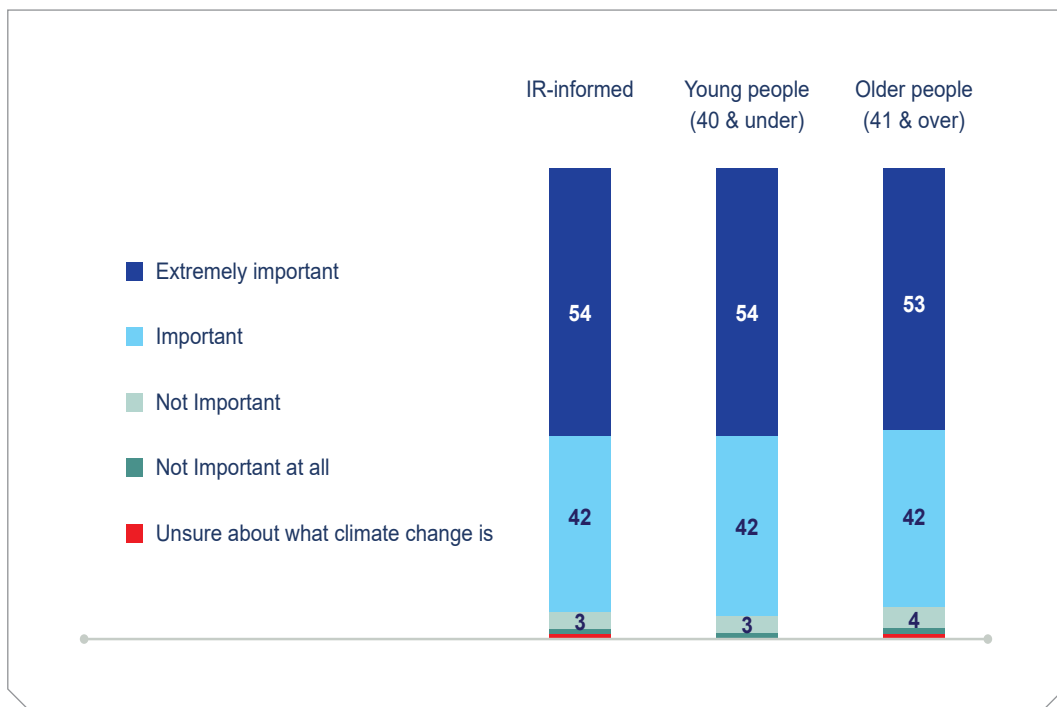
นโยบายต่างประเทศใดที่สำคัญที่สุด 3 อันดับแรก ที่รัฐบาลชุดที่เพิ่งแต่งตั้งใหม่นี้ต้องทำ โดยเริ่มจากจากนโยบายที่ควรทำเป็นอันดับแรก

IR-informed Thai people who see international relations changing would like to see Thailand more involved in ASEAN (41 percent), followed by greater engagement with global challenges (37 percent). Few Thais think neighboring countries should be the focus of Thai foreign policy.

Climate Change

An overwhelming majority (96 percent) of IR-informed respondents think climate change is important or extremely important, with more than half identifying climate change as extremely important (54 percent). Figure 37 shows that the Thai public is convinced that this issue should be a high priority for the next government. Table 4 shows how respondents would like to see the new government address climate change.

Figure 38: Importance of climate change

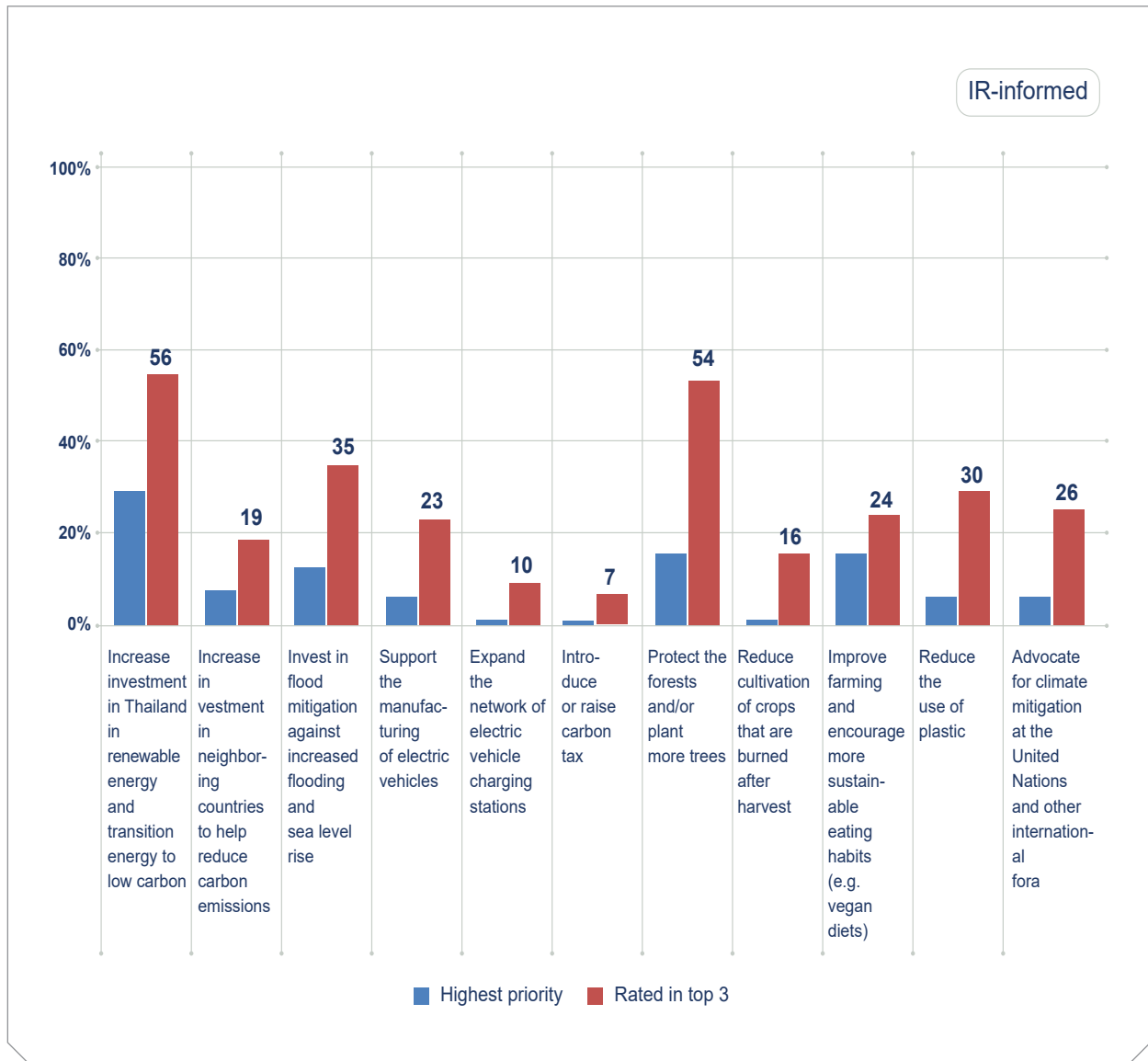


Q.12

Now I am going to change focus and talk about the environment and climate change. How important do you think climate change should be for the next government?

ส่วนต่อไปนี่ ดิฉัน/ผมจะขอเปลี่ยนหัวข้อและพูดคุยกันเรื่องสิ่งแวดล้อมและการเปลี่ยนแปลงสภาพภูมิอากาศ คุณคิดว่ารัฐบาลชุดใหม่ควรให้ความสำคัญต่อการการเปลี่ยนแปลงสภาพภูมิอากาศมาก น้อยแค่ไหน

Figure 39: Policy priorities for addressing climate change



Q.13

How can the government best address climate change (rank three)
 รัฐบาลควรจัดการเรื่องสิ่งแวดล้อมและการเปลี่ยนแปลงสภาพภูมิอากาศอย่างไร กรุณา
 เลือกประเด็นที่คุณคิดว่ารัฐบาลควรให้ความสำคัญที่สุด 3 ประการ



The Asia Foundation

Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities