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How Has Sports Diplomacy Contributed to The Growth of Soft Power and Nation-Branding in Qatar ?

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Abstract

Sports diplomacy and soft power has contributed to national branding in Qatar. This paper sought to explore the contributions of sports diplomacy to national branding and soft power in Qatar through qualitative methods, where respondents were recruited purposively. The sample size for this study was seven participants drawn from various sectors and positions in Qatar. Data were collected using interviews and analyzed thematically. Therefore, to realize this aim, the research was anchored on the fundamental questions of using sports diplomacy to achieve national branding, soft power, and promotes human rights. The study further examined criticisms against Qatar during the FIFA World Cup. The research relied on qualitative methods, where respondents were recruited purposively. The sample size for this study was seven participants drawn from various sectors and positions in Qatar. Data were collected using interviews and analyzed thematically. Key findings outlined that sports diplomacy enhances Qatar's attractiveness and image within the global community context. Sports highlight a nation's culture, identity, and ranking internationally. Through sports mega-events like the FIFA World Cup, Qatar has promoted its cohesion, integration, interaction, and togetherness with other countries globally. Sports diplomacy in Qatar has significantly contributed to realizing social, political, and economic ties with the global system. Sports mega-events like the FIFA World Cup influence diplomatic and soft power exercise through greater international visibility. Qatar was able to project its image as a developed, peaceful, and largely stable country in the Middle East region.

Introduction:

For the past decades, Qatar has relied on soft power, the power of the image, information highways, and digital technology, as a more protective and practical than hard power, force, and brutal force in today's globalized world. The Gulf Emirate has chosen to use sports diplomacy for domestic and international purposes, making it one of the primary levers in this process. Therefore, sports play a significant role in Qatar's branding strategy, which combines social, political, and economic activities.¹

Unlike other nations in Middle East, Qatar chooses to use sport as its primary vector and point of differentiation to neutralize its weaknesses in the political sector and become a leader in this sector. The approach has enabled Qatar to achieve strategic branding opportunities for global visibility in national and international sports. In this context, organizing major international events is the first component of Qatar's national branding strategy. Qatar hosted the World Cup, one of the most influential media events in sports history, with over 5 billion viewers worldwide.²

¹ Algan, E., & Kaptan, Y. (2021). Turkey's TV celebrities as cultural envoys: The role of celebrity diplomacy in nation branding and the pursuit of soft power. *Popular Communication*, 19(3), 222-234.

² Antwi-Boateng, O., & Alhashmi, A. A. (2022). The emergence of the United Arab Emirates as a global soft power: Current strategies and future challenges. *Economic and Political Studies*, 10(2), 208-227.

In this article three sets of objectives are presented: 1) To explore the link between sports diplomacy and Qatar's international image improvement using sports mega-events; 2) To find out how sports diplomacy has been utilized to realize soft power in Qatar; and 3) To recommend appropriate ways for strengthening national branding, human rights, and soft power in Qatar

This article provides a foundation for understanding sports diplomacy dynamics, as Qatar practices. In addition, the application of soft power is characterized by some diplomatic challenges, such as policy harmonization and power imbalances. The findings are integral in soliciting positive and realistic approaches to sports diplomacy to support Qatar's international visibility and strategic interests. Moreover, the findings would help stakeholders develop relevant policies to enhance the country's national branding through soft power and sports diplomacy. Stakeholders can compare different factors and approaches to achieve solid, focused sports diplomacy. The findings provide present and future sports scholars interested in sports diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power in entrenching and firming global visibility.

Literature review:

This section presents a literature review on the Article. It examines explicitly and reviews the literature on sports diplomacy, nation branding, soft power, and international relations machinations. The chapter also draws from a wide range of literature to point out the various perspectives on sports diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power in international relations. In addition, the section highlights the gaps in literature and research questions developed from the review.

Qatar and Small State Politics:

As an illustration of a small state involved in sports diplomacy activities, this study focuses on Qatar. According to Kandakkeel³ and Dubinsky⁴, Qatar is tiny (in terms of people and landmass) but disproportionately significant in terms of politics and economy. Having long been under the rule of multiple empires, including the Ottoman, Persian, and Portuguese, Qatar has undergone substantial transformation in the previous century. After being a British protectorate, Qatar has been governed by an absolute monarchy since its independence from the United Kingdom. This country is one of the six member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which was formed to help provide a stable political and economic environment for regional and national growth.

Similarly, Algan and Kaptan, Rookwood and Adeosun, and Teetzel and Dichter noted that other members of the GCC include Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The authors emphasize that Qatar is ranked 44th in landmass out of Asia's 51 states, with a total area of 4,416 square miles. Comparably, with 2.6 million people, it ranks in the 45th position of the most populous country across the continent.⁵

In supporting Algan and Kaptan, Teetzel and Dichter, and Haghirian and Robles-Gil⁶ state that Blue-collar expatriate workers make up 90% of this community, they have been enticed to the government's growing job opportunities in the recent years. Qatar is one of the wealthiest nations in the world despite its relatively small population and geographical scope. Furthermore, Haghirian and Robles - Gil and Dubinsky⁷ point out that Qatar's GDP per capita is currently more than twice that of the United States' GDP at £ 96,827.

³ Kandakkeel, I. I. (2020). *Meeting the demands of classic and contemporary – a study on the traditional representations of Qatari heritage in nation branding, with special reference to mainstream logos and social media analysis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar).

⁴ Dubinsky, Y. (2019a). *From soft power to sports diplomacy: A theoretical and conceptual discussion*. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 15, 156-164.

⁵ Lee Ludvigsen, J. A., Rookwood, J., & Parnell, D. (2022). *The sport mega-events of the 2020s: Governance, impacts and controversies*. *Sport in Society*, 25(4), 705-711.

⁶ Haghirian, M., & Robles-Gil, P. (2021). *Soft power and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar: Learning from experiences of past mega-sporting event hosts*. *Tajseer Journal*, 3(2).

⁷ Ibid.

The primary source of these riches is the export of crude oil and liquefied natural gas. Qatar ranks third among the largest distributors of crude oil worldwide and ranks as the largest supplier of liquefied natural gas globally.

Sport, Soft Power, and Nation Branding:

Analysis of the main drivers behind nation-states' participation in transnational sports and hosting related events refers to external and internal motivations. According to Haghirian and Robles-Gil and Antwi-Boateng and Alhashmi, by participating in transnational sports, Qatar attempt to create a national narrative while hosting sport-related events is one of the factors that influence and make connections across economic divisions and political borders. Power is among the most persistent factors influencing international relations.⁸

In a world where economic and political environments constantly change, states must cooperate across borders due to increased globalization processes and developments. On the other hand, Chadwick et al. (2022), Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), and Grix et al. (2019) contend that conventional "hard power" strategies for influencing relations across national boundaries remain a substantial part of the global political landscape. Hard power refers to coercive methods, usually involving the use of force and financial incentives to affect the policies or actions of other political entities. The observations of Chadwick et al. (2022) are corroborated by Grix et al. (2021), who noted that there has been a decline in the belief that, in international politics, employing force is the only realistic means of achieving objectives. Soft power, as opposed to physical power, is based on luring and co-opting other people to share desires.⁹

Mega-Events in Sports, Nation Branding, and Soft Power:

Sporting mega-events are becoming increasingly important for modern businesses, societies, nations, and athletes. Scholars across multiple disciplines, including tourism, economics, politics, and sociology, have studied these events. For example, Haghirian and Robles-Gil (2021), Kandakkeel (2020), and Næss (2023) provide evidence on mega-events and modernity that greatly enhance the comprehension of the historical and cultural value of these competitions as expressions of popular culture. In this regard, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are placed within the context of tourism, examining their political, economic, and cultural roles. Additionally, Grix et al. (2019) looked at the events' remarkable status due to their enormous scope, dramatic quality, frequency, and global importance - all of which contribute to their enduring mass popularity in modernity - continuing in an era of globalization. As people worldwide show more interest in significant events like the Olympic Games and World Cup, seen through profitable deals and TV contracts, media coverage, and high viewer ratings, small businesses in a hosting country are seen as valuable chances to gain influence through soft power. These purchases may be related to accomplishing goals stated by public diplomacy and nation branding experts. Similarly, Richelieu et al. (2021) and Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022) contend that large-scale events offer countries significant opportunities to connect with and affect international audiences through public diplomacy. There are potential adverse outcomes in the context of soft power and its association with soft disempowerment. For instance, diplomatic crises within the realm of international relations may emerge. Such cases could harm the reputation of a country.¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Chadwick, S., Widdop, P., & Burton, N. (2022). Soft power sports sponsorship – A social network analysis of a new sponsorship form. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 21(2), 196-217.

¹⁰ Richelieu, A., Lin, Y. C., & Leng, H. K. (2021). A typology of countries using place branding through sport. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1-19.

One of the earliest activities people have engaged in for enjoyment is sport, which involves entertainment and minimizing conflicts. According to Li and Feng, Richelieu¹¹ et al. and Rofe and Postlethwaite,¹² even if the history of modern sports spectacles began in Ancient Greece, the internationalized sports world of today is far more complicated than before. However, the sport still has a significant influence on public life. Sports have developed into a "truly global" industry that attracts billions of fans, players, and coaches and makes substantial money. The assertions are supported by Rookwood (2019), who pointed out that sports have long been a tool used by governments and those in power to demonstrate authority outside the limits of the game. The concept of sports diplomacy is evident in the way countries politicize sports in the global arena. Similarly, Antwi-Boateng and Alhashmi, Lee Ludvigsen et al.¹³ and Chadwick et al.¹⁴ noted that a burgeoning area of academic and civic society interest, sports diplomacy uses sport to accomplish specific goals, reduce conflict and animosity, and promote friendly interactions amongst strangers. Sports diplomacy entails the non-state and state players' purposeful and planned use of sporting events, athletes, and sports-related activities to influence public opinion among local and global audiences in a way that reinforces the objectives of the former. Regarding reducing political and social unrest, sports, like high culture, music, and arts, are valuable diplomatic soft power tools.

High-Level Athlete Naturalization:

The naturalization of athletes who were born outside of a state is a practice that is becoming more and more common among nations looking to improve their international standing through sports. According to Lee Ludvigsen et al.¹⁵, naturalization grants citizenship to athletes without apparent connection to the state. High-level athletes' naturalization is a win-win situation for athletes from highly competitive and weaker sporting nations.¹⁶ Naturalization programs, though filled with controversy regarding the alleged commercialization of citizenship, enable states to take advantage of foreign-born elite athletes' accomplishments to boost competitiveness and global prestige by producing medal tables and FIFA world rankings. The observations are supported by Li and Feng (2022), Kramareva and Grix (2021), and Kandakkeel (2020), who reported that elite sportspersons are given an easier route to international competition participation when they play for less competitive nations with underdeveloped domestic sports systems. Naturalizing foreign-born athletes is prevalent in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as Bahrain and Qatar, which want to draw skilled foreign-born individuals to balance their relatively small native populations. Regarding Qatar, the naturalization of elite athletes illustrates the Emirate's goal to raise its (perceived) athletic talent in international competitions and enhance its reputation worldwide, ultimately acquiring further socio-cultural and economic advantages.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Rofe, J. S., & Postlethwaite, V. (2021). *Scholarship and sports diplomacy: The cases of Japan and the United Kingdom*. *Diplomatica*, 3(2), 363-385.

¹³ Lee Ludvigsen, J. A., Rookwood, J., & Parnell, D. (2022). *The sport mega-events of the 2020s: Governance, impacts and controversies*. *Sport in Society*, 25(4), 705-711.

¹⁴ Chadwick, S., Widdop, P., & Burton, N. (2022). *Soft power sports sponsorship – A social network analysis of a new sponsorship form*. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 21(2), 196-217.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Li, X., & Feng, J. (2022). *Nation branding through the lens of soccer: Using a sports nation branding framework to explore the case of China*. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(4), 1118-1138.

The literature review has highlighted the attempts by states to tap sports mega—events, including the FIFA World Cup, to realize greater global visibility. As previously discussed, hosting internationally significant sporting events is a crucial component of Qatar's sports diplomacy. Studies, such as Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022), Kandakkeel (2020), and Haghirian and Robles-Gil (2021), have highlighted that it helps to protect the culture of the Emirate and position itself as a desirable place to hire white—collar workers, a hub for foreign investments, and a desirable travel destination, all of which support the long-term setup of economic diversification.

The FIFA World Cup aimed to introduce visitors worldwide to what the Emirate offers and bring sports enthusiasts and fans an unforgettable experience in Qatar. For this reason, the Emirate hopes to capitalize on the vast media attention in order to have a permanent window for international promotion.¹⁷

However, the reviewed literature needs to acknowledge that Qatar's initiative to host major events, such as the FIFA World Cup, is not just a marketing tool. The initiative also helped set the Emirate apart from other GCC nations. In this sense, the Emirate's actions might be seen as a tactic to get white-collar professionals the upper hand over international travel investments from highly industrialized civilizations, in addition to assisting it in cultivating goodwill and connections with potential rivals and worldwide allies. The reviewed literature must present the processes and dynamics of sports diplomacy through soft power to enhance

nation branding. The present study addresses these literature gaps by examining different stakeholder perspectives on sports diplomacy, emerging issues, and balancing national interests and global visibility due to sports mega-events.

Materials and Methods:

This section delineates the methods applied to realize the aim regarding the contribution of sports diplomacy to the growth of soft power and nation branding in Qatar. It presents specific qualitative techniques adopted by the theses. Thus extensively discusses the research philosophy, design, approach, sample selection, data collection, and data analysis framework.

The researcher explores subjective data concerning the contribution of sports diplomacy to the growth of soft power and nation-branding in Qatar. As outlined by Bhangu et al. (2023) and Johnson et al. (2020), interpretivism allows researchers to scrutinize and assess datasets from various perspectives, considering experts' ideas, thoughts, and viewpoints. Based on comprehension of the phenomenon studied, the researcher made well-informed decisions.¹⁸ The researcher used the interpretivism paradigm to investigate methodologically the contribution of sports diplomacy to the growth of soft power and nation-branding in Qatar. This paradigm made it easier to investigate many points of view and interpretations, which improved the generation of trustworthy and quality results and conclusions.

¹⁷ Kramareva, N., & Grix, J. (2021). *Understanding public diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power in showcasing places via sports mega-events*. In N. Papadopoulos, & M. Cleveland (Eds.), *Marketing countries, places, and place-associated brands* (pp. 298-318). Edward Elgar Publishing.

¹⁸ Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). *A review of the quality indicators of rigor in qualitative research*. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 84(1).

As such, through an interpretivism philosophy, this study will seek to understand the world the way it is through subjective experiences that are presented by respondents on the contributions of sports diplomacy to the development of national branding and soft power in Qatar.

The Article aims to assess the contribution of sports diplomacy to the growth of soft power and nation branding in Qatar. In addition, it concentrates on comprehending how Qatar has continuously used sports diplomacy to enhance its international diplomacy. The case study design was selected because it can gather information from the sample of participants at a particular time, giving a snapshot of their perspectives and experiences with sports diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power, as applied in Qatar. By applying qualitative data, this case study technique enables a thorough analysis of the research topic and aims.¹⁹ The objective of the qualitative component, based on the interpretive research philosophy, is to investigate the subjective meanings that workers assign to their working conditions. Participants expressed their ideas and emotions in-depth via semi-structured interviews, offering insightful information on soft power's benefits, difficulties, and motives in the context of nation branding and sports diplomacy.

The current study examined participants' reflections using a case study of Qatar. The study used the case of Qatar to explore the dynamics of sports diplomacy, national branding, and soft power. Therefore, this research was limited to the organization, planning, activities, and

perspectives regarding the FIFA World Cup edition in Qatar. When the term qualitative is used, it highlights the methods, characteristics, and interpretations used in studies that do not involve experimental methods.

This study utilized the purposive sampling technique to create its sample. According to Basias and Pollalis (2018), this method, classified as non-probability sampling, selects participants according to their familiarity with, understanding, and knowledge of a specific study issue. The study participants were selected based on evident connection to the topic under investigation, prior research expertise, policy experiences, and active participation in numerous sports activities.²⁰ The researcher only recruited participants with in-depth knowledge of sports diplomacy, the application of soft power, and nation branding articulation. Swygart—Hobaugh (2019) observed that purposive sampling allows researchers to reach and obtain in-depth data from participants with firsthand experiences. Therefore, the sampling method was appropriate and focused on achieving the stated research questions and providing empirical findings.²¹

In pursuit of its objectives, this study employed in-depth interviews. These in-depth, unstructured, and intimate interviews aimed to gain insights into participants' thoughts, emotions, and opinions regarding a specific research topic. The primary benefit of conducting interviews in person is that it allows for direct and personal communication between interviewers and respondents, which reduces the non-response rate. However, Busetto et al. (2020) state that to

¹⁹ Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2, 1-10.

²⁰ Basias, N., & Pollalis, Y. (2018). Quantitative and qualitative research in business & technology: Justifying a suitable research methodology. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 7, 91-105.

²¹ Swygart-Hobaugh, M. (2019). Bringing method to the madness: An example of integrating social science qualitative research methods into NVivo data analysis software training. *Iassist Quarterly*, 43(2), 1-16.

conduct a successful interview, interviewers must have the necessary skills. Moreover, semi-structured interviews allow for more flexibility in the interview process and can lead to conclusions regarding a research topic that was not previously planned. Thus, it is essential to note that the interview may deviate from the predefined goals and objectives of the study.²²

As reported in Qatar, the interview schedule contained four broad research questions on sports diplomacy, soft power, and nation branding. Basias and Pollalis (2018) state that the interview schedule permits participants to provide relevant answers to the issues sought by including clear and unambiguous questions. In conducting the interviews, the researcher probed respondents to get deeper insights into the main questions.²³

The interviews were conducted in a safe and private environment, as Köhler et al. (2022) and Hamilton and Finley (2019) emphasized. Providing security in interview locations allows respondents to answer questions freely without fearing interference from intruders.²⁴ Each interview lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. The interview schedule contains the following questions:

1. How did you feel about Qatar's successful bid to host the World Cup in 2022?
2. Do you believe the hosting of this event was successful?
3. What relationships (internationally) have been cultivated due to hosting the World Cup?
4. What is your response to the criticism that has emerged during the World Cup about Qatar's human rights record?

Findings and Analysis:

The data analysis yielded four broad themes regarding the contributions of sports diplomacy to nation branding and soft power in the context of Qatar. The themes include sports diplomacy and global recognition, successes and challenges associated with events in Qatar, sports diplomacy and nation branding, criticisms, soft power entrenchment, and sports diplomacy. The main themes are extensively elucidated in the following subsections.

Theme 1: Sports Diplomacy and Global Recognition

The theme highlighted the benefits of organizing sporting events like FIFA World in realizing global recognition and attention. Respondents noted that the successful bid and eventual hosting of the FIFA World Cup ushered Qatar to the worldwide stage through carefully crafted social, cultural, technological, and political messages for the international audience. The FIFA World Cup is attended and watched by many people across the globe.

The study outlined that the FIFA World Cup contributed significantly to Qatar's development. The responses indicate that holding the FIFA World Cup by Qatar was a huge milestone in all life spheres, including cultural, social, technological, and political development in the global arena. Qatar has a unique culture, and social ties displayed to the world during the FIFA World Cup and beyond. Winning the bid to host the mega event allowed the Arab world and Muslims to gain global representation and appeal because many people watch and attend the World Cup. Moreover, hosting the World Cup is a significant achievement for a nation. In the case of Qatar, it transformed and developed the country in record time.

²² Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C., *How to use and assess qualitative research methods* (Heidelberg, Germany, 2020)

²³ Basias, N., & Pollalis, Y. *Quantitative and qualitative research in business & technology* (Piraeus, Greece, 2018)

²⁴ Köhler, T., Smith, A., & Bhakoo, V. (2022). *Templates in qualitative research methods: Origins, limitations, and new directions*. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(2), 183-210.

Qatar provided the international community with the World Cup to remember in the Middle East. A country that hosts or wins this competition feels a pride lasting many years. The global exposure that Qatar experienced is crucial to future international engagements, including economic and political policies. Thus, by hosting the World Cup, Qatar has endeavored to build strong economic ties globally to realize positive transformation. Overall, hosting the FIFA World Cup by Qatar improved Qatar's international recognition and visibility. The responses also highlight the FIFA World Cup's potential contributions to strengthening and diversifying the national economy. Therefore, the FIFA World Cup provided an opportunity to promote Arab hospitality and confront negative misconceptions about Muslim nations, such as Islamophobia and terrorism. The FIFA World Cup propelled Qatar into the global limelight, where it showed national culture and advertised itself as a destination of choice.

Theme 2: Successes and Challenges Associated with Event in Qatar

The analysis showed that hosting the FIFA World Cup in Qatar presented mixed reactions from stakeholders concerning whether things were conducted successfully or failed. The responses indicate that despite Qatar's small size and international stature, it successfully hosted the FIFA World Cup. The FIFA World Cup is more than simply a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to host the World Cup. Respondents hail the World Cup in Qatar as the best due to its unique culture, planning, and execution. Moreover, the Qatari government provided adequate security for people attending the mega event. The organization reflected the hospitality of Qatar and, by extension, the Arab world. The stakeholders' reaction to the

FIFA World Cup is documented to highlight the positive achievements of the Middle Eastern nations. As depicted by the responses, memories from the event could shape future interactions by influencing how individuals respond to comparable circumstances. Thus, the FIFA World Cup held in Qatar acted as an inspiration for creating an entirely new national image and success factors. This event alone has significantly affected Qatar by highlighting its culture and fast-tracking socio-economic development.

The responses show that despite minor hitches in ticket acquisition for the various matches, the FIFA World Cup in Qatar succeeded. The planning and execution of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar ushered the country into the international community through various activities accompanied by its unique culture. The Middle East and the entire Arab world were proud of the mega sports event taking place in Qatar. The event helped Qatar and the world to celebrate unity and diversity. The responses indicate that fans worldwide congregated in Qatar to enjoy and appreciate the country's diversity. Qatar's unique culture and magnificent infrastructure attracted many people from different backgrounds. In addition, the tournament's success is shown in how fans from various regions celebrated together regardless of cultural differences. All people were welcome to visit and enjoy life in Qatar while supporting their teams. Furthermore, the responses showed that many people were surprised to learn about Qatar's capability to host the FIFA World Cup by building standard stadiums, hosting many people, and maintaining law and order. The Qatari government dispelled these fears through proper planning, execution, and management of all its security, management, and social apparatus to ensure the event's success. All individuals attending the FIFA World Cup in Qatar enjoyed security, as

traffic and order were maintained. Therefore, based on the responses of these participants, Qatar successfully staged the FIFA World Cup to the satisfaction and excitement of fans worldwide.

Theme 3: Sports Diplomacy and Nation Branding

Sports diplomacy and national branding emerged as the main themes from the analyzed interview transcripts. Participants indicated that the FIFA World Cup played a significant role in fostering Qatar's brand image internationally.

Respondents underscored the significant role played by Qatar in promoting regional peace through sports and diplomacy. The Qatari government strives to realize regional peace by undertaking mechanisms that bring warring countries to find amicable solutions.

The responses show that by hosting the FIFA World Cup, Qatar received significant global appeal due to its unique cultural heritage and natural fauna, fostering cultural, social, and economic integration. The intangible legacy resulting from the image of Qatar is one of the primary factors encouraging bidding for and hosting the FIFA World Cup. Qatar is situated in one of the world's most volatile areas; hosting events showed its ability to ensure national and regional security. The country utilized the World Cup opportunity to strengthen regional peace, as illustrated in its efforts to mediate the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. Although Qatar has a small territory, persistent diplomacy has strengthened international relations. Since hosting the FIFA World Cup, Qatar has been heavily promoting its destination image through event tourism and a plan of significant internal and external expenditures. The nation has developed over time into a center for business and leisure activities in the area, including conferences, festivals, thematic fairs, and sporting events. Beyond this, a significant

portion of a strategy to improve the country's reputation entails substantial investments in high-performance and local sports, allowing the nation to establish the most cutting-edge training facilities.

Furthermore, the connection between sports diplomacy and nation branding was emphasized by study participants. Qatar engaged in several activities before and after the FIFA World Cup to strengthen its brand image globally.

The responses reveal that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar promoted nation branding and displayed the uniqueness of the host nation to the global community. In Qatar, this approach has been strengthened by a policy that involves planning international events to raise regional awareness. Thus, the FIFA World Cup project affected the country and extended well beyond sports. The responses show that the FIFA World Cup was a turning point that permanently placed Qatar and the entire Arab world in the international limelight. The agencies tasked with managing, organizing, and executing the FIFA World Cup and other essential pre- and post-event support infrastructure did commendable work. Therefore, these responses highlight that the FIFA World Cup enhanced Qatar's brand image in international social, economic, technological, political, and cultural realms.

Theme 4: Criticisms, Human Rights, and Sports Diplomacy

The final theme developed from the interview responses was the emerging criticisms, human rights, and sports diplomacy. The respondents in this study pointed out that the planning, organization, and hosting of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar faced some criticisms. Participants emphasize the perspectives despite noting a strong connection between sports diplomacy and soft power elements.

The responses indicate that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar presented some human rights, as noted by participants. The world, particularly the West, focused on Qatar as the World Cup drew near. The responses reveal that the World Cup in Qatar received significant criticism from different quarters, including the Western media. However, such criticism must be constructive and intended to support sustainable growth and development. The criticism should not be based on a smear campaign. Qatar was mainly blamed for the poor handling of human rights. However, the criticisms coming from the Western media failed to recognize that the power and wealth in Western countries are products of exploitation and colonialism. The criticisms particularly sought to undermine Qatar's social fabric. Evidence from the responses suggests that despite these negative criticisms, Qatar overcame and staged the best FIFA World Cup. The host nation used the opportunity to promote the welfare of its workers to enhance overall national development. In addition, it was the first time the World Cup was held in the Middle East, and a developing nation automatically attracted criticism. The responses show that Qatar implemented policies to minimize human rights issues before the FIFA World Cup. The government and all other stakeholders collaborated with multiple ministries to deal with human rights challenges. The World Cup has been a unifying force, bringing people from different countries and cultures together and promoting a shared identity and community.

Discussion:

This section delineates the discussion of the findings presented in the preceding section. It is organized and structured to discuss holistically the overarching issues in the FIFA World Cup in Qatar by appreciating the role of sports diplomacy

in nation branding and human rights. The following key areas have been addressed: sports diplomacy and national branding, cross-cutting issues, sports diplomacy, and human rights. The planning and staging of the World Cup in Qatar influenced and resulted in far-reaching effects on the culture, economy, technology, social, and political arrangements. Moreover, Qatar is the first Arabic nation to plan for and host the FIFA World Cup. Hosting mega events influences the fundamental structures of a country, including economic, social, and political. Hosting the FIFA World Cup helped Qatar diversify its long-term revenue sources and receive enhanced global visibility.

Sports Diplomacy, Engagements, and Image Enhancement:

Being the first Middle Eastern nation to host the FIFA World Cup, Qatar may view the World Cup as one of the major opportunities to gain international recognition. In addition, Qatar is among the smallest nations, with a short football history, and has hot weather. Organizing a mega event despite the hot weather and winning the championships can pave the way for the country to accomplish its geopolitical objectives. However, in this case, people will question the appropriateness of playing games in the current geopolitical atmosphere. More significantly, this event allowed the country to make every effort to set itself apart from other Middle Eastern Gulf nations by showcasing its resources and favorable image at the massive event to attract highly trained workers from major industrialized states to work in Qatar. These findings are corroborated by Kandakkeel (2020), Dubinsky (2019a), Abdi et al. (2022), Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022), and Jeong and Grix (2023), who observed that in 2008, Qatar introduced our National Vision 2030 to turn the nation into a vibrant and sustainable knowledge-based economy.

Since then, the country has been putting much effort into developing Qatar's brand and raising its visibility in the international arena. Qatar has achieved this by hosting mega athletic events, diversifying the economy, promoting human and national development, and mediating international conflicts. Through these efforts, the country has strengthened its capacities and established its credibility as a trustworthy global participant and partner.

Qatar's soft power strategy and image branding are closely linked to its investments in international sports. The findings demonstrated how Qatar's prior branding strategy included supporting peaceful conduct of mega sports events. Qatar aims to raise its profile internationally by being affiliated with a globally recognized team such as FC Barcelona. Similarly, Qatar's involvement in international sports is a crucial component of its soft power and sports diplomacy plans. The FIFA World Cup provided the Qatari government with enormous branding and soft power expansion prospects. Qatar is a highly iconic city and well-known for its arts, culture, and architecture. As a result, it is seen as an attractive country by many people worldwide, contributing to its soft power and international reputation. Qatar sought to become more visible state and influential globally by equating itself world's democratic governments.

The findings revealed that Qatar sought to become a hub for regional and global sports events, as in the FIFA World Cup. The nation has invested significantly in sports activities to promote its image as a preferred destination in the Middle East. The Qatari government has developed various infrastructure projects to support mega sports events. Similar observations are reported by Grix et al. (2015), Næss (2023), and

Richelieu et al. (2021), who pointed out that only over 270,000 native Qataris, exist today, making up 10% of the nation's entire population. The remaining immigrants are all from different countries and frequently travel to Qatar for high-paying jobs. The naturalization approach formerly overused in sports has been gradually modified to prioritize local athletes' development. Despite inequality, Qatar might still be considered a relatively wealthy nation. These findings are reinforced by Chadwick et al. (2022)²⁵ and Ganohariti and Dijkhoorn²⁶ who observed that this is conceivable given the stark disparities in pay between Qatari citizens, who make up roughly 10% of the population but account for the majority of wealth, and migrant workers, who make up over 90% of the labor force. Qatar is currently the world's largest construction site. The local government has sought international recognition from Western nations through significant expenditures in infrastructural development. The findings highlighted that the intangible power sources of a nation, its foreign policies (when they are viewed as morally just and lawful), its political ideals (when it upholds them both at home and abroad), and its culture (where it is appealing to others), to elucidate diplomacy, as expressed in the case of Qatar. Then, these resources ought to be marketed in a way that appeals to entire countries, provided through the following three public diplomacy facets in addition to their governments: consistent communication that serves as a sort of national branding effort, planned communication that corresponds with the media, and other opinion leaders. Establishing viable connections with significant figures over an extended period via exchanges, training, conferences, seminars, and media outlets is paramount.

²⁵ Chadwick, S., Widdop, P., & Burton, N. (2022). Soft power sports sponsorship – A social network analysis of a new sponsorship form. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 21(2), 196-217.

²⁶ Ganohariti, R., & Dijkhoorn, E. (2020). Para-and proto-sports diplomacy of contested territories: CONIFA as a platform for football diplomacy. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 15(3), 329-354.

Sports mega—events, such as the FIFA World Cup, have a powerful emotional impact on host nations and fans worldwide. The event helps people to establish close relationships and learn cultural competence. In this regard, sponsors and hosts could leverage these relationships to enhance public perception and appeal. Qatar has employed various means, including lobbying, to gain international visibility through sports diplomacy. The ultimate goal of the Qatari government is to demonstrate leadership in the era of globalization.

The sports entail various aspects that can be employed to assess its potential impact on politics, in addition to the most efficient means of building relationships and promoting a good reputation, spreading information for state and non-state players as asserted by Lee Luvigsen et al. (2022) and Grix et al. (2015). The two significant reasons as stated in present findings highlight the importance of developing policies with full support from governmental companies and non—profit organizations as well as developing diplomatic relationships. Sports are one activity that can reach a larger worldwide on one hand, as the sports industry is a lot more profitable than most industries on the other hand. Qatar hosted the FIFA World Cup deemed most successful in the history of the mega event. However, Richelieu et al. (2021) and Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022) observed that Qatar has received much criticism from the West resulting due to the tapestry of human issues. It is worth mentioning that China was able to use sports to project an image of itself as a modern power to the world, whereas sports attract a large audience despite confronting a variety of criticism. Nation branding can be enhanced in the host country by utilizing the global audience to the events. The host country is

allowed by a global audience to do national branding and commercial products. Considerably, it is an example of how state increasing national visibility in the international area through diplomacy and soft sport power.^{27, 28}

Sports Mega Events and Diplomatic Nexus:

The present findings show that Qatar has significantly attempted to use sports to promote diplomacy and international relations. As demonstrated by Qatar, there are various observable instances of how sports diplomacy is used in multiple contexts to increase complex power resources and achieve specific national objectives. Qatar has used sports to express its willingness and ability to forge solid global relations for the common good. These findings are corroborated by Taylor et al. (2023), Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), and Rookwood (2019), who observed that Qatar seized the World Cup opportunity to glorify and display its foreign policies to the international community. Despite the small size of Qatar, the government ensured that all individuals attending the mega event were safe and comfortable. Qatar has exploited sports diplomacy to promote and strengthen its security apparatus in a region widely considered unstable and conflict—prone. In addition, Qatar leveraged the FIFA World Cup to realize its diplomatic objectives.

Qatar has attracted foreign countries in this context as it attempts to change its reputation from a threat to international peace. However, Grix and Brannagan (2016), Grix et al. (2019), Haghirian and Robles-Gil (2021), and Antwi-Boateng and Alhashmi (2022) pointed out that although Qatar has made considerable progress in strengthening its international diplomacy to

²⁷ Richelieu, A., Lin, Y. C., & Leng, H. K. (2021). A typology of countries using place branding through sport. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1-19.

²⁸ Lee Ludvigsen, J. A., Rookwood, J., & Parnell, D. (2022). The sport mega-events of the 2020s: Governance, impacts and controversies. *Sport in Society*, 25(4), 705-711.

achieve favorable global outlook in an increasingly competitive international community. The FIFA World Cup is among the most significant and most profitable sports events worldwide, which has an unmatched influence, a global audience, and an attraction for all people. Thus, the interplay between sports and diplomacy continues to be essential in the international arena.

Qatar has employed mega sports events, such as the FIFA World Cup, to enhance its international relations and reinforce international best practices, such as negotiations and observance of international human rights. The emphasis is on shifting from force to attraction and becoming more legitimate, cost-effective, and mighty in international affairs by strategically using its more appealing features. These findings are supported by Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), Næss (2023), Kramareva and Grix (2021), Algan and Kaptan (2021), Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022), and Teetzel and Dichter (2021), who illustrated four persuasion tools employed by public diplomacy are evident in the context of sports. It is representing a case study about the historical overlapping between the sports and international politics in a wide range area such as diplomacy, ideology, nation branding, and access. In this regards, these findings are consistent with Kandakkeel (2020) and Dubinsky (2019) which explained the reasons why governments rely on international sports to attract enthusiastic audiences. It is recognized that hosting international sports might be less cost compared to media campaigns such as TV or programming networks. Thus it is essential to consider sport diplomacy as a tool of soft power and achieving various kind of other set of goals or agendas like communication, interaction and cooperation.

Sports diplomacy entails using athletic events, sports professionals, and athletes to educate, engage, and create a positive image for audiences

and organizations worldwide. These individuals can also share insights to help their government accomplish its foreign policy objectives. Murray says that if the nation uses sports to supplement its foreign policy, its image will change from insignificance and hermetic to embracing efficacy and innovation. Furthermore, sports and sporting organizations' impact, influence, and attractiveness are growing. The findings are supported by Teetzel and Dichter (2021) and Taylor et al. (2023), who observed that hardly anyone who opposes sports activities. Therefore, sports present an excellent avenue for nations to expand their appeal to people. Cultural or sports exchanges, for example, are examples of soft power overtures from governments that are more likely to engage public opinion than hard power diplomacy. The findings are contradicted by Al Thani (2021) and Chadwick et al. (2022), who argued that it is not automatic that sports diplomacy yield good results without proper planning; the event could be counter-productive if an appropriate international agenda is not pushed by the host nation. The beliefs and perspectives of audiences in the international arena can be dramatically changed if the diplomatic message and image are changed to show confidence in sporting values.

The findings revealed that the country converted other stadiums into community amenities, including hotels, schools, and hospitals. A wide range of water and energy-efficient techniques, including solar energy and reusing air conditioning water, have been used in the construction of the stadiums, which have been constructed using recycled and reused materials wherever possible. Thus, by implementing modular stadium models, Qatar has taken steps to ensure that the World Cup stadiums do not become "white elephants," a problem that has often arisen in previous World Cups.

These findings are corroborated by Ganohariti and Dijkhoorn (2020), Næss (2023), and Richelieu et al. (2021), who pointed out that by displaying its state-of-the-art stadiums that are more sustainable and incorporate advanced technology, Qatar demonstrates its commitment to adopting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. This motivates people all over the world to commit to sustainability. Once more, this strategy demonstrates how Qatar uses sports diplomacy to build relationships with other nations. Qatar aims to win over the hearts and minds of people worldwide by concentrating on hosting a sustainable World Cup and giving away portions of their stadiums to other states without access to sports facilities. Qatar also displayed its stadiums and advanced infrastructure to a global audience during the FIFA World Cup.

Human Rights and Sports Diplomacy:

The findings revealed a strong link between sports diplomacy and the enhancement of human rights. The need to respect fundamental human rights is enshrined in international conventions. In this regard, Qatar is bound by these international laws to align its national goals to internally accepted best practices. Qatar, however, is under pressure to demonstrate that its outward portrayal of itself as a liberal and just society is accurate. The findings are supported by Algan and Kaptan (2021), Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), Teetzel and Dichter (2021), Kandakkeel (2020), and Dubinsky (2019a), who reported that aiming towards this objective, reforms like the reorganization of the Kafala system, enhanced migrant worker working conditions, and more female involvement in sports are all actions that will have an influence long after the World Cup is over. Meanwhile, Qatar managed these changes while maintaining its distinct cultural identity. The Qatari government

employed various tactics, including enhancing its diplomatic ties with the international community to successfully hold the FIFA World Cup. However, these findings are contradicted by past studies, such as Wong and Meng-Lewis (2023), Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022), and Grix et al. (2015) that the Emirate of Qatar is still suspected of using a sophisticated web of regional loyalties, football politics, and alliances to win its place as the World Cup hosting country, even if none of the allegations against it have been proven. Despite these assertions, Qatar lost its legitimacy, which cost it credibility and esteem abroad. Qatar has encountered persistent drawbacks in its continuous efforts to resolve these inequities and improve its global image. To refute these accusations, Qatar used the World Cup to show that it adheres to Western morals and standards of conduct in contrast to its neighbors in the area. In addition, Qatar's main goal to host the World Cup was to engage in political performance as a practice by presenting itself as a modern Muslim Arab community to attract other countries.

Qatar's laws and culture regarding gender equality and homosexuality have also drawn harsh criticism from international media outlets, with flogging being employed as a form of punishment for having extramarital affairs. Living together with unmarried people of the opposing sex is forbidden, and same-sex relationships are illegal. It is not appropriate to display affection in public. Though its culture should be respected, Algan and Kaptan (2021), Lee Ludvigsen et al. (2022), and Teetzel and Dichter (2021) stated that Qatar ensures every fan was made to feel welcome during the World Cup. The findings further revealed that the FIFA World Cup proved successful and a critical turning point in Qatar's history.

The event ushered in a momentous occasion with profound cultural and social ramifications, helping them forge a unique identity within the larger Muslim and Arab nations. The World Cup presented fans from various parts of the world to appreciate Qatar's uniqueness. The organizers and planners emphasized respect for cultural diversity. These findings are corroborated by Chadwick et al. (2022), Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), and Grix et al. (2019), who reported that the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, which oversees the tournament's organization and execution, guarantees that everyone will be accepted, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, color, or nationality. Qatar made every effort to guarantee the security and well-being of all fans. The host nation expected fans worldwide to enjoy and experience the scenes and sites in Qatar. In this context, the FIFA World Cup organizers discouraged any form of discrimination that would taint the image of the country. By reassuring the international community that they have nothing to fear when visiting Qatar as long as they respect the host nation's values and traditions, the strategy helps lessen exaggeration and solves their fears. These findings are reinforced by Taylor et al. (2023), Rookwood and Adeosun (2023), and Rookwood (2019), who observed that the Qatar government used diplomatic approaches to handle issues arising from the conduct of the FIFA World Cup. National dignity and respect were maintained to attract many fans from other countries. Events such as corruption, brought to light by Western media outlets and cast doubt on Qatar's actual worth as a host nation, have also contributed to the decline of Qatar's standing and reputation abroad. Thus, to dispel the unfavorable impression that many Western countries still have of the area, the event's organizers promised

reviews of its domestic laws on human rights, which have taken on a greater significance. Similarly, Al Thani (2021), Chadwick et al. (2022), and Antwi-Boateng and Alhashmi (2022) argued that sports have been a significant indicator of progress and development in Asia, particularly in East Asian countries. East Asia's developing nations want to host a significant international athletic event to demonstrate their strength, wealth, and arrival on the world scene. Most countries use sports to educate the world about the value of sports as a diplomatic instrument that can help raise their nation's status. Qatar uses athletics to raise its reputation internationally and serve as a peacemaker to ease tensions with rival countries. The announcement by North and South Korea to form a hockey team for a single woman for the Olympics shows how sports can strengthen ties between countries and bring competing countries closer together, which can also help their icy relationship. Similar findings were presented by Næss (2023) and Kramareva and Grix (2021), who observed that sports, could provide a forum or a platform where countries can reunite after 52 years apart and decide to develop relations. Since leaders of Pakistan and India frequently meet to have conversations and take action to ease ongoing tensions, cricket is a valuable tool for these meetings. In addition, a nation could promote significant political objectives and project a positive image to the world through sports. Ultimately, staging mega-events is not a goal only major developing countries have; small developing countries also aim to achieve this goal. Due to the large number of people attending the big sports event, non-state players also concentrate on it to spread a campaign and increase public and global awareness of the critical circumstances.

Due to its successful bid to host the FIFA World Cup and its favorable position to submit a new bid for the Olympics, Qatar has been using sport as a platform to show its global goals to the rest of the world. Sport provides countries with a platform to engage in a global sports arms race aimed at achieving worldwide recognition through methods different from the use of economic and military power. Following Qatar's successful bid, many people doubted the country hosting significant events because it is among the smallest in the world, has no football history, and has hot weather. The authorities of Qatar view the hosting of the mega tournament as a crucial component of their broader international strategy. The findings are reinforced by Teetzel and Dichter (2021), who observed that hosting the FIFA World Cup boosted its position in the international arena, fostered national unity, and improved their infrastructure. Putting together massive athletic events and funding the achievements of great athletes can be a means of achieving geopolitical objectives and gaining international recognition. In contrast to other countries that have recently made significant investments in the sports sector, Grix, Brannagan, and Houlihan (2015), Grix et al. (2019), Ganohariti and Dijkhoorn (2020), Næss (2023), Richelieu et al. (2021), Wong and Meng-Lewis (2023) reported that like South Africa and Brazil, Qatar is more focused on improving its national security than on becoming a regional powerhouse, which is a role that it already shares with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Major sporting events provide a hosting country with instant access to a global audience

market from which it can display its images and knowledge of its culture and society to people of all countries and share about its cultural, economic, and political power. This increased global audience market is also a sign that a country has emerged as a significant player on the international scene.²⁹

Furthermore, the study's findings show that investing in international sports and participating in these major sports events is essential to Qatar's foreign policy, emphasizing soft power. Soft power is the capacity to use beauty to persuade others to share desires. One has to consider Qatar's sports spending within a broader foreign policy framework. Qatar is well aware that it needs more hard power capabilities to defend the nation from external threats due to its small population and size. In light of this, Qatar has worked hard to establish solid diplomatic ties with other countries. Qatar views itself as a neutral player in the Middle East with positive ties to several states and organizations. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2023) and Grix et al. (2015) pointed out that owing to these positive ties, Qatar frequently mediates regional disagreements and crises to raise its political profile and soft power in the Middle East. Similar to how the World Cup in South Africa gave pride to the entire African continent, the World Cup can make the Muslim world proud. They may elevate their standing in the Middle East in this way.^{30,31} Major sporting events like the World Cup can draw tourists, boost a country's reputation abroad, and change how the public and governments of other countries view them. Qatar demonstrated its nation as a

²⁹ Grix, J., & Brannagan, P. M. (2016). *Of mechanisms and myths: Conceptualising states' "soft power" strategies through sports mega-events*. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 251-272.

³⁰ Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., & Houlihan, B. (2015). *Interrogating states' soft power strategies: A case study of sports mega-events in Brazil and the UK*. *Global Society*, 29(3), 463-479.

³¹ Taylor, T., Burdsey, D., & Jarvis, N. (2023). *A critical review on sport and the Arabian Peninsula—the current state of play and future directions*. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(2), 367-383.

rising, modern economic and sporting powerhouse by hosting exceptionally well—organized and spectacular Olympic Games. At the same time, Al Thani (2021) and Chadwick et al. (2022) noted that Germany used the World Cup as public diplomacy to change the world's perception of it as a hostile country to a hospitable and friendly one. This perfectly fits the foreign policy of Qatar of attracting soft power inside the international framework. Qatar hopes to demonstrate its political, economic, and cultural might by hosting the World Cup. If effective, it can enhance their standing as a modern, stable nation in an area where many Westerners consider them backward.

Conclusion :

Research in this study has shown the connection between national branding and sports diplomacy. Through sports, the host nation may display its wealth and resources to the outside world and present an environment conducive to international education and direct foreign contact. Expressing environments and philosophies may attract foreign direct investments and international students. The country might also advertise its top tourist spots to attract many visitors. One of the best examples of how important sports events are for achieving national interests in this international arena is the FIFA World Cup. Qatar created enormous opportunities for the country, as most of its towns underwent transformations that improved their reputation and drew tourists and business. Qatar was disconnected, irrelevant, and isolated until it hosted a single sports event. That event promoted improvement in the country's infrastructure and development; now, it is inventive and successful. Before the FIFA World

Cup, Qatar's reputation was unimportant and was heavily tarnished due to perceived roles in global terrorism. However, the Beijing Olympics significantly contributed to the globalization of the perception of China as a modern, emerging economic superpower. Billions of people worldwide watched the games through various media channels, which allowed Qatar to display performances based on its ancient heritage. This demonstrates how crucial mega sporting events are to any country's ability to advance its interests domestically, attract foreign direct investment, and influence public opinion abroad.

However, politics and sports frequently collide. Politicians and other leaders work harder to leverage sports' advantages to a country to achieve its national interests. In addition, sports have been utilized to influence bilateral and international relationships. History also shows that sports have been used to achieve diplomatic objectives, such as national propaganda, international boycotts, and raising public awareness. Moreover, sports diplomacy can attract and persuade, so it has frequently been utilized as a political and diplomatic instrument. International sports events are also considered an increasingly important channel through which nations present their brands, philosophies, and public image to the world. More significantly, countries have utilized sports to engage, share information, inform, and influence audiences worldwide and to impact international politics and events.

Date collected from participants adequately addressed critical issues link sports and diplomacy in the ever-changing complexion of international relations. The findings revealed that sports events could be enticing as they can arouse strong emotions

³² Al Thani, M. (2021). Channeling soft power: The Qatar 2022 world cup, migrant workers, and international image. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 38(17), 1729-1752.

³³ Chadwick, S., Widdop, P., & Burton, N. (2022). Soft power sports sponsorship – A social network analysis of a new sponsorship form. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 21(2), 196-217.

The Qatari society places a high value on cleanliness, and they have used athletics to display their culture and national image to the rest of the globe. The rest of the world viewed Qatar's positive image and served as an example of true sportsmanship to others, thanks to the millions of viewers. The World Cup serves as a platform that unites people from various countries and provides fans with a fantastic opportunity to learn about and exchange cultures, much like how the Qataris have demonstrated their fantastic culture of cleanliness. Qatar sought to use mega sports events to increase its soft power and project a positive image to the world. When a country shows interest in hosting major events, it is evidence that sports and related events are becoming an essential component of its diplomacy. The pursuit of worldwide recognition and marketing influence has made international sports and sporting mega-events precious assets. Sports mega—events might be utilized to educate the world about soft power in Qatar and attract people globally with sports. The mega sports event was a component of a larger soft power strategy that the country employed to possess both hard and soft power resources.

It is essential to examine the nexus between sports diplomacy and exercise of soft power. Governments and nations have consistently demonstrated how essential sports and athletic events are by focusing significantly on the advantages and power of access to large audiences. In the modern world, a country's foreign policy can be expanded by working with international sports teams or recruiting individual athletes and mending the cold diplomatic ties between them. Moreover, it can be employed to organize sports-based nation-building. It clearly illustrates how diplomacy and sports are connected to enhance international relations between governments and

nations. International sports also provide a variety of avenues for nations to demonstrate their various forms of domination, from individual athletic abilities in competition to displaying or communicating their philosophy regarding a specific political system.

The host nation can also educate global audiences about its economic prosperity through sports, inspire and draw foreign direct investments in international students studying abroad, spread the government's principles, and bring in the foreign public. Because of modern technology, people living in different parts of the world can now know what is happening in other parts, making the world much smaller. Hence, athletic events can potentially draw big crowds to the stadium. Furthermore, thanks to technology, these athletic events also give the hosting country a significant advantage. The three most important things for every country are to entice international students, convince foreign audiences, and encourage foreign direct investments. Significant groups of people in the audience attend sporting events. This is an advantage to the hosting country as it allows them to promote foreign direct investments, international students, and the international public by displaying its economic resources and positive image. The 2008 Beijing Olympics served as an excellent illustration of how China effectively promoted foreign direct investment, international students, and foreign public opinion by displaying its riches and positive image. Through sports, China was able to display itself to the world as a developing country, emerging to become a modern economic powerhouse despite facing much criticism. Furthermore, Qatar used sports to project its legitimacy. Sports are essential for drawing in big audiences, including influential politicians and authorities. Therefore, sports might be the perfect platform for the emerging

nation to fight for political freedom. International sports federations frequently provide nations with the will to become independent nation-states with the opportunity to compete or participate under a flag that may not represent their current level of sovereignty.

Soft power is the capacity to achieve goals by appealing to other countries instead of using force or money. Nations emphasize hosting mega sports events to display their assets and draw in foreign direct investment and tourism by projecting a positive image. In addition to countries cooperating in sports, education, the arts, and media, soft power is seen as having substantial power in recent years. A good example is the way that the various countries represent cultures. Hosting massive sporting events presents numerous opportunities to enhance soft power by showing cultural diversity in various media to draw in tourists. For instance, the FIFA World Cup attracted large global audiences, which helped them increase their soft power. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to reach many people quickly is hosting a mega event and making it successful.

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Political Party Affiliation and Preference of Television Stations in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The roles of the mass media in the governance of any nation cannot be overstressed. As a result, they are integral parts of any political system, or political process. They help in shaping the perception of voters during election, among other functions. In view of this, this work sought to establish whether political party affiliation influences politicians' preference for certain television stations in Edo State, Nigeria, to others. It adopted the Agenda Setting and Uses and Gratification Theories, and was guided by three research objectives. The study adopted the mixed method of data gathering due to its nature. It found, among others, that political party members prefer a particular television station to others mainly because it satisfies their political information needs, and because of their political affiliation to such stations. It also revealed that political party members still watch other TV stations, aside those owned or controlled by the political parties they belong to, because of the satisfaction they derive from the exposure. In view of the findings, it was recommended that political party members should watch other Television stations, apart from those that are sympathetic to their political parties, to have balanced information; and that similar study should be extended to other parts of Nigeria, to see if similar results would be got.

Introduction:

The roles of the mass media in the governance of any nation cannot be overstressed; they form an integral part of any political system, or political process around the world. The media help in shaping the perception of voters before, during, and even after elections. On the role of the mass media in politics, Ochonogor and Omego (2012) opine that experts in media studies believe that modern politics is largely impossible without adequate media coverage.

They observe that the mass media have revolutionised political campaigns because they enable candidates to reach voters more quickly and more directly, and depend heavily upon the media to transmit their desires to the public, as it is impossible for them to personally contact every voter in their districts. The mass media, especially the broadcast medium of Television (TV), serve as sources of news and avenue for people to express their political views.

Ogakason (2019) had earlier opined that television is one of the major and significant ways of passing on information to the people, as it is considered to be the greatest communication mechanism ever designed and operated by man after the Internet. The pieces of information passed on to the masses include political information.

Therefore, television schedules are creating more avenues to satisfy political needs of the populace through different programmes. For instance, Channels Television in Lagos, Nigeria, for some years now, have been airing "Politics Today," a political programme that gives in-depth analysis of political happenings in the country, from 8.00 pm to 8.30 pm, on Sundays. However, in 2016, due to the realisation of the fact that more viewers were showing interest in political issues, the TV station now airs "Politics Today" every day of the week outside Saturday. The programme now runs from 7.00 pm to 8.00pm from Monday to Friday while it comes on air from 8.00 pm to 9.00 pm on Sundays. Channels Television also has the Lunchtime Politics programme on weekdays.

Albeit all facets of the media are involved in political mobilisation, however, television tends to be the most effective amongst them all, especially because of its audio/visual advantage over other media. Explaining the potency of the television, Ogazuma (as cited in Kamorudeen, 2017) avows that "television pumps into the human brain an unending stream of information, opinions, moral values, and aesthetics taste" (p. 93). Television is a strong and effective medium of political communication that has helped to shape the political sphere all over the world due to its ability to avail both politicians and the electorate the opportunity to interface on various issues that have to do with the political landscape of nations.

Galadima (2007) also confirms the role of television in politics when he proved that some of the television stations have become pre-occupied with projecting the personalities of candidates through political advertising during election periods, and this helps such candidates to gain a competitive advantage over their opponents. He specifically mentions Udejah who cited how Chief Mike Ajaegbo used his Minaj Media outfits to influence peoples' opinion during the 1999 elections to his advantage thereby ending up as an elected Senator of Nigeria. He also cited the Independent Television, Benin whose owner, Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, used to promote the image of his son Lucky, who was eventually elected as the governor of Edo State in 1999.

Media scholars believe that politics is more likely to inspire selective exposure among media consumers as opposed to single exposure decisions, and that television is the most pervasive conduit of selective exposure in modern society. This calls for investigation, hence this study seeks to establish whether political party affiliation influences preference for certain television stations in Edo State, Nigeria, to others by some television viewers, or if they tend to only tune to certain television stations that are considered to be sympathetic with their political parties, or that support their political views.

Statement of the Problem:

Any society's democratic process is greatly strengthened by having access to a variety of political information. As a result, the mass media are constantly scrutinized for their role in society's surveillance. According to Kadiri (2023, p. 34), the mass media provide fora for political parties and their candidates to solicit votes from the public during election seasons. Using the media's influence, political parties and their candidates pitch their platforms to voters in an attempt to gain their support.

However, as noted by Okeowo (2016), it becomes an issue for journalism practice when media organisations exhibit bias in their reporting because of ownership or association with certain political parties. The politicisation of the media, particularly television, undoubtedly has an impact on their programmes, which may end up being biased against particular political parties, breaking one of the journalism profession's ethical rules against biased reporting. This raises the question of whether party members will still stay glued to a television station in order to satisfy their information needs despite bias reporting which disparage their political party, or they will prefer another television station that supports their party?

Objectives of the Study:

The general objective of this study was to find out if the political party affiliation of respondents influenced television stations' preference in Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To find out what motivates exposure to specific television channels among political party members in Edo State.
2. To ascertain if respondents' preferred television station satisfies their political information needs.
3. To inquire if membership of political parties will stop respondents in Edo State from watching the TV stations not affiliated to their political parties.

Research hypothesis:

One hypothesis is tested in this work

H01: There is no significant relationship between political party affiliation and preference of specific television stations.

Theoretical Framework:

Two theories are adopted for this study. They are Agenda Setting and Uses and Gratifications Theories. It is widely believed that the Agenda Setting Theory was formulated by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. de B'Berri et al. (2007, as cited in Guanah, 2021) note that Shaw and McCombs conducted the best-known contemporary studies on agenda-setting in the 1960s and 1970s.

They maintain that Shaw and McCombs, in a study of undecided votes in North Carolina in the 1968 presidential election, established strong evidence of a close relationship between the political issues emphasised by the news media, and the issues the voters regarded as important issues. According to McQuail (2005), the core idea is that news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are, and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues.

On the other hand, Anorue, Onyike, Ekwewchi and Chiana (2016), note that Uses and Gratification theory was espoused by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Micheal Gurevitch, which asserts that media audiences use media contents to provide gratification for their needs. Also, Nwagbara and Nda (2017) opine that messages from the mass media are one among many social or psychological factors "that cause audience members to select different media contents to which they give attention as well as experience divergent perceptions" (p. 69).

The theory, according to Katz (as cited in Arikewuyo, Ozad & Saidu, 2018), seeks to create an understanding of what motivates the audience to select and use specific media platform in achieving the desired gratifications (p. 32). The Uses and Gratifications theory can be traced to the studies carried out in the 1920s on exposure to and influences of the early radio serials (Herzog, 1994), and television (Katz, 1959).

To further strengthen the tenets of uses and gratification, Katz (1959) advised researchers to stop focusing on the question "What do media do to people?" and focus on "What do people do with media?", arguing that with this type of question, mass communication would experience further development. Katz, therefore, advocated for a practical uses and gratifications approach to bring about the understanding of media effects. He posits that the theory is about the psychological origins of needs among media consumers, which impinge on what they expect from the mass media contents.

This has a lot to do with how they expose themselves to the mass media. Therefore, Hassan (as cited in Akarika & Emem, 2018) opines that individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs; "to discover underlying motives for individuals' media use, as well as to identify the positive and negative consequences of individual media use" (p.35).

Among other things, the uses and gratifications theory talks about how the audience use the media of their choice, and what they benefit by doing so on the type and uses audience put media to, and what gratification they derive from their choices of the medium, content or channel. These theories are relevant to this research because television viewers selectively expose themselves to television content that meets their political information needs. However, these issues appear important to them due to the agenda set on them, and how they are portrayed by the mass media.

Television and Politics:

The media, television inclusive, have significant roles to play even in International relations that Gambari (2007) says "encapsulate the varied areas of inter-state relations including the foreign policy of nations, international economies, international law, international organisations and international politics" (p. 202). Gambari quotes Hans Morgenthau as underscoring that the quest for power by states is "power politics" which

"lies at the root of all international relations" (p. 203). Morgenthau is quoted as emphasising that international politics, which is a sub-category of international relations, has to do with the: forces that determine political relations among nation states, as well as how these forces act upon each other and upon international political relations and institutions.

Therefore, Nwankpa and Akpan (2015) are of the opinion that international politics can be made less confrontational through various forms of communication, and this can be achieved through the mass media. Almond understands the importance of communication to the growth and sustenance of democracy in any country, hence, in his work on politics in developing nations, he explains that:

All of the functions performed in the political system- political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rule-making, rule application and rule-adjudication- are performed by means of communication" (as cited in Galadima, 2007, p.384).

It is for this reason that Galadima (2007) agrees that in a nascent democracy such as Nigeria, "the mass media perform some of the major communicative tasks necessary for the people to know their civic roles and functions in all political activities" (p. 384). The mass media have various roles to perform in election campaign and reporting. The media have the ability to inform the public about the goings on in the world, and in this process, they can shape and direct public opinions on various issues, especially in political affairs. Understanding the power of the media in all ramifications, Nnaane (2007, p. 164), citing O' Sullivan et al, states that, "...the media collectively act as powerful agencies capable of shaping and directing public and private understanding of the world and awareness of its social, economic, moral, cultural, technological and political affairs."

The power of the media when it comes to politics, has always been on display at various times. Onayiga (2016) recounts that a political editor with Radio Nigeria, Victorson Agbenson, once said that the PDP lost the 2015 election in the media. He also refers to, Senator Shehu Sani who alluded to this when he declared that "Nigeria's media helped to bring down Jonathan." This shows that the media have the ability not only to determine the goings on in a nation, but those who govern nation. They can mobilise the masses and electorate to act in a particular way(s). In short, the mass media are the most effective tools for political mobilisation.

Ebeze (2003) sees political mobilisation as one of the basic political functions of the media. According to him, the media play the political mobilisation role of creating awareness, interpreting issues, reporting and airing programmes that encourage and educate the electorate to exercise their political rights and take informed political decisions. It also includes campaigning for societal objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic, development, work, etc.

Political exigency has also made the former President of the United States of America (USA), Donald Trump, to be mulling the idea of establishing a national television to counter the Cable News Network (CNN) due to "the unfair and false way CNN is portraying the country" (Premium Times, 2018, p. 1). Television has always been associated with politics, in fact, the first television station in Nigeria was established due to political reasons.

Before now, in 1980, Ted Turner had launched the Cable News Network (CNN), the first 24-hour news channel, as part of his Turner Broadcasting empire; Turner Broadcasting System then merged with Time Warner in 1996 (Punch, 2018). The use of television in politics called "televised politics" or "political television" is defined by numerous commentators broadly as:

..., including within it the news (local, national, and international), political advertising, campaign based communications as well as office holders' pronouncements, interview shows, political documentaries, public service messages, lobbying by those in the private sector, and citizen-action agendas, as well as variety of popular culture formats (Hart, 1996, pp. 99-100, as cited in Guanah, 2021).

Television stations are now so engrossed with politics and political reporting that Ted Turner, the founder of CNN, at one time, while speaking about CNN, had to say that, "I think they're sticking with politics a little too much. They'd do better to have a more balanced agenda. But that's, you know, just one person's opinion" (Punch, 2018, p.1).

Television is the most prevalent form of communication in our present society. According to Aririguzoh (2007), television has proved to be immensely popular in enhancing political education and participation. For this reason, the government, non-governmental organisations, political parties, contestants and voters recognise that television broadcasts can be powerful tools to be employed during times of election. What television shows or refuses to show about candidates and the electoral processes can affect citizens' participation and may help to determine electoral results (p.3).

Empirical Review:

Chaffee, Saphir, Graf, Sandvig and Hahn (2010), carried out a study entitled "Attention to counter-attitudinal messages in a state election campaign." The study establishes that the individual's education level, political knowledge, political curiosity and political discussion activity can predict his or her attention to both consistent and counter attitudinal political messages during election campaigns. Drawing their conclusion from these findings, they suggest that attention to

counter attitudinal political messages is worthy of further study as an important goal of political socialisation, and a criterion of citizen performance in democracy.

In the past, research on selective exposure by scholars like Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman (2012), and Valentino, Banks, Hutchings and Davis (2009) showed occasional circumstances in which people exposed themselves to opinion-challenging information due to the desire to gain useful information. However, analysing the fact that the glut of media coverage preceding a presidential election requires individuals to selectively expose themselves to some messages, and not others.

Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman (2012) studied a two-session online quasi-experiment with 205 participants that were conducted before the 2008 United States of America (USA) presidential election. The study found that information utility can override a confirmation bias and motivate exposure if a government change is likely, and the favoured political party is likely to lose the election.

In their work, Jones, Ferraiolo and Byrne (2011) studied today's fragmented media environment where citizens have the choice to select media outlets that match their pre-existing political beliefs and avoid information sources that clash with such political linings. Among other findings, the study ascertained that conservative media outlets include Fox News Channel while liberal outlets include MSNBC, adding that conservatives who watch Fox News or listen to Rush Limbaugh would shift further to the right over time; liberals who watch MSNBC or read progressive blogs would shift further to the left. However, none of these reviewed studies focused on Political Party Affiliation and Preference for Television Stations in Edo State, Nigeria. This is the gap in literature which this present study sought to fill.

Methodology:

The mixed research design was used for this study. Consequently, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were adopted. The benefit of the mixed method includes the fact that the weakness of one method can be filled by the strength of the other. Qualitative data were obtained using oral in-depth interview for select members of both the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the Peoples Party (PDP), two from each political party, and two politicians from another political party bringing the number to six people interviewed.

Also, questionnaire was used as research instrument to generate quantitative data from respondents in Edo State. The choice of survey as a technique of generating quantitative data is based on the fact that it is a potent method of measuring data relating to demographics, attitude, opinion and perception (Ekharefo, 2013). The population of this study is the registered members of All Progressive Congress (APC), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Edo State.

According to the Publicity Secretary of APC in Edo State, Chris Azebamwan, APC members in the State were 605,827 while according to the Publicity Secretary of PDP in the State, Momodu Abu, registered members of the party were 540,000; (personal communication, August 23, 2019). This brings the total population to 1,145, 827. Therefore, the population of the study is 1,145, 827.

A sample size of 384 was obtained using Cozby's (2004) Precision of Estimate table which was calculated using conservative assumptions about the nature of the true population values; it states that $\pm 5\%$, a population above 100, 000 shall have a sample size of 384. However, through a multistage sampling technique, 192 members were selected from each political party (APC and PDP), making it a total of 384 members to make up

the sample. The multistage sampling technique was used because the researcher had to choose his samples in stages until he got the required sample (Asika, 2009), and because the researcher is aware that there are composite (common) characteristics peculiar to the different categories of the political parties' membership.

The main goal for using the multi-stage sampling technique was to ensure that the researcher focused on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest which will best enable answers to the objectives of the study. A 20-item questionnaire that bore two sections—section A, which contains the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, and occupation; and section B, was used to elicit thematic data.

The questionnaire contains closed-ended dichotomous response questions such as “yes”, “no”, or “undecided,” multiple-choice questions, and a 5-point summation rating scale or the Likert scale (Owuamalam, 2012). In gathering the data, the researcher trained two research assistants, and with the support of the State secretariats of both the APC and PDP in Benin City, 378 copies of the questionnaire were administered face-to-face.

To carry out a comprehensive work, the researcher spent three months on the field with the research assistants, distributing and retrieving

copies of the questionnaire, as well as conducting the various oral in-depth-interviews on scheduled dates with the respondents. The research assistants also served as guides to the researcher since they are more familiar with the terrains, especially the rural areas.

The data collected were analysed using model of mixed research design. This required the quantitative and qualitative data to be analysed separately. They were compared and contrasted before interpretations of both sets of data were made. The quantitative data obtained were analysed and interpreted using charts, degrees, and simple statistical procedure of percentages and description of respondents. Charts were drawn purely for clarification and understanding. The Chi-Square (X²) Goodness of Fit, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMMCC) at 0.005 level of significance were used to test the hypotheses. The qualitative data (oral in-depth interviews) were analysed in line with Yin (2009) explanation building method based on the objectives of the study.

Testing of Questionnaire Reliability:

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 was used to analyse the Cronbach alpha.

Table 1

Demographics of respondents' information

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Political Party Membership	0,752
Preference	0,849
Television	0,844

Source: Fieldwork 2019

Usually, internal consistency is measured with Cronbach Alpha, a statistics calculated from the pair wise correlations between items. Internal consistency ranges between 0 and 1. A commonly accepted rule of thumb a of 0.6–0.7 indicates acceptable reliability, and 0.8 or higher indicates good reliability. High reliabilities (0.95 or higher) are not necessarily desirable, as this indicates that the items may be entirely redundant. The goal in designing a reliable instrument is for scores on similar items to be related (internally consistent), but for each to contribute some unique information as well.

The administration of the instrument for this study was done once and the scores were used accordingly. The value of the reliability co-efficient got from the pilot is 0.80. This means that the proportion of variance which is due to error is 0.20 or 20% while 0.8 or 80% represents the consistency or stability of the questionnaire. The value is considered acceptable reliability for

this study. The reliability test above indicates that all the items for each dimension is high which conforms to the widely accepted limit of 0.7 and above for reliability test.

Data Presentation and Analysis:

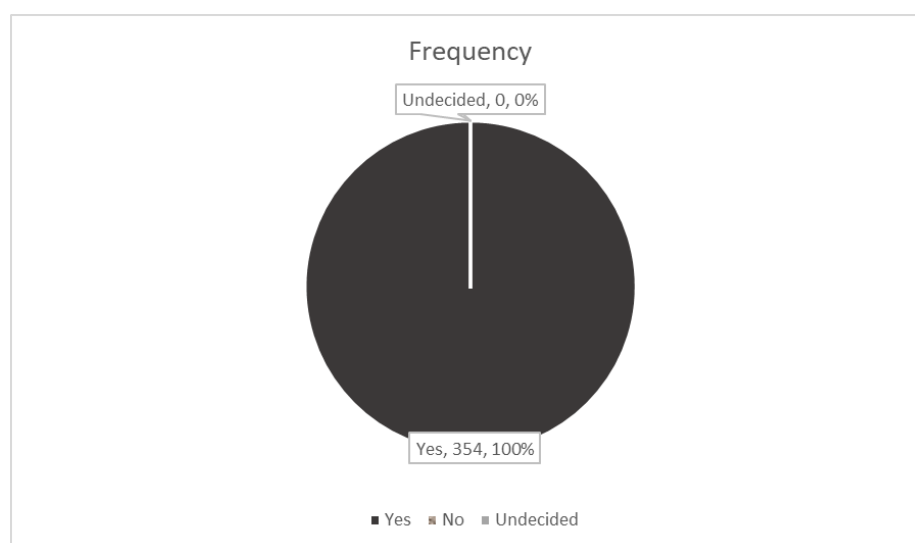
This section presents and analyses the data generated for the study in two sub—sections. The first sub-section represents the survey on the respondents while the second sub-section represents the oral in-depth interviews with the six selected respondents. A total of 378 copies of the questionnaire were administered on 378 respondents out of the sample size of 384, the remaining 6 were penciled down for oral in-depth interviews. However, out of the 378, only 354 copies were filled, returned and found usable, yielding 93.65% response rate, and the 24 unreturned or badly filled ones constitute 6.35% mortality rate.

Data from Survey (Questionnaire)

Pie- Charts, degrees, and simple percentages were used to analyse data

Figure 1

Whether respondents' watch ITV or EBS

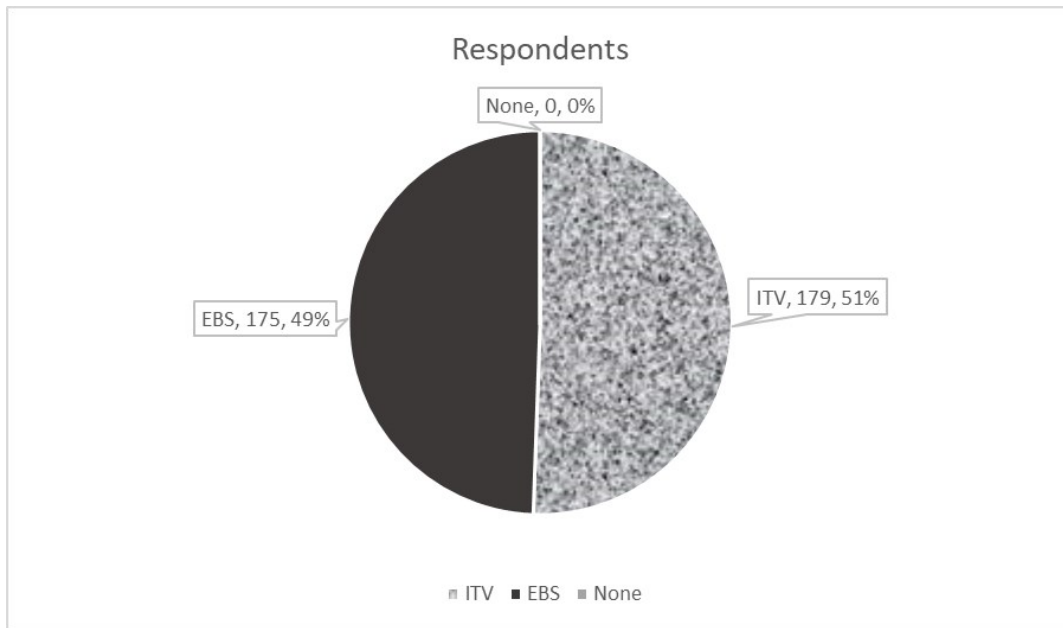


KEY: Yes: ■ No: □ Undecided: ▒ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

Data from Figure 1 show that the 354 respondents (100%) watch either ITV or EBS.

The implication of this analysis is that all the respondents watch either ITV or EBS.

Figure 2
 Respondents' preferred TV station

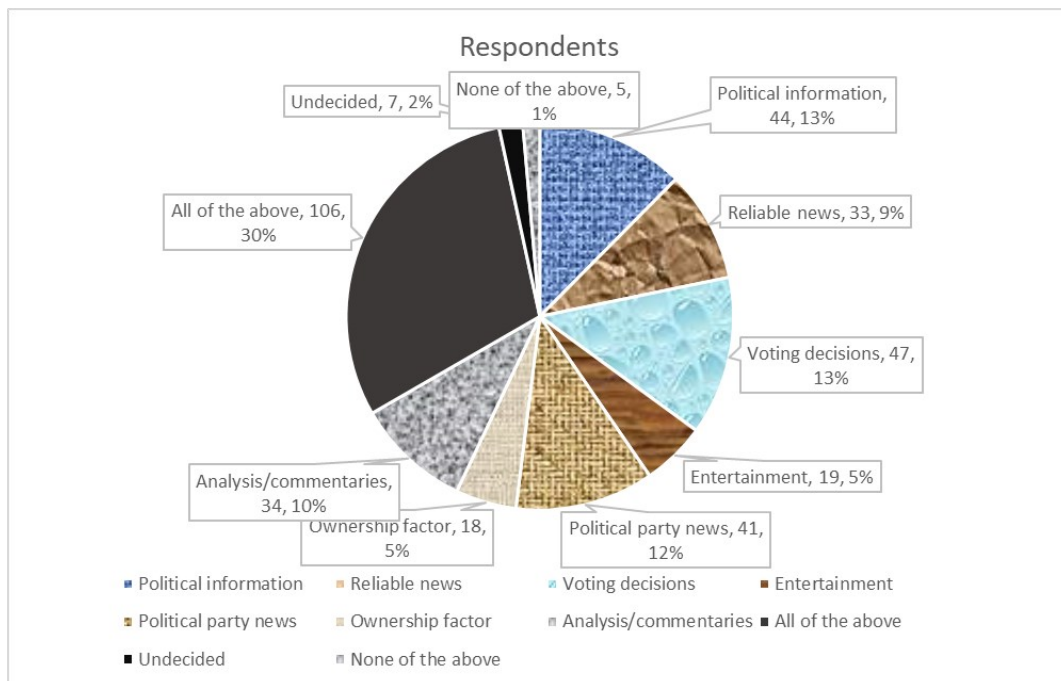


KEY: ITV: [ITV pattern] EBS: [EBS pattern] Scale: 1% = 3.6⁰

Data from Figure 2 reveal that 50.56% of the preferred watching ITV while 49.44% preferred to

watch EBS. This implies that both stations have almost the same viewership rate.

Figure 3
 Factors that motivate respondents to watch a television station

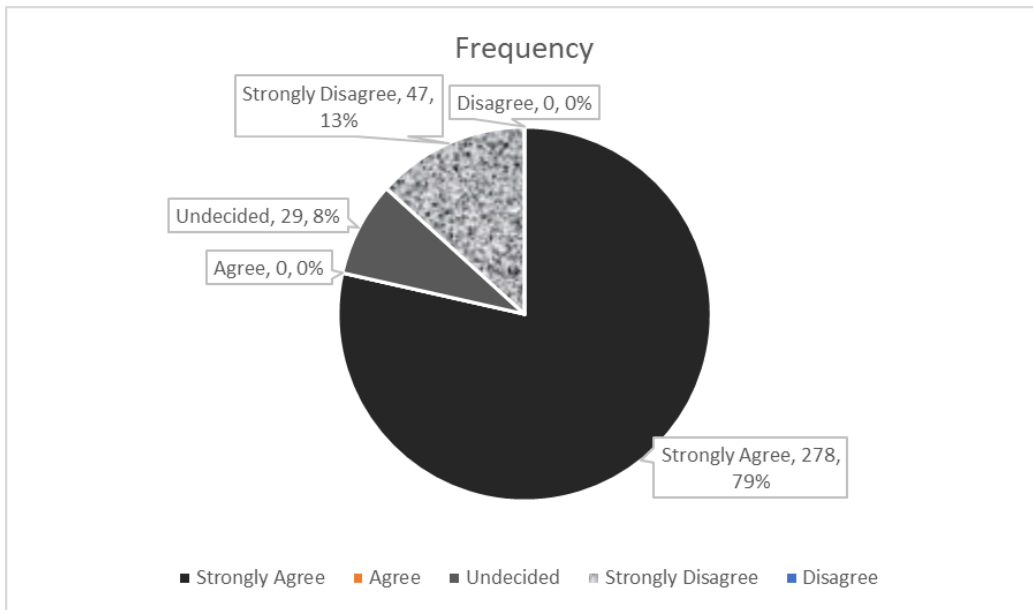


KEY: Political Information: [Pattern] Reliable News: [Pattern] Voting Decisions: [Pattern] Entertainment: [Pattern] Political Party News: [Pattern] Ownership Factor: [Pattern] Analysis/commentaries: [Pattern] All of the above: [Pattern] Undecided: [Pattern] None of the above: [Pattern] Scale: 1% = 3.6⁰

Data from Figure 3 implies that political party members have different and various

reasons for choosing the television station they watch.

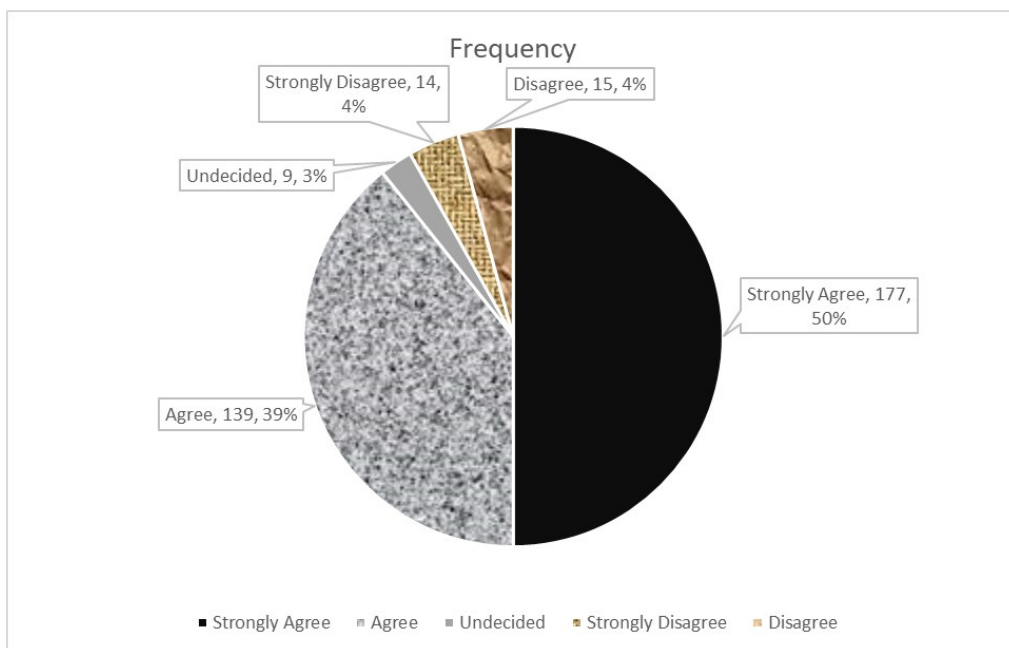
Figure 4
Political party affiliation influences preference of television station



KEY: Strongly Agree: ■ Agree: ■ Undecided: ■ Strongly Disagree: ■ Disagree: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

The import of Figure 4 above is that political party affiliation really influences preference for television station.

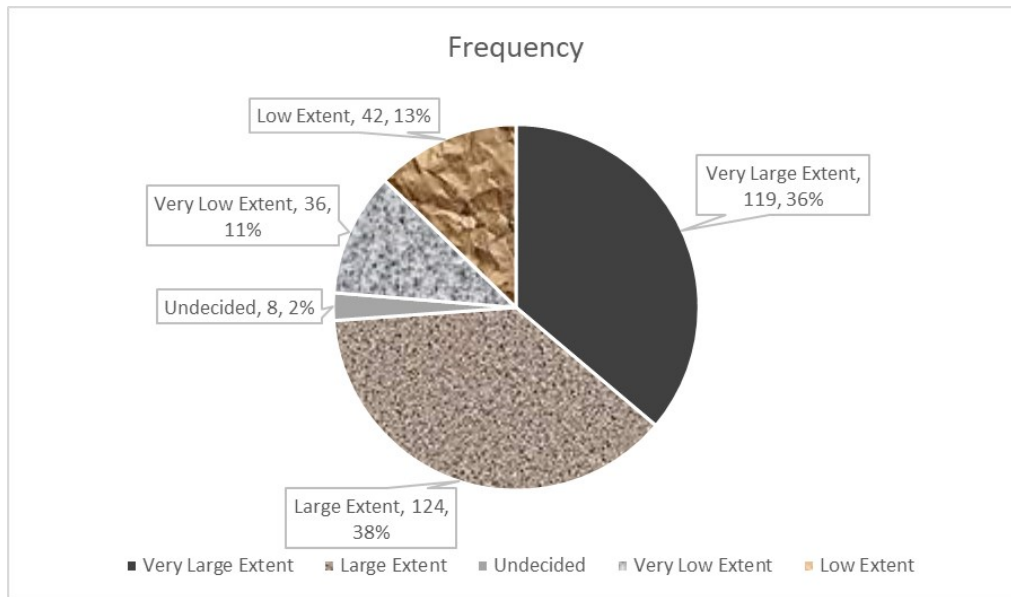
Figure 5
Membership of political parties not affecting the watching of TV stations that is not affiliated to their political parties



KEY: Strongly Agree: ■ Agree: ■ Undecided: ■ Strongly Disagree: ■ Disagree: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

Figure 5 implies that membership of political parties does not stop respondents from watching other TV stations not affiliated to their political parties.

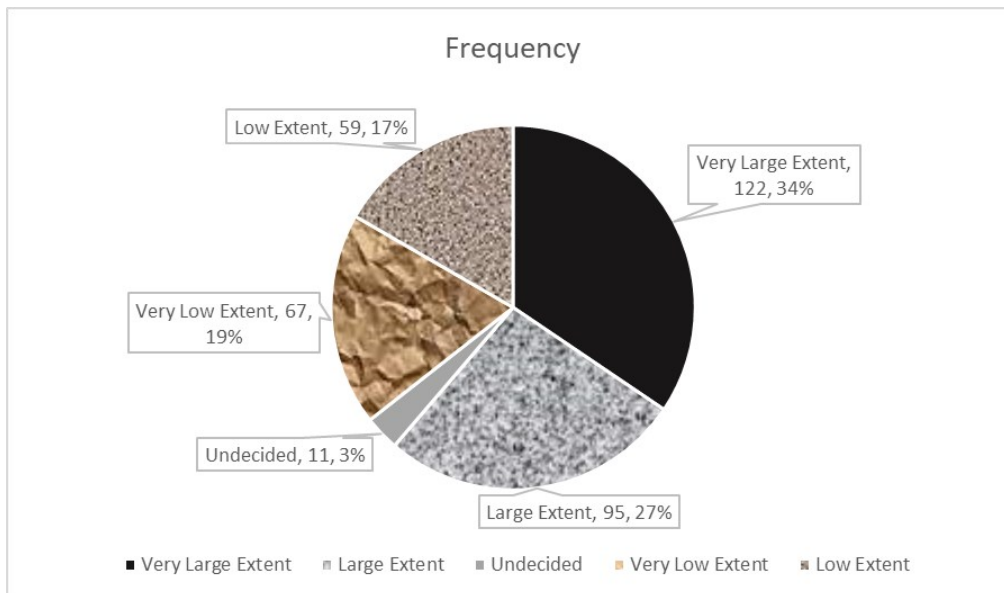
Figure 6
 The extent preferred television station satisfies political information needs



KEY: Very Large Extent: ■ Large Extent: ■ Undecided: ■ Very Low Extent: ■ Disagree: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

Figure 6 above implies that respondents agree to a very large extent that their preferred television stations satisfied their political information needs.

Figure 7
 The extent the television station of preference helps to decide on candidates to vote for at elections

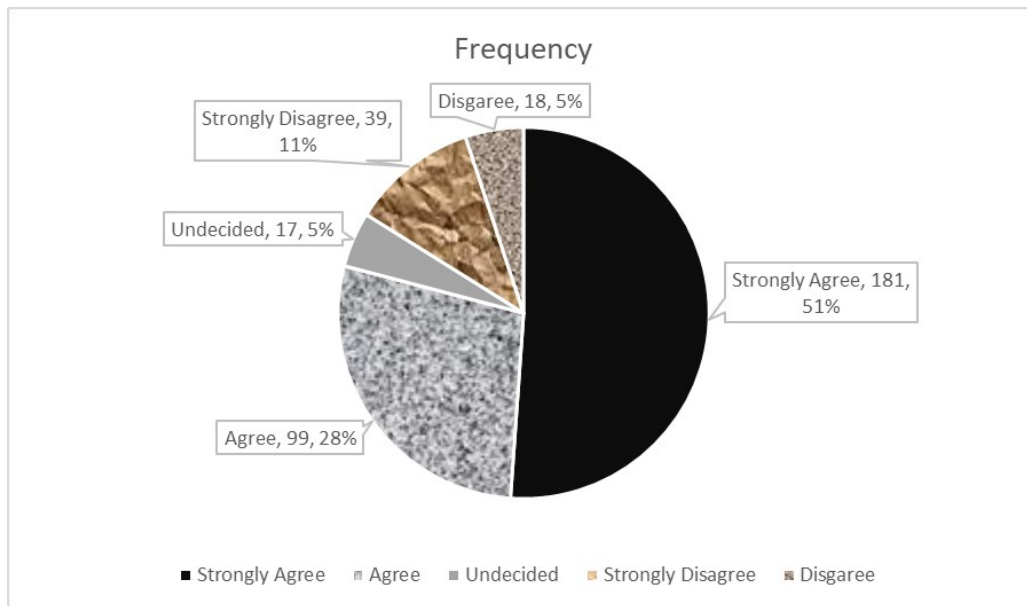


KEY: Very Large Extent: ■ Large Extent: ■ Undecided: ■ Very Low Extent: ■ Disagree: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

Figure 7 shows that most respondents decide on candidates to vote for at elections based on what they see on television.

Figure 8

Television stations give more prominence to their owners and their political parties than their political opponents

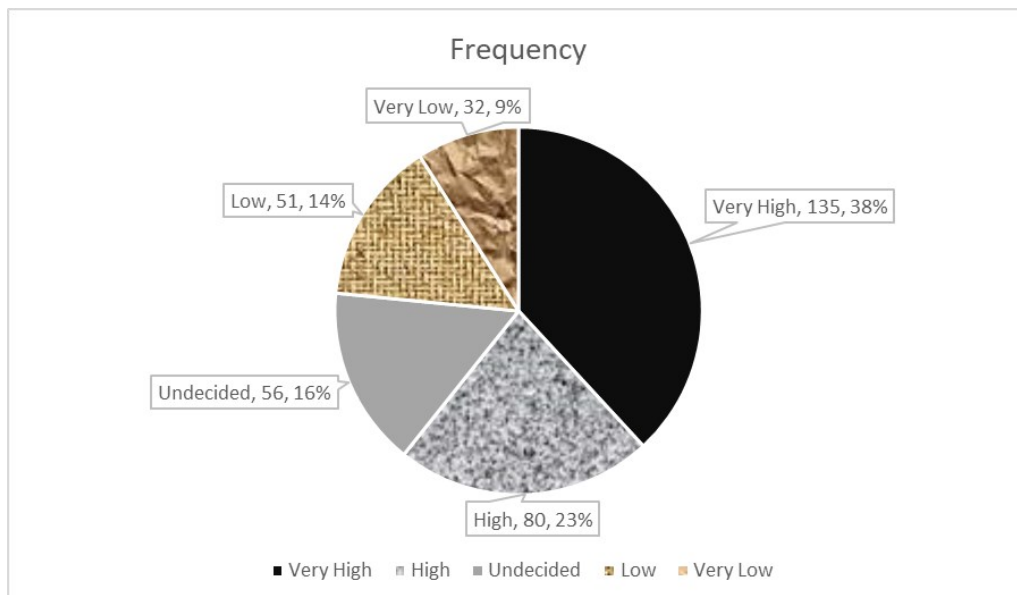


KEY: Strongly Agree: ■ Agree: ■ Undecided: ■ Strongly Disagree: ■ Disagree: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6

Figure 8 implies that television stations are bias in the discharge of their duties.

Figure 9

Respondents` frequency of watching television



KEY: Very High: ■ High: ■ Undecided: ■ Low: ■ Very Low: ■ Scale: 1% = 3.6°

From the data in Figure 9, it can be deduced that respondents watch TV most times.

Data from Survey (Oral in-depth interviews):

This aspect of the research deals with the thematic explanation of the interviews held with the six selected respondents. These qualitative data (oral in-depth interviews) were analysed in line with Yin (2009) explanation building method based on the objectives of the study.

Motivators of exposure to specific television Channels:

The manifest data from the oral in-depth interviews show there was a general consensus on the part of the respondents on why they are moved to watch their preferred TV stations. It is observed that it is not just because they supply political Information, entertainment, political party news, and because of ownership factor but also because of the way they analyse and carry out commentaries on issues. Respondents are driven to watch the TV stations because of the way topics and issues that were hitherto confusing are properly simplified and analysed for them to understand.

Political party affiliation and choice of TV stations:

The majority of the respondents confirm that their political party affiliation has a lot to do with the TV station of their choice. They indicate that the stations furnish them with detailed information about what goes on in their political parties more than the opposition—controlled TV stations could do, and that they tend to believe the news and contents of their stations of choice more than they believe those of the opposition which they doubt their credibility and authenticity when it concerns political matters most times.

Membership of political parties and watching of other TV stations

The six respondents interviewed said they do not see any reason why being a member of a

political party will stop them from watching any other TV station. They agree that variety is the spice of life hence they are at liberty to watch other TV stations regardless of the political party they belong to, or the fact that it may not be controlled by their political party, or political party member.

Preferred TV stations satisfying political information needs:

Most of the respondents say they depend on the TV stations for information on various issues, including political news. They are eager to know what is going on in the society, especially when it comes to political issues, hence they get glued to the TV station of their choice to know the latest happenings in the political scene. This happens, most times, when their political parties are holding programmers that they could not attend, and they want to know what transpired at such meetings.

Preferred TV stations and voting decisions:

The fact that the television does help citizens to participate in the political process was expressed by respondents during the interviews conducted. Most of them declared that they get to know about most of the candidates contesting for various elective positions through the television and that this helps them to decide on who to vote for at elections.

Test of Hypothesis:

One hypothesis was tested in this study to establish the findings of the study based on the assumptions made at the beginning of the study. Specifically, the hypothesis tested the significant relationship between political party affiliation and preference of specific television stations.

Hypothesis One:

Null Hypothesis- Ho: There is no significant relationship between political party affiliation and preference of specific television stations.

Alternative Hypothesis - H1: There is significant relationship between political party affiliation and preference of specific television stations.

Decision rule:

The data analysed was got from Fig. 4. The table or critical value of chi-square at a degree of freedom of 2 and a margin of error of 0.05 is 5.991 shows that the calculated chi-square value of 92.32 is greater (>) than the table value of 5.991.

It means that since the calculated chi-square value of 92.32 is greater than the table value of 5.991, then the null hypothesis above is rejected while its alternative is accepted. It implies that there is significant relationship between political party affiliation and preference of specific television stations.

Discussion of Findings:

The findings that were arrived at from the analysis of both the qualitative and the quantitative data collected and collated from the field are discussed here. Also, the discussion was aligned to the theoretical framework and the related literature reviewed to realise the objectives of the study. Therefore, the discussion addresses the three (3) research questions raised, and the hypothesis tested.

Research objective 1: To find out what motivates exposure to specific television channels among political party members in Edo State.

The first research objective was to find out what motivates exposure to specific television channels among political party members. This question is answered by the analysis provided in Fig. 3. The data collated show that respondents are motivated to watch the television of their choice for various reasons, these include the fact that these television stations cast news predominantly about their political parties; for the stations' analysis and commentaries; for enabling them make voting decisions.

More reasons also involve ownership of the television stations, that is, if the stations are owned by their political party members or government; for entertainment; because they consider the news they reel out to be reliable, and mostly because the stations supply them with political information. These align with the views of Ijeh and Onojeghwo (2009) who assert that the individuals use the mass media, amid other available resources, to satisfy their needs and gratify their desires. This also confirms the position of selective exposure, that individuals make their decisions based on information that is consistent with their decision rather than inconsistent information (Fischer, Kastenmüller, Greitemeyer, Fischer, Frey & Crelley, 2011).

Research objective 2: To ascertain if respondents' in Edo State preferred television station satisfies their political information needs.

The second objective sought to know if the television stations respondents prefer to watch meet their political information need. Information from Fig. 6 were used to answer this question. It was found that most of the respondents' (71.19%) political information needs are satisfied by the television station of their choice. Also, the in-depth oral interview data support the foregoing assumption. For instance, in an interview with Momodu Abu, a member of the PDP, he said in terms of news concerning his political party nationwide, the television station of his choice (ITV) do give in-depth reports more than it does of the APC, and this enables him to get to know about the happenings in his party to enable him participate fully in politics. This is consistent with the toga on the television as the major source of news to most people, and that "television, in particular, has proved to be immensely popular in enhancing political education and participation" (Newman, 2017, p.4). Communication experts such as Arceneaux and Johnson (2013) and Knobloch—Westerwick and Meng (2009)

therefore believe that people who live in high choice media contexts expose themselves asymmetrically to political information that is more like-minded than cross-cutting. In order to make informed decisions, voters want timely and correct information; but, without sufficient knowledge about the range of topics at hand, they will not be able to fully participate in the electoral and political process (Keghku, 2003, p. 42).

Furthermore, Guanah (2014, p. 22) states that elections are a necessary component of the democratic process, and that democracy can only be claimed to exist when the mechanism that establishes a government, or any individual, is based on credible, free, and fair elections. The public must be able to make decisions that are right before they cast their ballots. Once they are reached through the proper channel, they can contribute positively.

Huge et al. (as cited in Agba, 2006), lists the following as the roles played by television media in political campaigns: reporting and interpreting events, defining problems, portraying characters, looking into support, spotting patterns, and gathering and evaluating public opinion (p. 201). This suggests that the respondents' needs for political information are not only met by the television station of their choice, but also that the respondents process and use this information in accordance with the requirements of the Uses and Gratification theory, which holds that media users use it specifically to satisfy particular needs.

Research objective 3: To what extent does membership of political parties stop respondents from watching the TV stations not affiliated to their political parties?

Research objective three was designed to ascertain if membership of political parties will stop respondents in Edo State from watching the TV stations not affiliated to their political parties. Data collated and analysed revealed that political party members still watch other TV stations aside

those owned or controlled by the political parties they belong to because of the satisfaction they derive from the exposure. This is so because "exposure is always selective; in other words, a positive relationship exists between people's opinions and what they choose to listen to or read" (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1948, p. 164, as cited in Guanah, 2021).

The choice of the respondents aligns with the dictates of the Uses and Gratifications theory as espoused in this study. According to Defleur and Dennis (1991, p. 559), the uses and gratifications theory assumes that potential media content consumers promptly choose the exact media content that satisfies their needs. For this reason, political party members ensure that they do not limit themselves to just the TV stations their political parties control, but they expose themselves to other TV stations to meet their various varying media needs. Hence, scholars like Best, Chmielewski & Krueger (2005) and Chaffee, Saphir, Graf, Sandvig and Hahn (2001), and the Annenberg Public Policy Center (2004), support the idea that individuals prefer exposure to information that is consistent with their preexisting opinions, and in this case not minding whether they get it from the media they are used to, be it being controlled by their political party or not, as long as they get new information from such TV stations. Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, and Frey (2005) therefore declare that "when searching for new information, people are often biased in favor of previously held beliefs, expectations, or desired conclusions" (p. 978).

Conclusion:

The study comes to the conclusion that political party members have a preference for one television station over another mostly due to their political affiliation with the station of their choice, and the political information they receive from it. This serves as compelling evidence that the selection of media to consume is influenced

by the information that the public, or audience, receives from the media. This is in line with the principles of the Uses and Gratifications theory, which holds that viewers should only engage with media that they find particularly satisfying.

It is quite glaring that political party members today tend to prefer viewing political programmes over other television shows, as politics has permeated almost every element of Nigerian culture to the point where it influences how people watch and consume television material.

Recommendations:

Based on findings of this study, we recommend that:

1. Political party members should watch other TV stations apart from those that are sympathetic to their political parties to have balanced information.

2. Affiliation of members of political parties should not be the only reason why politicians prefer watching a TV station.

4. Similar study should be extended to other parts of Nigeria, to see if similar result would be gotten.

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Legislative—Executive Relations in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: A Review

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Abstract

This paper examines legislative-executive relations in Nigeria’s fourth republic and provides meaningful suggestions that will assist in strengthening the relationship that will, in turn, ensure good governance and promote democratic tenets in the country. The data for the study were collected using secondary sources. Secondary sources comprise of a comprehensive review of the literature (books, journal, publications of governments and non-governmental bodies). It finds out that the nature of the relations between the legislative and executive arms of government is complex but vital lessons can be drawn from these relationships. Thus, the paper recommends that continuous dialogues are the key to cordial relations and that the principles of separation of power should be respected in the dealing of both the legislative and executive arms of government as this is an important and guaranteed way of ensuring and promoting cordial legislative-executive relations.

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1. Introduction:

Since the entire people of a country cannot individually participate in the day—to—day running of the government at a given time, they must entrust their duties and right of participation to an elected few through the democratic process. These elected few are executives and the legislators who formed the basic political structure of the democratic political system. Although the legislative arm, in particular, is known by divergent names in different countries, such as Congress, Knesset or Duma, Assembly, or Parliament, everywhere the legislature performs similar functions of lawmaking, passing of motions into resolutions, and making a significant contribution by passing bills into law for the overall development of the nation as the authorized representatives of the citizens of their various constituencies (Tom &

Attai, 2014). The nature or kind of relationships between the legislature and executive vary largely from country to country, from Britain to the United States, and from South Africa to Nigeria (Tom & Attai, 2014). The United States of America’s presidential system was founded on a clear separation of powers, with each institution or arm of government having a distinct duty and responsibility, thereby encouraging the principle of checks and balances in all governmental activities to avoid the domineering influence of one arm of government over the other, thus enduring accountability in governance (Fashagba, 2009). The passers of the War Power Resolution in the United States of America in 1973, which overrides the presidential veto, made significant changes in the legislative-executive relations in the country, and subsequently served as a permanent shift in

the political landscape of the nation, as well as a resurgence of the power of the Congress with an era of legislative—executive relations in issues of national interest (Bhattacharya, 2014). It is important to note at this point that the presidential system allows for elections of the president and legislatures separately thus creating a situation that allows for the pursuance for dual policies' legitimacy, which often creates room for interaction between the legislature and executive and sometimes stalemates thus shaping the power struggle over the supremacy or otherwise (Oni, 2013; Abonyi, 2006).

The constitution of the United States of America gives the legislative and executive arms of government clear and separate responsibilities; thus, the legislative-executive relations are strictly based on principles of separation of power, as stipulated in the constitution of the country (Oni, 2013). Both the legislature and the executive have their powers, duties, authority, and democratic legitimacy from the constitution-making difficult for any arm to control the other, for examples the executive cannot dissolve the legislative arm and the members of cabinets are not directly responsible for the legislature as just the legislature is equally not directly accountable to the president, thus providing a clear observance of the principles and tenets of separation of power in their relationship (Smith, 2010; Oni, 2013).

However, legislative—executive relations in Great Britain where a parliamentary system of government in practice greatly determines the kind of relationships among the political parties form the government and ability of the government to win most supportive voters of the parliamentary members (Mbah, 2000). Here legislative—executive relations are largely determined by the strength and influence of the ruling party in the parliament; thus, legislators are most often under pressure to support the executive leadership that they help produce (Oni, 2013; King, 1976).

In Africa, for example, Malawi operates a hybrid system of government, which has the features of a parliamentary and presidential system running together, as the constitution spells out the duties of all arms of government. The legislative—executive relations are structured in such a way that the president has supreme control over the legislature, as the legislature is largely a rubber stamp arm of the government as it is considered treasonous to go against the president (Oni, 2013). Although the constitution provides for checks and balances as a mechanism against supreme control of one arm of government over the other, the reality is the following the amendment of the constitution of the country, one-party state, and supreme executive power was technically vested on the executive president (Oni, 2013). Thus, making the kind and nature of legislative-executive relations in Malawi is so determined by the executive arm led by the president. The South African constitution provided for separating power between the arms of the government, with adequate provision for checks and balances to ensure responsiveness in governmental administration remains the basis for legislative-executive relations. The nature of legislative-executive relations in South Africa is centered on the constitutional provisions, which basically allows the legislature to serve as a watchdog, a pillar of ensuring accountability, responsiveness, implementation of policies, and overseeing the performance of the executive to the citizenry (Munzhedzi, 2017).

The legislature and the executive as the mainstay of representative democracy are pertinent to democratic consolidation, as both arms of government serve the purpose of checks and balances; and are strategically and constitutionally positioned to undermine any authoritarian tendencies in the country and ensure an adequate and responsive government in the delivery of public services as well as safeguard the rule of law and

constitution adherence (Aliu, 2013). Despite the lofty goal of the arms of government, the cordial relationship needed between the legislature and executive in Nigeria, especially in the fourth republic, unfortunately, seems to be cordial. The legislative-executive relations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are more conflictual in almost all spheres of their constitutional mandate, thus heating up the political atmosphere (Fatile, 2017).

This paper examines legislative—executive relations in Nigeria's fourth republic to provide meaningful suggestions that will assist in strengthening the relationship that will, in turn, ensure good governance and promote democratic tenets in the country. It adopts a secondary method for data collection and content analysis. This section lays out of paper began with an introduction that explains the dynamics of legislative-executive relations in global democracies citing examples from the USA, Britain, China, South Africa, Kenya, and of course issues arising from Nigeria. The second section explains the basic concepts of legislative-executive relations under a presidential, parliamentary, and hybrid systems. The third section maps the Historical and Constitutional Insights into legislative-executive relations. The fourth section maps the relations and complexities associated with the relationship in the Fourth Republic in some cases. The next section provides lessons to be drawn from these relations, and finally, conclusion and recommendation.

2. The main objectives of this study:

- To examine the key factors impacting legislative—executive relations during Nigeria's fourth republic
- To analyze how constitutional provisions have shaped the dynamics between the two arms of government
- To identify major issues/ conflicts that have arisen in legislative-executive relations from 1999—present

- To evaluate the implications of strained legislative—executive ties for governance and democracy in Nigeria

- To provide recommendations for improving coordination and cooperation between the legislative and executive branches

General Research Question:

- What is the nature of the relations between legislative executive in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

3. Fixing the Puzzle: Concept Formation and Theoretical Inclination:

The legislatures vary in terms of role, structure, and composition across the world where a democratic system of governance is practiced (Tom and Attai, 2014). The most popular forms of legislatures are the unicameral and bicameral types, whereas the unicameral legislature has only one legislative chamber, the bicameral type of legislature has two chambers often called the Lower and Upper Houses. Some refer to the Lower House as the House of Representatives and the Upper House as the Senate as it is known in Nigeria, although they both exhibit common features not minding the structural differences (Tom and Attai, 2014). Legislature-executive relations are critical to any democratic system of government as it ensures the sustenance of trust in the institutions, legitimacy, and trust in the entire governance process; this kind of relationship that exists at any point in time remains a significant indication of what the citizens of the country are expected in political and socio-economic policies of the government (Aliu, 2013).

The legislature is that arm of the government that occupies and plays a crucial role in the overall running of the government to check the excesses of the other arms of government and guarantee governance in the country. The legislature is that branch of government which has defined purpose of formulating laws, articulating these laws, and

deliberating on them to form an expression of the collective will of the citizenry in furtherance of the genuine democratic political system (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010; Bernick & Bernick, 2008; Fatile, 2017). Although the forms of legislative duties and powers in exercising its mandate as well as intra-legislative relations differs from country to country, basically it is a shared collective expression of the sovereignty of the citizens which they represent. Thus, the legislature does not only make laws for good governance but also serve as watchdog to the excess of the executive, promote democratic consolidation and population participation in all policies of the government (Mbah, 2014).

The executive arm of government play an important role in policy implementation and is in charge of the day-to-day running of the government. The executive occupies a critical position in the state. It plays administrative role and through it policy decisions are made and implemented as acted by the legislators, via the coordination of the daily activities of various departments and units within her unit (Laski, 1992; Fatile, 2017). The executive arm formulates national policies sent to the legislative arm for input and deliberation and subsequently passed into law, while the executive arm carries out the implementation of such policies. The executive initiates or formulates programs and policies, and subsequently implements and coordinates such policies after the passage into law of those policies and programs by the legislators thus giving legal backing to the programs (Fatile, 2017).

A peaceful coexistence between the two arms of government that is the legislative and the executive in the broader sense can be guaranteed when the city has confidence in the political institution that is free of continuous interference and when there is mutual respect (Aiyede & Isumonah, 2002). The relations between the legislative and the executive are constitutionally defined which assist in structuring the model of

interactions between them (Lijphart, 2004). The nature of relations between the legislative and the executive in a presidential system of government most often faced with issues because the structure or the institutional arrangements bequeathed on the system which often interactive and issues of national concern, which often lead to stalemate or left unresolved (Hammond & Butler, 2003). Legislative—executive relations ensure democratic consolidation and guarantee good governance and greater democratic dividend especially in political institutions such that the legislature and the executive interact cordially and respect the tenets of separation of power and constitutional responsibilities (Aiyede and Isumonah, 2002). Legislative—executive relations represent and show a fundamental characteristic of a democratic system of government where existing structures and institutions are respected and allowed to function independently.

Legislative—executive relations either under the presidential and parliamentary or hybrid system are greatly determined by the beliefs, the attitude of the executives and legislators because complex or non—complex relations largely depends on formal (constitutional provisions and laws) or informal practices (Bernick and Bernick, 2008). Legislative—executive relations greatly depend on the quest for power within the legislative assembly and between the legislative and the executive (Penning, 2003). Thus, Penning (2003) indicated that three (3) modes of legislative—executive relations exist: the executive dominates the assembly (parliament), the legislative dominates the executive or the legislative and executive are a balance. The scholar further stated these legislative—executive relations are majorly based on the role of the Head of State (President) as the constitution provides in their dealings with the legislature, the use of confidence votes which both the legislative and executive may use to achieve a certain objective, and the use of constitutional

provision vested on the executive were their stalemate in the assembly. Similarly, Anyaegbunam (2000) demonstrated three kinds of legislative-executive relations, the polarized relationship which is frosty in nature, and a cordial relationship where mutual understanding over policy formulations and implementation often prevailed even in a face of disagreements, and relationship characterized by hostility thus creating an atmosphere of disharmony. In Nigeria, legislative—executive relations in the country's current presidential system of the government have shown more executive influence and attempted to control the legislature by the executive have often met serious challenges, even though some cases have the approval of the executive arm of government in the country and still have some level of imprint on the legislature. Legislative—executive relations in a parliamentary system of government give the legislative arm powers over the government they often exercise during policy issues and on individuals in the form of influencing their decisions. The kind of legislative-executive relations at a particular point in time is greatly influenced by the nature, structure, and attitude of because the political system is a product of behavioral attributes of the political class or political actors as each system gives some constitutional duties, responsibilities, and privileges to both the legislature and the executive. Hence, the way these privileges is exercise depends on the kind of relationship that existed between them (Oni, 2013).

4. Setting the Stage: Historical and Constitutional Insights:

Studies have shown that the legislation formally started in 1922 because of the Clifford Constitution that made a provision for four Nigerian to be elected into the Council of fourth—six members, while others apart from the four elected were handpicked for the representation of various interests (Tom & Attai, 2014). Although, before

the 1922 Clifford Constitution after the combination of the Northern and Southern protectorates, a legislative body was put in place comprising of thirty-six people selected and picked by the colonialist government to form the Nigerian Council, while way before the Legislative Council existed to mainly oversee the affairs of the colony when the colonialists officially took over Lagos (Adebo, 1988; Tom & Attai, 2014). The legislative-executive relations at this period of Nigeria's history were that of colonialist master and servant relations, which was mainly beneficial to the colonialists. The legislative—executive relations were that of the handpicked or selected few on one hand (legislators) and the colonialist on the other (executive). These legislative—executive relations in the early days of colonialism in the country were major in safely guiding the collective interest of the colonialist through the involvement of the locals in the name of participation. The legislative—executive in vogue during this period with the existence of the Nigeria Council was that of executive superiority where the legislative arm could rarely reject an executive proposal as well as lacking law/policy—making powers, but only exist to modify or amend what the executive may be presented (Nwaubani, 2014). The Nigerian Council, despite being large by the term of representation and composition the power to operate independently and control its finances, was greatly absent because of the dominance of the executive as the council was reduced to a debating organization of the Governor General Annual Address (Nwaubani, 2014).

Richard's constitution of 1946 and Macpherson's constitution of 1951 continued with the elective principle with an increase in the number of elective representatives in the Colonial Legislative Council (Tom & Attai, 2014). The Westminster Parliamentary system was in place in Nigeria's independence in 1960 with a bicameral legislature with the House of

Representatives and the Senate, with 312 members elected in the House of Representatives and the 44 members selected from the federal system in place for the Senate (Adebo 1988). The legislative-executive relations in the first republic allow both the Senate and House of Representatives as well as the executive to consolidate the independence of Nigeria and strengthen the institutions of the state. The exercise of the legislative duties of the National Assembly, especially in appropriation, was prominent in this period as an input of both the House of Assemblies on executive bills was felt and the power to modify and reject the proposal or bills was exercised, thus enhancing the legislative executive. However, the legislative arm of the government in Nigeria's first republic was mild because they, unfortunately, found themselves under a more solid executive thus legislative executive during this period of the nation's life was a weak legislative house verse a strong executive branch of government (Fashagba, 2009). The legislative—executive relations in Nigeria's first republic were that of the legislature was humanely an appendage of the executive that clearly shows legal independence and absence of mutual respect for the constitutional responsibility of the legislature as they were made to do the bidding of majorly the executive arm of the government, as reflected in the government intervention of the 1964 Western Regional Crisis without due regards to the legislature (Nwaubani, 2014). And when the executive arm of government created Mid—West Region, the legislative input was manipulated and minimum because the Western region was under administrator and the West House of Assembly was basically not available to determine or otherwise of the split in its region (Nwaubani, 2014).

The bicameral legislature was maintained in Nigeria's second republic with a new nomenclature National Assembly, and there was no structural difference in the legislative in the aborted third

republic with geographical representation with each of the then 19 federating states subdivided five (5) roughly equal territorial constituencies with each of them presenting a senator (Tom & Attai, 2014). The legislature was strengthened in the second republic because of the constitutional provision for a presidential system and direct election used during this period, as the legislators commanded some respect (Dudley, 1982). The commanding respect that the legislature of the second republic got did not stop the frosty legislative—executive relations during this era. The legislative—executive relations in the second republic were sore with allegations of continuous obstruction, and self—aggrandizement, and subsequently, both chambers were reluctant in passing the budget, which was delayed for about four months for these reasons (Tom & Attai, 2014). The second republic witnessed issues such as headship tussle in the legislative arm of the government, which was further aggravated by the absence of an independent and cordial relationship between the legislative and executive (Fashagba, 2009). The legislative—executive relations were lopsided, as the executive was stronger and existed as an overriding political institution, while the legislature was more of an ineffective and inefficient body incapable of performing its fundamental or constitutional responsibilities of formulating and constructively critical of government finance and policies (Nwaubani, 2014).

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided for a bicameral structure that is the Senate called the upper legislative chamber, and the House of Representatives, which is called the lower chamber, constitutes the National Assembly, while the constitution in section 4 provides legislative powers. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria practically provided or granted the power of legislation to the chambers as captured in Section 4, Subsection 1 thus: "the legislative

powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly for the Federation, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives". The 1999 constitution further demonstrated the need for peaceful co—existence, which is needed for good governance, thus providing the need for more robust and cordial relations between the legislative executive (Mbah, 2014). The 1999 amended constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides the ratification of the appointment made by the executive arm. The screening and confirmation of appointees of the executive as spelled out in the Section 147 Sub—section 2 and Section 154 Sub—section 1 empowers the Senate to confirm nominees for ministerial positions, ambassadorial positions, and members and board of some agencies of government (Michael, 2013). Amongst the appointment of the executive that requires confirmation of the executive are Niger Delta Development Commission, the Code of Conduct Bureau, the Independent National Electoral Commission, the Federal Character Commission, the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission, the National Population Commission, the Police Service Commission and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Michael, 2013).

5. Zooming-in on the Fourth Republic:

Selected Cases:

Legislative—executive relations in Nigeria's fourth republic has been devoid of cooperation, while conflict and confrontation over the exercise of power, responsibilities, and tussle over public policy decisions and of course implementation thus seemly making this republic the most problematic issues in the country's democratic dispensation (Oni, 2013; Aiyede, 2005). Unlike the previous, the times the legislature in the fourth republic was prominent in exercising its constitutional responsibilities, thus making them more proactive by going beyond just lawmaking

to conducting oversight on the executive arm of the government through various steering committees and carrying out investigations into issues of public importance such as the Zaki - Biam and Odi invasion of the military through the order of the executive, as well as courage this legislature to overriding the executive on some policies (Nwaubani, 2014). The legislative and the executive arms of government in the current fourth republic have witnessed a serious tussle over a series of issues beginning with the high allowance and salaries of the legislators that the executive clearly show their displeasure, and the alleges executive interferences in legislative activities have no doubt increasing disharmony among the bodies. Akomolede & Akomolede (2012, p. 67) clearly stated the nature and modality of this executive interference thus

It is however disheartening to say that the exercise of the above function to ensure good governance for the benefit of all and sundry is often interfered with and hampered by the executive. This is done, first and foremost, by the executive ensuring that their cronies are elected as the leaders of those houses through excessive politicking orchestrated and funded by the executive. Again, where the legislature musters enough courage and ventures to carry out any of the oversight functions, the executive often resorts to the use of money to pursue a "divide and rule" agenda to break the rank and file of the legislators.

The legislative—executive relations in Nigeria's fourth republic have deteriorated into a conflict that often affects policies that would have to ensure good governance and delivery of democratic dividends to the citizens who elected them (Fatile, 2017). The legislative—executive relations under the 4th and 5th National Assembly were not so cordially partly to due personal interest from both the legislative and the executive arms of the government. The political leadership tussle of the lower chamber between the then Speaker of the House of Representatives Ghali Umar Naa'baba and the

then President Olusegun Obasanjo led to frosty relations between the legislative – executive because the president made attempts to remove the Speaker through the members of the House that were loyal to him through an impeachment motion. This was equally in the case in the Senate where the consistent remove of the Senate President was attributable to the executive interference in the activities of the legislators (Fashagba, 2009). The attempts at removing the Speaker of the House of Representatives at the early stage of the fourth republic was extended to the Senate that succeeded via the influence of the executive. The personality clash between the former speaker of the House of Representatives Ghali Umar Na’abba and the former executive president Olusegun Obasanjo undisputedly led to frosty relations between the legislative and executive of the government at the beginning of the fourth republic in 1999, and the then Speaker of the house barrage several allegations against the executive (Kabir, 2016). The political tussle between the then president and the Speak of the House of Representatives was apparently blindsided by the emergence of the Ghali Umar Na’abba as the Speaker of the House lacked the backing of the president after the sudden remover of Salisu Buhari over certificate racketeering that he presented, which invariably has the support of the president (Ihenacho, 2002). The legislative – executive relations escalated because of the displeasure of the president over the emergence of the Na’abba thus deploring spurious impeachment plan toward the speakers and allege of money and the promise of a return ticket to members of the House of Representatives to perform this plan (Ihenacho, 2002).

Both Evan Enwerem and Chuba Okadigbo, who were Senate Presidents from 1999–2000, were removed courtesy of the executive influence over the constitutional functions of the legislative. However, the arrival of Senator Anyim Pius Anyim (2000–2003) prompted some levels of

legislative-executive relations at the expense of the constitutional responsibility of the upper chamber. And the unilateral decision of the executive to implement the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the handing over the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon led to more frosty and frightening relations between legislative and executive considering the sudden removal of the previous Senate President Pius Okadigbo and Adolphus Wabara sway of the executive (Fashagba, 2009). Legislative – executive relations under the administration of Umaru Musa Yar’Adua and Goodluck Jonathan improved substantially and partially due to the coordination of the office of the Special Adviser to the executive president on National Assembly matters and it promptly executive – relations conference organized to promote political stability and stimulate smooth and harmonious relations among the two arms of government (Eme & Ogbochie, 2014).

The issue of budget padding remains to dominate the 8th National Assembly, which invariably causes frosty relations between the legislative executive in Nigeria’s fourth republic. The padding issues in 2005 cost the seat of the then-Senate President Senator Adolphus Wabara in the legislative arm and the eventual dismissal of Professor Fabian Osuji, who was then the Minister of Education from the executive arm of the government, as the financial inducement was carried purposely to give a passage of the inflated budget of the ministry of education, thus generating some backlash between the two bodies (Fashagba, 2009; Osuji 2005). Even in the 4th and 5th National Assemble the legislative – executive relation was frosty due to the issue of discriminatory budgetary implementation. The implementation of the annual budget distorts the relations between the legislative executive this period because the legislature on their part tries to make the executive not only accountable to the people in the implementation of budgetary provisions the selective implementation

of projects in the budget most draws backlash and displeasure of the legislators (Fashagba, 2009). The 2016 budgetary proposal was one of the most controversial appropriation bills in the history of Nigeria because of padding of the budget was heavily irreconcilable differences was discovered during the scrutiny of the document by the legislature, as inflated estimates were included in the provision of MDAs and two versions of the budgets as at that time existed in the National Assembly, leading to the throwing of accusation and counter—accusation between the legislature and the executive (Theophilus & Perpetua, 2016).

Prominent among the issues that have led to frosty relations between the legislative—executive is the unilateral scrapping of some existing policies by the executive that the legislators felt was a fundamental responsibility as the constitution requires them to carry along in the making and repealing policies legally formulated by the assemble, some such policies are the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF), while the legislators also aroused concern over the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) Act, Electoral Act 2001 over insertions of clauses, which they consider a controversial and unilateral change in budgetary provisions by the national assembly, which the executive always express their displeasure (Obi, 2013; Onimisi, 2014; Onimisi, 2018). The legislative—executive relations in the fourth republic were even more confrontational during the performance of oversight responsibilities of the legislative arm of the government, which in most cases, the executive arm sees this discharge of the function of the legislature as witch—hunting and a form of intimidation.

The relations between the legislative and the executive in Nigeria's fourth republic were frosty when it comes to nominations and confirmations of a candidate for the executive position because of a series of rejections by the legislators that

often does not please the executive. The most obvious in the rejection by the 8th Senate of Ibrahim Magu for the position of head of the anti-corruption body, the Economic and Financial Crime Corruption (EFFC) to the displeasure of the executive arm of the government. A number of rejections were promptly captured by Fashagba, (2009), such as the nomination and rejection of Professor Babalola Borisade in 2003, who was nominated for the ministerial position and subsequently rejected by the Senate over his failure to adequately resolve the Academic Staff of the Union of Universities (ASUU) prolong industrial action 2001, while he was in charge of the Ministry of Education, although he was later confirmed after a few months. Again, the scholar captures the rejection of Mrs. Mobolaji Osomo, who was also nominated for the ministerial position and the rejection of another candidate nominated by the executive as she replaced Ambassador Bayo Yusuf was based on her inability to explain the full meaning of the acronym NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies), also rejected was Mr. Augustus and Dr. Obadiah Ando ministers in the early stage of the fourth republic.

The legislative-executive relations in the fourth republic have been characterized by disagreements and conflict basically because of the different perspectives and views of both bodies, these disagreements although not new to emerging democracy made worsened in the country because of personal interest and ego tribal and sectional interest, and the fear of mutual suspicions of both the legislators and executive (Mbah, 2014). Beyond the issue of personal interest and ego, is the issue of budget padding, the financial responsibility of the legislature and power of appropriation of both the Senate and House of Assemble, which is basically to cut the excesses and control of the executive has in the fourth republic hindered the legislative relations. The legislature is saddled

with the appropriation of public funds in Nigeria under the amended 1999 constitution of the country as stated in Section 81/82, which clearly stated that before the fund is withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue of the country the approval and authorization must be gotten from the National Assembly deployed by the Assemble to curtail the executive has led to more frosty legislative—executive relations (Michael, 2013). The executive recent times has gone ahead to withdraw from the Consolidated Revenue of the Federation for the purchase of Fighter Planes without recourse to the National Assembly for appropriation that the legislature has frowned at, thus constituting tension and acrimony among the legislators and executives.

6. Connecting the Dots and Lessons Learnt:

Cordial legislative-executive relations: Cordial legislative-executive relations are critical to the promotion of good governance and deepening democratic principles in any nation of the world. Cordial legislative-executive relations do not only promote good governance, it ensures the smooth running of the government, and of course, any democratic system is also adopted. Harmonious relations between the legislative and the executive bring sanity to the polity of the country, thus guaranteeing peace and co—existence, which is needed for governance to thrive in the country. The cordial legislative—executive relations remain one major means of ensuring democratic dividend to the country's citizens because smoothing running of the daily activities of the government is best guaranteed when all the arms of government are working together thus relegating the fear of recklessness and tyranny as well as promoting strict adherence to the principles of separation and constitutionalism (Fatile, 2017; Omotola, 2008).

Accountability in governance: The cordial relations between the legislature and the executive would ensure accountability in governance,

adequate and prompt response to the aspiration of the citizen, formulation, and implementation of the laws that will promote democratic tenets, enforcement of rules, and issues of national integration would literally be resolved and democratic institutions in Nigeria would strengthen and grounded in the discharged in stationary duties (Davies, 2004). And importantly since the legislature has the responsibility to represent and express the needs of aspirations of the people, as well as to make laws, and debates, deliberate and regulate the activities and operations of the government, and put into consideration various interests, strata, and divide in a multi—ethnic society such as Nigeria (Bakare, 2009; Michael, 2013). This makes it imperative for cordial legislative relations in Nigeria for the opinion, views, and interests of most of the citizens is considered during the formulation and implementation of policies.

Effective mechanism for conflict resolution: Cordial legislature—executive relations would serve as an effective mechanism for conflict resolution, mediation, and agents of the promotion of industrial harmony. Over time, the legislature has assumed the responsibility of mediation between the executive and some bodies/agencies, and their intervention has led to several industrial harmony and calling-off industrial actions such Academic Staff Union of Universities verse the Federal Government, Major Oil Marketers, and the Federal Government, and the Labor Union and the Federal Government among others (Michael, 2013).

Frosty cordial legislative—executive relations: The frosty legislative—executive relations in Nigeria's fourth republic, which saw the removal of about three Senate presidents in the space of three years and the attempted removal of a number of speakers of the House of Representatives, which was heavily influenced by the executive arm has led to a worrisome dimension in the relations of two arms thus creating a logjam in socio—economic and political issues, disconnect in public policy

formulation and implementation and matters of national importance thus making the goal of providing good governance to the citizen far from being achieved (Aiyede 2005; Fatile, 2017). The legislative—executive relations are fundamental to the expression of the will and meeting the aspirations of the citizen because an absence of cordial relations between these two important bodies of government would keep the government far from meeting its target of good governance for most of the populace. The frosty relations between the legislative and executive, unfortunately, hampered the quest for good governance, subsequently denying Nigerians the benefits of democracy.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations:

The paper explores the imperative of the legislative-executive relations in the Nigerian fourth republic with a particular focus on a few core issues that have affected the cordial relationship needed for the country's quest for democratic consolidation and in the long run will help in not only widening democratic principles, but it will be deepening democracy and promoting good governance in Nigeria. The legislative—executive relations should be free of one influencing the other because this kind of relationship is counter-productive as it will affect the good and effective governance in the country. Ensuring good governance requires all stakeholders, which include both chambers of the national assemblies and the executive arm of the government and heads of ministries and parastatals as a matter of national importance to be almost not on the same page to guarantee democratic dividends to the citizen of Nigeria.

The business of ensuring good governance requires the cooperation of both the legislature and executive arms of the government; thus, bills and policies that concern the socio-economic, political, and general welfare of the citizenry

should be subjected to scrutiny by a joint committee that includes both chambers (Senate and House of Representatives) and the executive before it is presented for general deliberation of all members of parliament. This would not only ensure better and cordial relations between the legislative and the executive, but also reduce the incidents of rejection of bills and democratic principles is better ensured and good governance is guaranteed. Dialog is another important tool for strengthening legislative—executive relations in Nigeria. All issues that seem unclear to both the legislature and the executive can be resolved and made clear through dialog. These two important arms of government must always engage in continuous or regular dialog as this will ensure and promote cordial relations between the bodies. While continuous dialogues are advocated, the principles of separation of power should be respected in the dealing of both the legislative and executive arms of government as this is an important and guaranteed way of ensuring and promoting cordial legislative-executive relations.

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Protecting Children's Privacy: Legal Strategies to Limit Sharenting in Thailand

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Abstract

The rise of social media has led to the phenomenon of "sharenting" - parents sharing extensive personal information and pictures of their children online. While this practice is well-intentioned, it raises significant privacy concerns for children whose personal information is published without their consent. Thailand, where social media usage is very high, but data protection laws are still emerging, is an example of the challenges of protecting children's online privacy. This study analyzes the Thai legal framework for the protection of children's personal data, particularly about sharenting and the "right to be forgotten" under the Thai Data Protection Act (PDPA). Through a comparative analysis of data protection regimes in the United States and the European Union, gaps in Thai laws are highlighted. The study highlights the urgent need for Thailand to clarify the policies and procedures that allow children to request the deletion of their data shared online by their parents. It suggests possible changes to existing child protection and privacy laws to better define the boundaries for parental sharing of children's information. It also recommends raising parental awareness and creating mechanisms for children to exercise their privacy rights. In light of growing concerns about digital privacy, this study highlights the importance of continuously reviewing and strengthening legal protections for the most vulnerable members of society.

1. Introduction:

Social media has revolutionized how we interact online, and its impact on parenting is no exception. In today's digital age, many parents use social media to document their children's lives and share their experiences with others (Brosch 2016). However, the practice of "sharenting" has raised concerns about children's privacy and personal information being shared online without their consent (Steinberg 2017). This problem is

particularly worrying in Thailand, where internet usage is rapidly growing, and children's rights to privacy are not always clearly defined.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated the trend of "sharenting," with many parents working from home and using social media to connect with others. As a result, there has been a surge in data exchange and storage, which has also increased threats to privacy rights (Amon et al., 2022). In Thailand, approximately 52.25 million

people, or 72.8% of the population, use social media, according to a report by Datareportal Digital. (Internet Usage in Asian Internet Users 2023; Datareportal Digital 2023) This widespread adoption of smartphones and increased internet usage has increased privacy violations, particularly against children (Livingstone & Smith 2014).

Despite the potential risks, Thailand's legal framework for protecting children's privacy on social media is still in its infancy. This study aims to analyze Thailand's current laws and regulations that protect children's personal information and privacy rights from being shared on social media. Specifically, we will explore the right to the erasure of personal data and the extent to which current laws address this right. This study will use qualitative and documentary research models to gather information from various sources, including constitutional provisions, textbooks, articles, dissertations, expert opinions, and critical analysis.

The significance of this study is to bring attention to the issue of "sharenting" and to explore the legal framework in Thailand that protects children's rights to privacy. Children are particularly vulnerable to privacy violations on social media, and their rights must be protected to ensure their safety and well-being. By analyzing current laws and regulations, we can provide guidelines for further legislation that better protects children's privacy rights on social media.

2. Materials and Methods:

This research examines the legal provisions that protect children's personal information and privacy rights in Thailand and other countries with strong privacy laws. By analyzing laws from Thailand and countries such as the United States and in Europe, this study aims to understand the measures in place to safeguard children's personal information and privacy.

The methodology for this research will involve a thorough review of relevant laws,

regulations, and scholarly articles on children's privacy and the protection of personal information. This research will also examine the practical implications of these laws, exploring any challenges or gaps in protecting children's personal information and privacy rights.

The findings of this research will be significant in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the legal provisions in place to protect children's personal information and privacy rights in Thailand, as well as providing a comparative perspective with other countries. Furthermore, by drawing attention to areas needing improvement, this research will inform efforts to strengthen the protection of children's personal information and privacy rights in Thailand and beyond.

In conclusion, this research will comprehensively examine the legal provisions in place to protect children's personal information and privacy rights in Thailand and other countries. Furthermore, by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of these provisions, this research will inform efforts to enhance the protection of children's personal information and privacy rights in the future.

3. The Concept of Protecting Personal Rights and Personal Data:

The contemporary legal frameworks of democratic nations across both international and domestic domains exhibit an almost universal acknowledgment and safeguarding of individual rights. This phenomenon arises from the conceptualization of personal rights as intrinsic human rights, inherent to all individuals from the moment of birth. Consequently, state authorities are expressly proscribed from undertaking any actions that would constitute an infringement or violation of these fundamental rights. The inviolability of such rights is regarded as an inviolable tenet, requiring the utmost adherence and reverence within the juridical sphere. Empirical research endeavors have yielded findings that

elucidate the congruent conceptualization of the "right to privacy" espoused by global and regional international organizations. This shared understanding can be encapsulated as follows: the inviolable personal prerogative and liberty of every human individual to self—determine their existence or *modus vivendi* by their intrinsic satisfaction or desire, unfettered by the obtrusive interference or interventions of external parties. This formulation posits the right to privacy as an inalienable human right, granting individuals the autonomy to chart the course of their lives without encroachment from extraneous entities or forces (Nimnoo 2019).

3.1 *The Concept of Protecting Personal Rights*

The concept of individual rights can be traced back to Christian religious teachings and the natural law schools of thought, evolving over an extended period. Throughout history, there have been periods where individual rights were abolished and others where they were more widely accepted.

In contemporary times, the most significant and widely recognized individual rights can be categorized as follows (Nimnoo 2019):

1. *Information Privacy* is a fundamental right concerning personal information, encompassing any data related to an individual that can be obtained directly or indirectly through identifiers such as national identification numbers (e.g., social security numbers) or unique personal elements (e.g., full name, date of birth, biometric data, fingerprints, DNA, etc.). This personal data is subject to regulations governing its collection and management, to safeguard individual privacy.

2. *Bodily Privacy* is a fundamental aspect of personal autonomy that safeguards an individual's physical integrity against invasive procedures or interventions that may violate their privacy rights without informed consent. This concept encompasses the protection of an individual's body from being subjected to operations or experiments that

infringe upon their privacy rights, such as genetic experimentation, mandatory drug testing, and other forms of unauthorized bodily intrusion (Beauchamp & Childress 2001).

3. *Privacy of Communication* is a fundamental principle that safeguards the confidentiality and security of individuals' communications, regardless of the medium used. This principle aims to protect the sanctity of communications by letter, telephone, electronic mail, or any other means, ensuring that the content of such communications remains inaccessible to unauthorized parties (Solove 2008).

4. *Territorial Privacy* refers to the concept of establishing boundaries or limitations that prevent unauthorized individuals from encroaching upon or intruding on private premises (Altman 1975). This notion encompasses various aspects, including the installation of surveillance devices such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and the verification of individuals' identities through national identification documents (ID checks) before granting access to residential or private spaces.

The evolution of personal rights protection in Thailand's constitutional framework has undergone significant transformations over time. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2540 (1997), marked the first explicit recognition of personal rights in Section 34 (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1997). Subsequently, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2550 (2007), in Section 35, further solidified the protection of personal rights and provided more comprehensive safeguards for personal data (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2007). However, when the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2560 (2017), came into effect, the wording in Section 32, which had previously protected personal rights in the 2007 Constitution, was revised to be more concise (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2017). This constitutional evolution reflects Thailand's ongoing efforts to adapt its legal framework to address the evolving needs and challenges surrounding personal rights and data protection. The changes in wording and scope across the different constitutional iterations

highlight the dynamic nature of this area and the continuous refinement of legal provisions to keep pace with societal developments.

3.2 *The concept of protecting Personal Data*

The internet has revolutionized global connectivity and information sharing. While its creative utilization offers manifold benefits, misuse can lead to concerning consequences. Unauthorized access to personal data, illegal content dissemination violating intellectual property rights, cybercrime facilitation, and obfuscation of digital trails exemplify the potential dangers. Such activities infringe upon individual privacy and freedoms, necessitating regulatory measures to strike a balance. Initially, internet content regulation aimed to safeguard minors from harmful materials while preserving free expression and fostering open technological development. Regulatory frameworks must evolve to uphold user rights and safety in the digital sphere (Srihatai 2019).

The protection of personal information privacy on the Internet involves two main approaches: legal measures and self—regulation. Legal measures can be further divided into two (Nimnoo 2019):

1. Comprehensive legislation: This approach involves a single, overarching law that covers all privacy cases. It is commonly found in European countries, such as Sweden and Germany, as well as in countries with common law systems.

2. Case-specific legislation: In contrast, the United States has adopted a sectoral approach, enacting legislation to address specific privacy issues as they arise, such as privacy for medical information, loan information, and so forth.

The second approach is self—regulation, which is widely accepted in the United States. In this model, groups of entrepreneurs or individuals form organizations to create rules, etiquette, and ethical guidelines for self—monitoring (Bambauer 2013). These self-regulatory efforts do not rely on state—enforced legal authority but rather on shared missions and responsibilities. Consequently, self-

regulation is generally considered more flexible and voluntary than law enforcement (Hirsch 2010).

The recognition of the significance of privacy and the exercise of individual rights and freedoms has led to the evolution of the protection of individual rights and personal data, both internationally and at the national level. This is reflected in the legal framework that guarantees and safeguards fundamental rights such as Information Privacy, Bodily Privacy, Privacy of Communication, and Territorial Privacy. In Thailand, the Constitution has witnessed continuous improvements in laws aimed at protecting personal rights and personal data, underscoring the importance of privacy and the exercise of individual rights and freedoms in the country's legal landscape.

4. **Sharenting and the Protection of Children's Personal Data: A Comparative Analysis of the United States, the European Union, and Thailand**

4.1 *Protection of children's personal data in the United States*

Social media use among young people in the United States is widespread, with 95% of 13-17-year-olds with access to social media and over 45% using it regularly. This technology makes it easier for parents to share photos and updates of their children, with approximately 75% of parents and guardians in the U.S. using social media for this purpose. However, when a parent publicly shares a child's personal information on social media, it creates potential risks, such as exploitation by fraudsters, and negative impacts on the child's well-being, such as bullying or difficulty at school or work (Anderson & Jingjing 2018).

Although the US has privacy and personal data protection laws, including the Fourth Amendment and sectoral laws, there is no centralized law on data protection, such as the European General Data Protection Regulation (Blum—Ross & Livingstone 2017; Keith & Steinberg 2017). This lack of a centralized law means that the US does not have a specific "right to be

forgotten" as provided for in the European Union Directive (Dowdell 2017). One of the reasons for this is that the right to be forgotten conflicts with the fundamental human right to free and open access to information, which is enshrined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

In the U.S., the Restatement of Torts provides legal protection like the "right to be forgotten" and deals with the public disclosure of shameful private facts. Nevertheless, if the information is no longer relevant or has lost its significance, individuals do not have the authority to ask for its deletion (Gajda 2018).

While the Supreme Court has recognized the rights of parents to raise their children and the freedom of expression, these rights are limited and can be restricted if they affect the child's welfare. The court has also recognized the right to privacy in the Bill of Rights, as seen in the 1965 case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (Fazlioglu 2021).

In the United States, the Communication Decency Act 1966 (CDA) protects third parties from the content on websites, ensuring that Internet companies can grow without fear of litigation from their activities. Section 230 of the CDA provides online intermediaries with immunity for their editorial decisions regarding screening and deletion from their network. However, the right to be forgotten is still difficult to define and protect in the United States, as it conflicts with the rights of free expression and access to information. It is also difficult to exercise this right in a world where information is usually saved on the internet all the time (Goldman 2007).

Overall, while the US has privacy and personal data protection laws, it does not have a central law for data protection or a specific right-to-be-forgotten law. The US does have legal forgiveness in the Restatement of Torts, which is like the right to be forgotten, but the right to be forgotten conflicts with the fundamental human right to free and open access to information, which is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution (Dowdell 2017).

4.2 Protection of children's personal data in the European Union

Protecting children's personal data privacy is a global issue not limited to specific regions like the European Union (EU) or the United States (Schwartz & Solove 2014). The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides a central law for personal data protection, but it still has gaps in protecting children's personal data. While the GDPR recognizes the need for specific protection for children's information, the exemption of personal and household activities from the GDPR's provisions creates a loophole that could violate children's rights through practices such as "Sharenting" (Donovan 2020).

Sharenting refers to parents sharing their children's photos and personal information on social media platforms without their children's consent (Barnes & Potter 2020). This phenomenon has become widespread, with some parents sharing information about their children's lives from birth through adulthood (Brosch 2018). However, it is essential to recognize that this practice can put children's privacy and security at risk. Moreover, children may not fully understand the potential risks and consequences of sharing their personal information online (Siibak & Traks 2019).

To protect children's personal data effectively, the GDPR must be refined to address the complexities of family life and household activities. The regulation must provide comprehensive and specific protection for children's privacy, given their vulnerability and the increasing internet use by younger generations. The GDPR recognizes the right to be forgotten, where individuals can request that their personal information be deleted when it is no longer needed or deemed incomplete or inaccurate. This law aims to ensure that data controllers who collect and manage private information respect the rights of data owners and protect their information from misuse (Haley 2020).

Recently, the EU proposed a new directive to address present issues and achieve the most significant benefit for individuals. On June 15, 2015, the Council agreed on the new General

Data Protection Regulation approach. In May 2016, the official texts of the Regulation were launched and enforced, intending to replace Directive 95/46/EC. Under the new directive, the right to be forgotten is provided under the title of "Right to Erasure" in Article 17. This law imposes strict conditions and only allows data controllers to retain personal information for legitimate purposes (Asensio 2020).

In conclusion, protecting children's personal data privacy needs to be addressed globally, and the GDPR needs to be refined to ensure comprehensive protection for children's privacy. While the GDPR recognizes the right to be forgotten, it must address the complexities of family life and household activities to ensure that children's rights are not violated through practices such as sharenting. The new directive proposed by the EU is a step in the right direction towards achieving the most benefit for individuals while addressing present issues.

4.3 Protection of children's personal data in Thailand

Thailand has established a legal framework to protect personal data through the PDPA. The PDPA safeguards personal data and regulates its collection, use, and disclosure by data controllers. The law requires data controllers to obtain consent from data subjects, provide information on the purpose of data collection, and implement measures to secure the data (Greenleaf & Suriyawongkul 2019).

However, the PDPA does not explicitly address protecting children's personal data or provide for their protection. This gap is concerning, as children increasingly use social media and may be at risk of having their personal data shared online. Moreover, there is a lack of awareness among parents and children about the risks of sharing personal data online. Therefore, there is a need for educational campaigns to raise awareness of data privacy and protection (Napatanapong & Ariyasunthorn 2022).

A study of the right to be forgotten in Thailand revealed that while Section 33 of the PDPA protects this right, there are exceptions to its exercise. The lack of clear and comprehensive details on how to exercise the right to be forgotten is an issue, as Thailand does not have a law explicitly protecting this right. Additionally, personal information is not clearly defined, and there are no guidelines on how to make personal data non-identifiable. Therefore, there are no practical details on handling personal data in each case, including exceptions to exercising such rights (Eiamchamroonlarp 2022; Langkarpint 2023).

In conclusion, while Thailand has established a legal framework to protect personal data, including the PDPA, there are gaps in protecting children's personal data and exercising the right to be forgotten. Therefore, there is a need for further education and clear guidelines to protect personal data and privacy, particularly for children who are increasingly using social media.

In summary, the protection of children's personal data and the right to be forgotten is a complex issue that requires comprehensive legal frameworks and clear guidelines in different regions. In the United States, while privacy and personal data protection laws exist, there is a lack of a centralized privacy law and a specific right to be forgotten law, which conflicts with the fundamental right to free and open access to information. The GDPR recognizes the need for special protection for children's data and the right to be forgotten, but still has gaps when it comes to addressing the complexities of family life and household activities such as sharenting. Thailand has introduced the PDPA to protect personal data, but it does not explicitly address the protection of children's personal data and does not provide clear guidelines for exercising the right to be forgotten. Therefore, the legal framework, awareness campaigns and practical guidelines need to be further refined to ensure comprehensive protection of children's personal data and the right to be forgotten in the different regions.

3.Result:

Parents' motivations for sharing personal information about their children online vary greatly. These include sharing family moments with relatives or friends, seeking support for a child's illness, or seeking online fame. Regardless of the motivations, sharing children's personal information can have a direct or indirect impact on their lives—immediately or in the future (Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017; Steinberg 2017).

Thailand enacted the Child Protection Act of 2003 (CPA) to protect children's personal information. Section 27 prohibits advertising or disseminating information about a child or his or her guardian through mass media or technology if it is intended to harm the child's mental, reputational, or other interests or to gain an undue advantage for oneself or others. Section 50 prohibits guardians and child protection workers from publishing a child's name, photograph, or personal details that could harm their reputation or rights (Chotchaisathit, 2014). However, this protection only applies to third parties, not parents. Parental disclosure of a child's personal details online does not contravene the CPA, as the law assumes parental responsibility for the child's welfare, which creates a gap in comprehensive protection.

The PDPA provides more robust protection for personal data, aligning with the United States' provisions that protect personal data for legal purposes only. Where a specific law infringes personal data, it must be protected unless exceptions apply, such as the collection, use, and disclosure of personal data, the rights of the data subject, and sanctions. Where specific laws do not contain provisions for complaints, powers to order expert committees, or regulatory duties, the PDPA applies. Unfortunately, Thai law does not restrict parents from posting their minor children's personal information online, which could allow it to be used without consent or for illegal purposes.

Regarding the right to erase personal data, Thai society is still adjusting to the new right of individuals to delete, restrict, or alter their historical

data on the Internet. The data subject has the right to request deletion or destruction of their personal data under Section 33 of the PDPA. Section 37 (3), meanwhile, requires the personal data controller or processor to delete or destroy the data if it meets the criteria set by law (Eiamchamroonlarp 2022).

The Thai legal system protects children's personal information, but there are gaps in the protection provided by the CPA. The PDPA provides more comprehensive protection, but there are still limitations in the ability to erase personal data from the internet. As technology evolves, the legal system must adapt to provide more robust and comprehensive protection for children's personal information.

Thailand's privacy protection is still in its early stages, reflecting the nation's history of authoritarianism, in contrast to the liberal, individualist principles that underpin privacy protection in many developed countries. Privacy is, therefore, not a widely recognized concept in Thai culture.

In the digital age, sharing personal information online, especially about children, is a common practice among parents. The proliferation of social media platforms has facilitated the sharing of real names, birthdays, photos of birthday parties, and other personal details. However, this widespread sharing of personal information poses significant risks to children's privacy, as unauthorized parties can access and exploit this data (Steinberg 2017). In addition, children may come into conflict with their parents due to the information shared online, which can lead to negative psychological consequences (Duggan et al. 2015).

In Western societies, the protection of personal data has become a major concern, leading to the adoption of laws designed to prevent data breaches. However, the GDPR, a landmark data protection law, fails to address the problem of "sharenting" – a term used to describe the over-sharing of children's personal information by parents on social media platforms (Steinberg 2017). This omission leaves significant gaps in ensuring

adequate protection of personal data. The PDPA, which is modeled after the GDPR, also overlooks the problem of sharenting and currently provides no legal protection for personal information shared by parents on social media.

The PDPA outlines key principles for the protection of personal data in Section 19, such as prohibiting the collection, use, or disclosure of personal data without the consent of the data subject. Consent must be clear and unambiguous and obtained by written or electronic means, and it can be withdrawn at any time, unless otherwise provided by law. It is evident that existing data protection regulations, while making commendable efforts, still have significant gaps, particularly about the emerging issue of sharenting. Consequently, policymakers and legal experts must work together to constantly reassess and improve data protection laws and ensure that they remain comprehensive and adaptable to the evolving technological and societal landscape (Solove, 2021).

Section 24 of the PDPA aims to protect personal data and keep it confidential for the public interest. It includes exceptions for cases where it is necessary to prevent danger to an individual's life, health, or safety, or when the data is publicly available with the explicit or implicit consent of the owner. The collection, use, or disclosure of personal data may also be necessary for contract performance, carrying out a public interest mission, legitimate interests, or compliance with law or exercise of state power. In all cases, protecting the data subject's fundamental rights are considered. Comparing the principles of consent in the PDPA and the GDPR, it is evident that the PDPA in Thailand adheres to the same principles as those set forth in the GDPR.

Article 33 of the PDPA provides for the privacy protection of the data subject's personal data, allowing the data subject to demand that the data controller delete, destroy, or anonymize their personal data. However, this right is not absolute, as Parliament can enact laws waiving the exercise of such rights by personal data subjects.

In conclusion, while the PDPA is modeled after the GDPR, it overlooks the issue of sharing personal information on social media, known as "Sharenting". The PDPA outlines key principles for protecting personal data, including consent and protection of confidential information, while considering exceptions in cases such as public interest, contract performance, and compliance with the law. However, the right to delete or destroy personal data is not absolute and can be waived by Parliament. As privacy protection is still in its initial stages in Thailand, it is necessary to continue to evaluate and improve privacy laws to ensure adequate protection against breaches.

4. Discussion:

The protection of children's privacy is an important concern in Thailand, especially when parents upload photos or videos of their under-age children to social networks. Such actions could expose the child's personal information and allow it to be used illegally or without the child's consent, who is the rightful owner of their personal information. While specific laws have been enacted in Thailand to protect personal data, these laws have been drafted based on the guidelines of the GDPR, which include the right of children to request the deletion of their parents' personal information on social media.

Despite these efforts, the Thai legal system has not yet comprehensively addressed this issue. While the PDPA follows the guidelines of the GDPR and recognizes the "Right to be forgotten" of children in Article 33 and Article 37 (2), the Act does not explicitly mention "the right to be forgotten," a provision contained in Article 17 of the GDPR. Consequently, there are no clear procedures in Thailand for the erasure, destruction, or de-identification of an individual's personal information.

Another challenge is that online data retrieval service providers may not be able to delete or destroy the data published by other data controllers. When parents upload their children's personal information to the internet, the child's

right to request the deletion of this data is unclear, which can be a cause for concern.

To address these issues, Thailand needs clear policies and procedures for the deletion of personal data, especially children's data. These policies and procedures should include provisions to ensure that online data retrieval service providers can delete or destroy data published by other data controllers, as well as clear procedures for children to exercise their right to be forgotten.

In summary, the protection of children's privacy in Thailand is a complex issue that requires careful consideration and attention. While progress has been made through the enactment of laws such as the PDPA, there is still work to be done to ensure that children's personal information is protected and their right to privacy is respected. Thailand can take a significant step towards achieving this goal by developing clear policies and procedures for the deletion of personal data.

5. Conclusion:

Thailand has taken measures to protect children's personal information through laws such as the CPA and the PDPA. However, there are gaps in protection that need to be addressed. For example, the CPA does not extend to the protection of parents' personal data and the right to erasure of personal data under the PDPA is limited, highlighting the need to prioritize the protection of children's data online.

Parents play a critical role in protecting their children's privacy when they share their personal information online. However, to improve the protection of children's personal information, the government could consider amending existing laws or regulations to define measures that set limits on the exercise of individual rights and freedoms, particularly where parents may infringe their children's rights to personal information. Specifically, the following amendments could be considered:

1. The Child Protection Act:

- Expand the scope of the CPA to include provisions to protect children's personal information, not just their physical safety and well-being.
- Define clear guidelines for parents or guardians regarding the collection, use and disclosure of their children's personal information online.
- Establish mechanisms for children to report instances where their personal data has been misused by their parents or guardians or shared without consent.

2. The Personal Data Protection Act:

- Clarify and strengthen the right to erasure of personal data, especially for minors and their parents/guardians.
- Define the circumstances in which the right to erasure of personal data can be exercised, considering the best interests of the child and the child's stage of development.
- Establish a procedure for minors to request the erasure of their personal data, either directly or through their parents/guardians, with appropriate safeguards and controls.
- Introduce specific provisions for the processing of children's personal data to ensure that their data is treated with a higher level of protection and care.

In addition, the government could consider introducing education campaigns and awareness programs to inform parents and children about the risks associated with sharing personal data online and the importance of responsible data handling. These campaigns could cover topics such as online safety, best data protection practices and the potential consequences of data breaches.

Continuous evaluation and improvement of data protection laws is essential to keep pace with the ever-evolving digital landscape and new technologies. By closing the gaps in the existing legal framework and prioritizing the data protection of children, Thailand can better protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens, especially the most vulnerable members of society.

In summary, while Thailand has taken steps to protect children's personal data, further changes and measures are needed to close the gaps in the existing legal framework. By clarifying and defining the boundaries for the exercise of individual rights and freedoms, especially in cases where parents violate their children's rights to personal data, Thailand can strengthen its commitment to protecting the privacy and personal information of its citizens, especially children.

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A Comparative Study of the Public Procurement Efficiency Measurement by Cost Saving Rate

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Abstract

The academic study explores the efficiency of public procurement by examining data from the annual government procurement reports from The Comptroller General's Department (CGD) from 2018 to 2022. Utilizing "cost savings rate" as a metric, the study reveals an average rate of 6.57 % during this period, albeit dropping to 3.04 % in 2022, down by 2.53 % from the previous year. Notably, despite comprising a smaller budget allocation, central and provincial administration, state enterprises, and local administration collectively contribute to 90 % of the total budget. Further analysis indicates that e-market procurement exhibits the highest cost savings rate (15.54 %), followed by e-bidding, while selection and specific methods yield the lowest rates. Interestingly, construction procurement, with the highest budget allocation, also boasts the highest cost savings rate, whereas goods and services procurement fall below the average in both budget and savings rate. Projections suggest a continuous decline in the overall cost savings rate, reaching a mere 0.83 % by 2025. Meanwhile, findings from audits conducted by the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand (SAO) reveal procurement deficiencies in roughly half of the audited agencies, with local administration displaying the highest frequency. Factors contributing to these deficiencies include inaccuracies in focal price calculations, non-compliance with regulations, and reluctance to source locally. Forecasts indicate a slight increase in procurement deficiencies from 2023 to 2025. Ultimately, the study underscores the insufficiency of public procurement efficiency as a determinant of pricing and competition mechanisms.

Introduction:

Public Expenditure refers to government spending aimed at maintaining the operational level of the state and for the collective benefit of

society (Khenapoom, S., & Chantanukul, W., 2016). According to annual budget expenditure forecasts based on Thailand's budget data from 2012 to 2021, Thailand's annual expenditure has been rising, especially in 2022, when the budget

reached 3,100,000 million THB, indicating a 5.66% decrease from the previous fiscal year. This could be attributed to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the worldwide economic landscape, including Thailand, prompting the government to reduce spending while advancing policies and strategies for national development to ensure public services and maintain fiscal liquidity at a sustainable level, addressing both current and future economic conditions. When forecasting Thailand's annual budget expenditure over the next three years, the expenditure is expected to rise steadily in 2023, 2024, and 2025 (Sirisanhiron, S., et al., 2022). Public procurement is a critical fiscal activity for government expenditure, with considerable annual costs that tend to increase as the government's budget grows. For example, the 2022 annual budget, under the Budget Appropriations Act 2022, amounted to 3,100,000 million THB, with procurement costs totaling 1,436,438.48 million THB across 5,363,392 projects (CGD, 2022). This accounted for 46.33% of the total budget.

The Comptroller General's Department (CGD) is responsible for supervising and managing government expenditures, procurement, and asset management. It has modernized public procurement through electronic systems like e-GP, e-market, and e-bidding, and uses GFMS (Government Fiscal Management Information System), a real-time online system for financial management. Section 8 of the Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017), stipulates that public procurement must adhere to the principles of value for money, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and auditability. At the conclusion of each fiscal year, the Department publishes government procurement results in the Thai Government Procurement system, indicating the difference between budgeted amounts and actual contract costs, known as the "cost saving rate." This rate reflects the efficiency of public procurement in terms of cost. Higher savings imply less government

expenditure, allowing reallocation to more beneficial uses or retention for fiscal stability and security, as outlined in Section 62 of the 2017 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Fiscal and Financial Discipline Law.

The study compares the relationship between Public Procurement and audit findings by the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand (SAO) from fiscal years 2018 to 2022, with a forward forecast using Time Series Analysis for 2023 to 2025. The hypothesis is that efficient procurement leads to reduced audit findings. In other words, higher savings indicate greater procurement efficiency, resulting in fewer audit findings. Conversely, lower savings point to reduced procurement efficiency, leading to more audit findings.

Public Procurement:

Procurement refers to the process of acquiring supplies through sale, hire, lease, exchange, or other legal actions as prescribed in the Ministerial Regulation, following Section 4 of the Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017). Public procurement is considered a component of government expenditures, overseen by the CGD, responsible for ensuring proper, disciplined, transparent, and auditable use of public funds. The framework and central criteria for policy and standards in public procurement are developed by the State Procurement Office, focusing on the development of laws, regulations, ministerial announcements, rules, and other legal aspects related to public procurement and supplies management. The State Procurement Office also gathers feedback from relevant stakeholders, analyzes potential legal impacts, and evaluates the effectiveness of laws within its jurisdiction and authority (CGD, 2023).

The Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) promotes the modernization of government procurement and asset management

practices. This involves reforming current paradigms to enhance process efficiency for the public's benefit and to ensure alignment with international standards across all aspects. This includes: (1) Value for Money; (2) Transparency; (3) Application of Technology; (4) Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); (5) Establishing Professionalism for Procurement Practitioners.

“Value for Money”, The principle of bureaucratic reform mandates that government agencies must operate in a manner that better serves national development and the public. According to Section 23 of the Royal Decree on Criteria and Procedures for Good Governance, B.E. 2546 (2003), government agencies are mandated to conduct procurement with transparency, fairness, and consideration for both social benefits and harms, burdens on the public, quality, intended use, price, and the long-term benefits that government agencies will receive. Moreover, the decree allows government agencies to purchase without always choosing the lowest bid, emphasizing quality and maintenance as key factors. To implement the Royal Decree effectively, creating value for money is a key paradigm shift that policy and operational stakeholders must embrace.

Creating value for money requires consideration of the following factors:

- The cost of goods and services and / or infrastructure (including other costs such as quality, performance, maintenance, and the disposal of obsolete assets).
- Supporting regional development through improved business management and local economic growth.
- Fostering social and environmental responsibility, including environmental conservation, local employment, reducing social disparities, and promoting equal employment opportunities.

If public procurement can be conducted with these factors in mind, it will lead to greater value for money, not solely focused on price. This

should be a key objective in procurement, ensuring that taxpayer funds are used efficiently and effectively, yielding the best outcomes. (OPDC, 2016)

In recent years, CGD has made significant strides in modernizing public procurement through the Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system. This system centralizes data on government procurement for both public and private sectors, providing accurate, efficient, and comprehensive access to procurement information. The goal is to increase transparency, ease of auditing, reduce corruption, minimize errors, and promote accountability. (CGD, 2019)

The development of the e-GP system occurred in several phases. Phase 1, initiated in April 2010, introduced electronic methods for procurement such as price quotation and competitive bidding. Phase 2, launched in February 2013, expanded the system to cover all 12 procurement methods and integrated with external systems like the Government Fiscal Management Information System (GFMIS). Phase 3, beginning in February 2015, established an electronic market for trading goods and services and further developed electronic bidding to foster genuine competition and transparency in government procurement. The Cabinet resolution on January 27, 2015, officially approved these strategies, with formal announcement in the Royal Gazette on February 4, 2015. Phase 4 is currently underway to align with the Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017), which came into effect on August 24, 2017. This phase emphasizes procurement through selective methods and specific methods, continuing the advancement of the e-GP system.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 (2017)

Section 62 stipulates that the State must uphold stringent financial and fiscal discipline to

ensure the sustainable stability and security of its financial and fiscal status, as mandated by the State's laws on financial and fiscal discipline. Additionally, it mandates the establishment of a taxation system to ensure fairness within society.

The law on financial and fiscal discipline of the State shall, at minimum, include provisions pertaining to the framework for managing public finances and the State budget, establishing fiscal discipline concerning both budgetary and extra-budgetary revenues and expenditures, managing State assets and treasury reserves, and overseeing public debt management.

The State Fiscal and Financial Disciplines Act, B.E. 2561 (2018)

Section 48 mandates that procurement and asset management by State agencies adhere rigorously to the guidelines outlined in the law on public procurement and state asset management, or follow the internal rules and regulations of the State agencies. These activities must be conducted with honesty, cost-efficiency, transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency, and be subject to scrutiny.

Section 80 stipulates that state audits must be conducted with honesty, diligence, transparency, fairness, courage, and without prejudice, adhering to good governance principles outlined in the Organic Act on State Audit. In instances of financial misconduct or disciplinary breaches as defined in this Act, administrative sanctions must be imposed in accordance with the provisions of the Organic Act on State Audit.

The Public Procurement and Supplies Administration ACT, B.E. 2560 (2017)

Section 8 outlines that procurement and supplies administration conducted by a State agency should yield maximum benefits for the agency and adhere to the following principles:

(1) The principle of value for money, which ensures that the procured supplies meet the quality or specifications required for their intended use by the State agency, are reasonably priced, and are accompanied by a clear and appropriate plan for supply administration;

(2) The principle of transparency dictates that procurement and supplies administration must be conducted openly, allowing for fair competition among vendors. This entails equal treatment of all business operators, providing adequate time for tendering proposals, and ensuring clear evidence and disclosure of information throughout all stages of procurement and supplies administration;

(3) The principle of efficiency and effectiveness emphasizes the necessity of a pre-established plan for procurement and supplies administration. This plan ensures that procurement processes occur promptly and consistently. Additionally, there should be ongoing assessment and disclosure of the effectiveness of procurement and supplies administration practices;

(4) The accountability principle underscores the systematic retention of information related to procurement and supplies administration to facilitate audits and ensure transparency and responsibility.

Section 4 of this Act defines:

'Procurement' refers to the process of obtaining supplies through methods such as sale, hire, lease, exchange, or other juristic acts as specified in the Ministerial Regulation.

'focal price' refers to the price utilized as a benchmark for comparing prices proposed by individuals tendering proposals, and it may serve as the basis for actual procurement in subsequent orders:

(1) The price determined based on calculations as per the regulations outlined by the Focal Prices Committee;

(2) The price obtained from the supply index—price database set up by The Comptroller General's Department;

(3) The standard price specified by the Bureau of the Budget or other central agencies;

(4) The price obtained from market price investigations;

(5) The price from the previous procurement conducted over two fiscal years;

(6) Any other price determined in accordance with the regulations, procedures, or practices of the relevant State agency.

If the price under (1) is available, it shall be given priority. If the price under (1) is unavailable but prices under (2) or (3) exist, priority shall be given to the price under (2) or (3), with utmost consideration for the State agency's interests. If prices under (1), (2), and (3) are unavailable, the price under (4), (5), or (6) shall be adopted, again with prime consideration for the State agency's interests.

Section 55 outlines the methods by which procurement of supplies may be conducted:

(1) General Solicitation Notification Method: This involves solicitation by a State agency to business operators possessing qualifications determined by the State agency for tendering proposals;

(2) Selection Method: This method entails solicitation by a State agency specifically to at least three business operators possessing qualifications determined by the State agency for tendering proposals. However, if there are fewer than three qualified business operators for a particular work, this requirement may be waived;

(3) Specific Method: This method involves solicitation by a State agency to a particular business operator possessing qualifications determined by the State agency for tendering a proposal or for price bargaining negotiations. It also includes procurement of supplies directly with a business operator for small cost estimates as prescribed in the Ministerial Regulation issued under Section 96, paragraph two.

The Organic Act on State Audit B.E. 2561 (2018)

Section 4 defines "State Audit" as the comprehensive examination of the finances of audited entities. This examination encompasses the scrutiny of revenue collection, receipt, expenditure, utilization, safekeeping, and administration of money, property, rights, and interests under the control or spending authority of the audited entities. The primary objectives are to verify compliance with laws, regulations, cabinet resolutions, and public administration practices, and to assess whether the expenditure or utilization of funds aligns with intended purposes, is economical, yields results, and demonstrates efficiency. Additionally, State Audit includes the auditing of financial reports of audited entities, providing opinions on examination results, and conducting other audits specified in this Organic Act.

"Examination" means state audit.

"Audited entities" mean:

(1) Ministries, bureaus, departments, or other government offices with the status of ministries, bureaus, or departments;

(2) Provincial government units;

(3) Local government units;

(4) State enterprises as defined by the Budget Procedure Law and other laws;

(5) Revolving funds;

(6) Other state agencies;

(7) Entities not established by the State but receiving government subsidies or businesses that have received funding or assets from audited entities as specified in (1), (2), (3), (4), or (6), limited to the portion pertaining to the subsidies or businesses;

(8) Any other agency or business that is legally required to be audited by the Office, or where the law provides the right to request the Office to conduct the audit.

Section 10 mandates that State audits must be conducted with integrity, thoroughness, transparency, fairness, courage, and without bias,

following principles of good governance. The examination should consider the fulfillment of State duties, adherence to national policy guidelines and strategies, including aspects such as value for money, maintenance of public order, fostering public trust, conducting operations honestly, achieving effectiveness, and ensuring efficiency in the use of funds by audited entities. Additionally, audits should aim to prevent potential harm to the State's finances;

Section 95 outlines the procedures for addressing defects discovered during audits conducted in accordance with financial discipline laws. If a defect is found that does not involve corruption and does not harm the State or the audited entity, the Auditor-General may notify the entity to prevent its recurrence;

If the defect constitutes corruption, the Auditor-General is mandated to escalate the issue to the National Anti-Corruption Commission. This referral triggers further action within the Commission's purview, with Section 88, paragraph two, applying accordingly;

If the discovered defect causes damage to the State or the audited entity, or if there is clear evidence of intentional violation of financial discipline laws, the Auditor-General is obliged to notify the audited entity. This notification prompts the audited entity to contemplate restitution for any damages incurred by the State or itself, or to initiate disciplinary measures as deemed suitable. Subsequently, upon the audited entity's action, it is required to furnish a report to the Auditor-General.

The Efficiency of Procurement: Cost Savings Rate

The Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017), stipulates in Section 8. (1) that State agencies must adhere to the value for money principle in their procurement and supplies administration. This means that procured supplies must meet the required quality

or specifications for their intended use by the State agency, be reasonably priced, and be guided by a clear and appropriate plan for supplies administration. Additionally, 'focal price' refers to the price utilized as a benchmark for comparing prices proposed by individuals tendering proposals. The use of this price in procurement helps determine value for money and serves as a benchmark for government procurement, making it a key factor in evaluating the efficiency of public procurement processes.

Otley (2001) highlights that the term "performance" carries various interpretations among individuals, often used loosely to mask a lack of shared understanding. In the context of business or public sector organizations, he focuses on the three 'E's' of performance, as exemplified by the public sector:

- Effectiveness: Achieving desired outputs and outcomes.
- Efficiency: Utilizing minimal inputs to achieve desired outputs.
- Economy: Acquiring inputs at the lowest possible cost.

These elements encapsulate different facets of performance, including output production, input-output conversion, and input procurement. From an accounting perspective, commercial organizations can quantify these aspects of performance in financial terms, with sales revenue representing results and input costs representing various expenditures, including capital costs.

The efficiency of procurement and contracting is influenced by the rate of savings. Research findings suggest that the level of efficiency in procurement management in universities significantly impacts organizational performance. Strategic management, which involves decision-making processes by managers to achieve organizational objectives efficiently, is crucial for success. Strategic management encompasses continuous planning, considering both internal and external

environments to ensure operations align with set goals. Therefore, the rate of savings can indeed affect the efficiency of procurement and contracting processes. (Arsatum, 2019)

The 'Cost Savings Rate' refers to the ratio between the allocated budget and the actual procurement expenditure, which fluctuates based on the nature of procurement and the efficiency of the procurement process. In some cases, the actual expenditure may be lower than the allocated

budget, indicating cost savings and efficiency in procurement management. Conversely, in other cases, the actual expenditure may exceed the allocated budget due to unforeseen circumstances, changes in market prices, or inefficiencies in the procurement process. Monitoring and analyzing these ratios can provide insights into the effectiveness of budget allocation and procurement management practices.

$$\text{Cost Savings Rate} = \frac{(\text{Contracted of Project} - \text{Allocate Budget of Project})}{\text{Allocate Budget of Project}} \times 100$$

Example: In the fiscal year 2022, from Table 1., a total of 5,211,809 procurement projects were initiated with a budget allocation of 1,204,376.34 million Baht. Successfully executed

contracts amounted to 1,167,798.98 million Baht, reflecting a cost savings of 36,577.36 million Baht. This translates to a cost savings rate of 3.04%.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cost Savings Rate} &= \frac{(1,204,376.34 - 1,167,798.98)}{1,204,376.34} \times 100 \\ &= 3.04\% \end{aligned}$$

It was found that cost saving measures have a significant impact on procurement efficiency, as follows:

1. **Effective Management:** Efficient management, especially in the procurement process, can lead to cost savings and enhance the organization's efficiency. (Klongthom Hospital, 2022)

2. **Strategic Procurement Planning:** Appropriate strategic planning in procurement helps reduce budget costs and increases operational efficiency.

3. **Applying Governance Principles:** Incorporating governance principles such as transparency and accountability into the procurement process fosters cost savings and boosts operational efficiency. (Kittipongwarakarn, 2020).

Thus, it can be seen that cost saving through effective management, strategic planning, and adopting governance principles in procurement can lead to improved efficiency in an organization's procurement activities.

Findings from the Study:

Findings from the Procurement Statistics

Studying statistical data on procurement within the Thai Government Procurement system, an overview report of the public procurement for the fiscal year, prepared by Thai Government Procurement (e—GP).

In the procurement landscape spanning fiscal years 2018—2022, the period following the implementation of the Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017), it was observed that the public sector engaged in

5,024,885 procurement projects in 2018. Out of these, 4,867,496 projects, with a budget of 1,098,711.54 million Baht, were successfully procured. The contract value was 1,016,579.74 million Baht, resulting in cost savings of 82,131.79 million Baht, representing a cost savings rate of 7.48%. The average for the fiscal years 2018—2022 was 6.57%. The cost savings rate has decreased each year since 2019, with the rate for 2022 at 3.04%, lower than the 2021 rate of 2.53%, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Procurement Statistic Overview for Fiscal Years 2018-2022

Fiscal year	Number of all procurement projects	Procurement projects with signed contracts					Compare cost savings rates previous fiscal years
		Number of contracted projects	Allocate budget (million bath)	Contracted project (million bath)	Cost saving (million bath)	Cost savings rate (%)	
2018	5,024,885	4,867,496	1,098,711.54	1,016,579.74	82,131.79	7.48	-
2019	4,982,412	2,584,516	1,236,483.62	1,134,324.41	102,159.21	8.26	0.78
2020	4,591,078	4,429,828	1,317,134.42	1,230,151.98	86,982.44	6.60	-1.66
2021	5,336,160	5,247,846	1,412,289.52	1,333,622.22	78,667.29	5.57	-1.03
2022	5,363,392	5,211,089	1,204,376.34	1,167,798.98	36,577.36	3.04	-2.53
Average			1,253,799.09	1,176,495.47	77,303.62	6.57	

Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e—GP).

However, when disaggregating procurement data to identify key insights, it can be categorized into three types as follows:

1) Disaggregated by State agency type

In the fiscal year 2022, the total budget money allocated for procurement was 1,436,438.48 million baht. When disaggregated by state agency type, Central and Provincial Administration received the highest budget allocation at 54.28%, followed by State Enterprises at 24.50%, and Local Administration at 17.44%.

When comparing the average cost savings rate by state agency for the period 2018-2022, Independent Organizations had the highest average savings rate at 11.39%, followed by State Enterprises at 10.31%, and Local Administration at 7.06%. Regarding the savings rates between the fiscal year 2022 and the previous year, it was observed that Independent Organizations had the highest reduction at 4.18%, followed by Central and Provincial Administration at 2.42%, and State Enterprises at 1.36%. Details are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Procurement categorized by types of State Agency, Fiscal Year 2018 - 2022.

State Agency type	In fiscal year 2022		Cost savings rate (%)					Average	Compare previous fiscal years
	Amount (million baths)	(%)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Central and provincial administration	779,645.07	54.28	7.12	7.76	5.16	4.34	1.92	5.26	-2.42
State enterprises	351,863.84	24.50	10.79	12.39	11.03	12.16	5.20	10.31	-1.36
Public organization	14,062.47	0.98	4.87	4.73	6.56	4.81	3.46	4.89	1.83
Agencies not affiliated with the Office of the Prime Minister, ministries, departments, and entities under the supervision of the Prime Minister.	20,370.69	1.42	3.2	2.87	3.06	2.81	3.01	2.99	0.19
Independent organizations	7,485.88	0.52	10.88	14.02	9.84	13.33	8.88	11.39	-4.18
Local administration	250,448.25	17.43	8.09	8.03	8.78	6.29	4.10	7.06	0.75
Other state agencies established by specific laws	12,562.28	0.87	6.52	4.90	5.15	4.25	6.45	5.45	0.25
Total	1,436,438.48	100.00	7.35	7.81	7.08	6.86	4.72	6.76	

Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e–GP).

2) Disaggregated by Procurement Method

In the fiscal year 2022, the total budget for procurement amounted to 1,436,438.48 million Baht, disaggregated by procurement methods. The highest proportion was for the e–bidding method, accounting for 44.47%, followed by the specific method at 32.16%, and the selection method at 16.21%

Over the period from 2018 to 2022, the average cost savings rate by procurement methods was highest for e-market at 15.54%, followed by e–bidding at 9.71%, and consultancy by general solicitation notification at 8.88%. The method

with the lowest cost saving rate was the specific method at 1.51%. When comparing the cost savings rates in 2022 to the previous year, it was observed that the rate for design or construction supervision work by general solicitation notification method decreased the most by 7.09%. This was followed by e–bidding, which decreased by 4.70%, and the selection method, which decreased by 3.31%. In general, the cost saving rates mostly decreased, except for e–market, specific method, and Consultancy work by specific methods. Details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3*Procurement categorized by types of procurement methods, Fiscal Year 2018 - 2022.*

Procurement methods type	In fiscal year 2022		Cost savings rate (%)					Average	Compare previous fiscal years
	Amount (million bahts)	(%)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
e—market	151.53	0.01	15.89	13.92	17.47	15.14	15.28	15.54	0.14
e—bidding	638,851.08	44.48	12.35	12.82	10.09	9.00	4.30	9.71	-4.70
Selection	232,807.71	16.21	4.11	5.71	4.88	5.89	2.58	4.63	-3.31
Specific	462,026.16	32.16	1.56	1.95	1.47	0.75	1.83	1.51	1.08
International bidding	82,302.00	5.73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consultancy work by general solicitation notification	505.92	0.04	8.18	6.70	7.49	12.25	9.76	8.88	-2.49
Consultancy work by selection	12,236.55	0.85	8.74	2.88	3.24	4.55	2.66	4.41	-1.89
Consultancy work by specific	3,645.27	0.25	5.47	3.82	3.20	1.97	2.73	3.44	0.76
Design or construction supervision work by general solicitation notification	493.28	0.03	-	-	9.98	11.15	4.06	6.30	-7.09
Design or construction supervision work by selection	3,178.26	0.22	-	-	5.40	6.10	4.26	5.25	-1.84
Design or construction supervision work by specific	201.92	0.014	-	-	6.43	6.82	5.03	6.09	-1.79
Design or construction supervision work by design competition	38.80	0.003	-	-	5.40	6.10	4.26	5.25	-1.84
Total	1,436,438.48	100.00	8.04	6.83	6.82	7.25	5.16	5.65	

Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e—GP).

3) Disaggregated by Procurement Types

In the fiscal year 2022, the total budget money for procurement amounted to 1,436,438.48 million baht. Construction work had the highest budget, accounting for 38.45%, followed by sales at 33.91%, and Goods/Services at 23.31%.

Over the period from 2018 to 2022, the procurement types with the highest average cost saving rate was construction work at 8.51%, followed by Design and construction supervision work at 8.47%, and leasing at 7.14%.

Comparing the cost savings rate in 2022 with the previous year, Design and Construction Supervision work had the highest decrease in the average cost savings rate at 11.73%, followed by Sales, which decreased by 4.07%, and Design

work, which decreased by 3.29%. In general, the cost savings rates mostly decreased, except for Construction supervision work and rental, which had an increase in the cost savings rate. Details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Procurement categorized by types of procurement, Fiscal Year 2018 - 2022.

Procurement type	In fiscal year 2022		Cost savings rate (%)					Average	Compare previous fiscal year
	Amount (million baths)	(%)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Sale	487,095.53	33.91	4.58	5.49	5.38	5.89	1.82	4.63	-4.07
Construction work	552,329.36	38.45	11.50	11.68	11.68	5.39	4.84	8.51	-0.55
Goods/ Services	334,864.87	23.31	4.65	6.53	6.53	5.33	2.38	4.59	-2.95
Rental	41,848.72	2.91	12.05	5.39	5.39	5.46	6.08	7.14	0.62
Consultancy work	16,387.74	1.14	7.99	3.25	3.25	4.31	2.89	4.37	-1.42
Design work	2,553.04	0.18	-	-	-	6.81	3.52	5.36	-3.29
Construction supervision work	1,119.07	0.08	-	-	-	5.01	5.51	5.59	0.50
Design and Construction Supervision work	240.15	0.02	-	-	-	16.10	4.37	8.47	-11.73
Total	1,436,438.48	100.00	8.15	6.47	6.45	6.79	3.93	6.08	

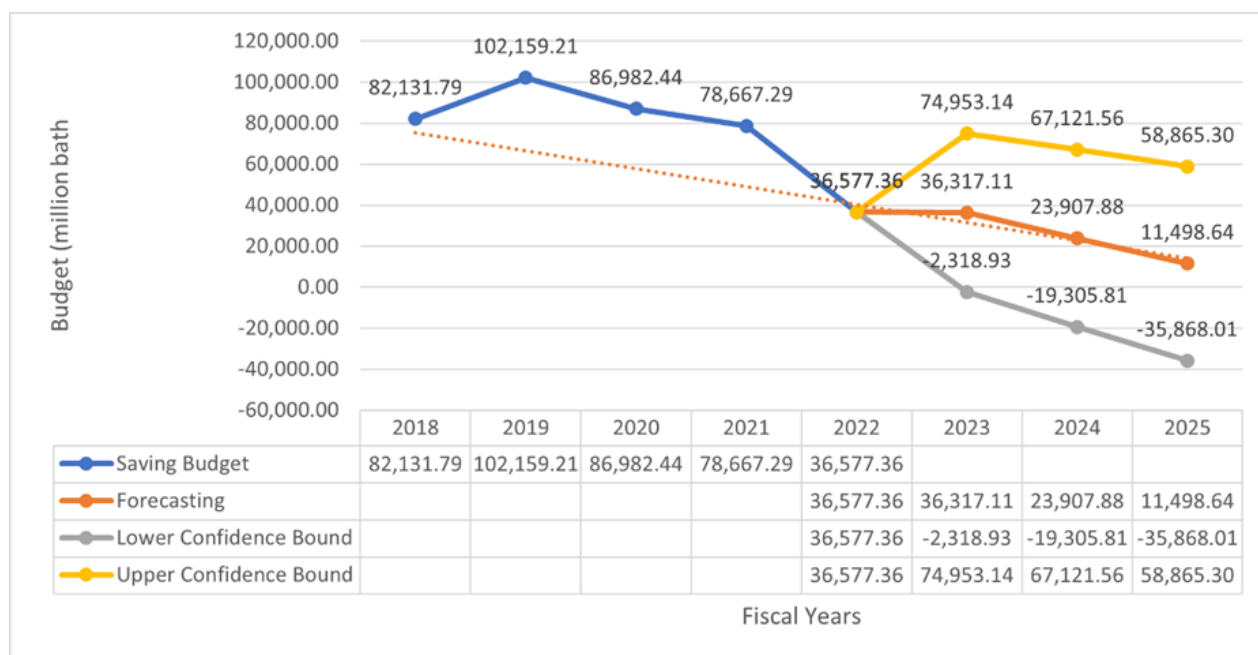
Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e–GP).

The forecasted cost savings rates, analyzed through time series analysis for the years 2023 to 2025, based on data from 2018 to 2022, indicate a decreasing trend in the cost savings rate for public procurement and supplies. In 2022, the cost savings rate adjusted itself, decreasing from 2021. The

trend of cost savings rate for the next 3 years, in 2023, 2024, and 2025, continues to decrease consecutively, with percentages of 2.81%, 1.79%, and 0.83%, respectively. Details are presented in Figure 1 and Table 5.

Figure 1

The forecasting of cost savings rate after the year 2022 for the next 3 years (2023 to 2025)



Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e-GP).

Table 5

The forecasted cost savings rate for the years 2023 to 2025, following the year 2022.

Fiscal year	Budget money (million bath)	Contracted value (million bath)	Cost saving budgets (million bath)	Cost savings rate	Compare previous fiscal year (%)
2023	1,327,297.40	1,292,206.65	36,317.11	2.81%	-0.23
2024	1,359,490.53	1,336,781.67	23,907.88	1.79%	-1.02
2025	1,391,683.65	1,381,356.69	11,498.64	0.83%	-0.96

Note: The article's author calculated data from the procurement statistics for the fiscal years 2018–2022 in the Thai Government Procurement (e-GP).

Findings from audit conducted

The performance report of the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand (SAO) for the fiscal years 2018-2022, particularly in the area of procurement audits, encompassed a total of 1,777 agencies. Out of these, 878 agencies were found to have deficiencies, accounting for 49.44%. The highest number of agencies selected for audit were local governments in Bangkok and Pattaya,

totaling 1,005 agencies, followed by central and regional government agencies with 703 agencies, and state enterprises and subsidiaries with 36 agencies. In 2022, the number of agencies with deficiencies decreased by 163, aligning with the reduction in the total number of audited agencies by 274, representing a decrease of 2.33%. Details are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

The procurement audit findings are categorized by state agency, fiscal year 2018 - 2022.

Type of agencies	Number of units audited					Average	Compare 2022 to 2021
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Central and provincial administration	816	541	648	923	585	703	-338
Local administration, Bangkok, and Pattaya	1,088	1,062	1,110	847	920	1,005	-73
State Enterprises and Subsidiaries	31	40	46	34	28	36	-6
Funds and Revolving Funds	-	1	-	-	2	1	2
Other Government Units	20	38	42	33	28	32	-5
Total number of units audited	1,955	1,682	1,846	1,837	1,563	1,777	-274
Number of units with deficiencies found	918	924	1,017	848	685	878	-163
Percentage of deficiencies (%)	46.96	54.93	55.09	46.16	43.83	49.44	-2.33

Note: The author calculated from the performance report for the fiscal year 2021-2025 of the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand.

From the study of procurement audit findings from the examination of procurement activities by the SAO, which may impact the cost savings rate from 2018 to 2022, it was observed that discrepancies were affecting the procurement process. These include instances where the announced prices for procurement were higher than market prices, inaccuracies not aligned with reality, deviation from criteria, avoidance of procurement of equipment at standard or legal prices, failure to specify standard prices, median prices, or the most recent purchase or hiring prices in procurement reports. Incorrect calculations of focal prices not in compliance with the law,

regulations, and criteria resulted in higher focal prices than warranted. There was no evidence of the appointment of a price—setting committee, or if appointed, the committee was inappropriate. There was a lack of disclosure of focal prices and details of focal price calculations on the agency's website. The preparation of tender or price inquiry announcements and documents specified text or conditions that created non—competitive opportunities. The committee responsible for drafting the Terms of Reference (TOR) did not perform its duties by procurement regulations or was not suitable. These details are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

The procurement audit findings that impact the cost savings rate, fiscal year 2018 - 2022.

Procurement audit findings by the procurement process	Number of findings				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Drafting the scope of work, specific supply specifications, or the construction plan.					
1.1 Issuing procurement announcements and documents with restrictive terms or conditions that hinder fair competition.	3	-	-	-	-
1.2 The TOR drafting committee not adhering to legal regulations and procedures.	-	-	81	47	13
2. Process of identifying Focal Prices					
2.1 Lack of evidence of disclosing focal prices and price calculation details on the organization's website.	6	-	-	-	6

Procurement audit findings by the procurement process	Number of findings				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
2.2 Prices announced in procurement are higher than market prices, incorrect, and not by criteria, avoiding procurement at standard or legal prices.	-	22	34	22	27
2.3 Failure to specify standard prices, focal prices, purchase prices, or recent hire prices in procurement reports.	-	-	3	-	-
2.4 Incorrect focal price calculations, are not in compliance with the law, regulations, and criteria, resulting in higher focal prices than necessary.	294	113	199	218	237
2.5 Failure to announce focal prices or inaccurate focal price announcements.	14	-	21	17	40
2.6 Lack of appointment of the focal pricing committee or inappropriate appointments.	8	-	-	-	13
2.7 Incorrect focal price calculations and methods, with bid prices differing from the focal price by more than 15%.	-	-	-	-	21
3. Failure to follow procurement regulations or inadequacy.	71	-	-	-	-
Total	396	135	338	304	357

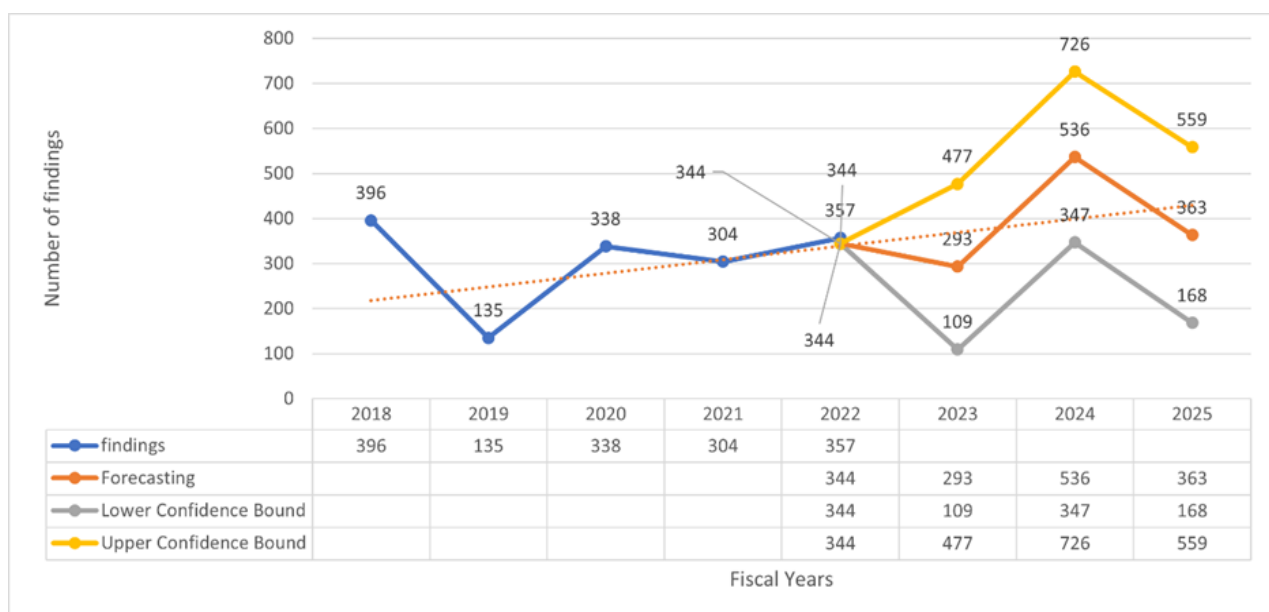
Note: The author calculated from the performance report for the fiscal year 2021-2025 of the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The forecast of potential audit findings that may impact the cost savings rate, using Time Series Analysis based on audit findings of procurement activities during the period 2018-2022, indicates that the trend of audit findings for

the next 3 years, in 2023, 2024, and 2025, is projected to be 293, 536, and 363 reports/contracts, respectively. The trend shows a slight increase, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The forecasting of finding public procurement after the year 2022 for the next 3 years (2023 to 2025)



Note: The author calculated from the performance report for the fiscal year 2021-2025 of the State Audit of The Kingdom of Thailand, <http://www.audit.go.th/report/audit>

Discussion:

1. Cost Savings Rate Analysis (2018–2022) : The average cost savings rate from 2018 to 2022 was 6.57%, but it began to decline in 2020. Notably, the Central and Provincial Administration, which holds the largest budget allocation (54.28%), had a lower cost savings rate, with a 1.92% decrease in 2022. The e-bidding procurement method, despite being the most commonly used at 44.47%, saw a significant decrease in its cost savings rate (4.70% compared to 2021). However, the e-market method, used the least (0.01%), had the highest cost savings rate at 15.54%. In terms of procurement types, construction work had the highest cost savings rate at 8.51%, whereas sales fell below the average due to challenges in establishing clear pricing. Reduced expenses from efficient procurement can be redirected towards investments or other development projects that generate revenue or foster economic growth.

The forecast for the cost savings rate trend over the next three years indicates a continued decline, with rates expected to drop to 2.81% in 2023, 1.79% in 2024, and 0.83% in 2025. This decline might be due to procurement focal prices aligning more closely with market prices, reducing price competition, and diminishing the effectiveness of competitive bidding mechanisms.

2. Audit Findings by the SAO: From 2018 to 2022, the SAO audit results showed that approximately 49.44% of state agencies exhibited irregularities. Issues that could impact the cost savings rate include deviations from established criteria when setting focal prices, overly restrictive terms of reference (TOR) that limit competition, and non-compliance with regulations. Local government entities like the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and Pattaya City exhibited the highest deficiency rates. The forecast for the next three years (2023-2025) suggests a slight upward trend in identified issues.

3. Correlation between Cost Savings Rate and Audit Findings: The study indicates that the declining cost savings rate may result from inefficiencies in setting focal prices and inadequacies in competitive bidding mechanisms, suggesting that public procurement is not yet sufficiently effective.

Conclusion:

Effective management of procurement processes can lead to significant cost savings and improve organizational efficiency. And procurement process factors that positively affect procurement efficiency were as follows: Procurement planning purchasing and procurement administration (Kruewan, 2022). Emphasis should be placed on the procurement process at every step to attain the organization's objectives, aiming to enhance budget management effectiveness for increased efficiency and maximum benefits (Sonsai, P., & Jannopat, S., 2021). An efficient procurement approach involves systematic planning and execution, with a clear assessment of needs and thorough audits to ensure resources are used effectively. The increase in procurement savings rate may directly or indirectly impact the financial stability and treasury of the state. This is in line with the principles of fiscal discipline mandated by the law. Measuring procurement efficiency using the savings rate can be a crucial indicator to evaluate the effectiveness of this process. Increasing the savings rate can help reduce expenditures and standardize government operations. The savings rate can also serve as an indicator of procurement efficiency directly. The increase in savings rate following the implementation of Thailand's Public Procurement Act in 2017 has contributed to establishing standards, enhancing transparency, and increasing accountability. However, the decrease in savings rate after 2023 may be attributed to economic factors, incomplete mechanisms, or legal loopholes.

Audits conducted by the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand between 2018 and 2022 found that approximately 49.44% of audited agencies had procurement—related deficiencies. Common issues included overpricing, deviation from standard procurement practices, and inaccurate calculation of focal prices. The trend of increasing deficiencies over the next three years poses a significant challenge, potentially impacting the efficiency of government procurement. Therefore, developing processes by reducing deficiencies, conducting detailed audits, and promoting public participation may help create an efficient and equitable government procurement system in the future.

Recommendations:

Enhancing the effectiveness of public procurement necessitates rigorous financial management, ensuring expenditures are prudent, transparent, and easily audited. Streamlining processes and eliminating duplications can lead to cost reductions, while prioritizing fairness and transparency fosters trust and organizational resilience. Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial to enhancing procurement efficiency and promoting accountability, ultimately bolstering the nation's fiscal health. To achieve these goals, government entities and partners must collaborate closely, focusing on key priorities such as:

1. The Comptroller General's Department ought to revisit and revise laws and regulations concerning public procurement to establish transparent pricing standards and enhance the efficiency of competitive bidding. Additionally, investing in resources for implementing procurement integration through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can significantly enhance efficiency, effectiveness, worthiness, transparency, and inspection (Kruewan, 2022).

2. The State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand should improve its auditing procedures

by expanding the frequency and breadth of audits, while also shifting towards an advisory role to supplement and enhance traditional auditing functions.

3. Academic and Research Institutions should support research on public procurement and create platforms for discussion and critique, offering constructive feedback and educating the public.

4. The public's participation through online community networks, "watchdog groups," (Hesse004, 2014) and anti—corruption organizations can play a significant role in monitoring procurement activities and suggesting improvements. NGOs, with their innovative tools like ACT Ai, can detect irregular procurement behaviors and share their findings with the public.

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The State Nationalism vs Liberal Nationalism in Thailand and Myanmar: Focusing on the National Revolution Traits in the Process of Nation State Building

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Abstract

This paper intends to verify with the cases of Thailand and Burma that national unity is not the background condition for democratization based on liberal nationalism, but that democratization after critical decision and habituation phases is the background condition for national unity through reconciliation putting an end to a 'prolonged and inconclusive political struggle'. Thai society has never had a history of overcoming state nationalism adhering to the trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and King'. Democratization as civil revolution in Thailand was bounded by "Democracy with the King as Head of State", and there was no prototype civil revolution beyond the royalism unlike in Europe, at least before the aftermath of 2006 coup that turned over the Thaksin regime. The coup after democratization triggered intensive struggles between typical civil revolutionary forces based on liberalism and pro-official nationalism based on statism. The 'yellow-red standoff' since 2006 can be interpreted as the starting point of a 'prolonged and inconclusive political struggle' between state-national forces and liberal-national forces. The 2010 May civil war and the 2014 May coup exposed an aspect of intensive political struggles between the two forces. In Burma the prototype of civil revolution broke up in Burma in 1974, 1988, and 2007, even though all ended in a failure. The Burma case proves that the political conflicts between official-state nationalists and civil-liberal nationalists may not settle down easily, as it shows the 2021 February coup. The ongoing civil war in Burma is revealing atrocities of official-state nationalists. In sum, the cases of Thailand and Myanmar suggest that genuine national unity is not possible without reconciliation after passing through intensive struggles between official-state nationalists and civil-liberal nationalist.

I. Raising the Question

To Thailand and Burma (Myanmar), the years of 1932 and 1962, respectively, are points in time when very significant political changes took place. In 1932, Thailand saw a constitutional revolution by a rightist military—leftist civilian cohabitation that changed absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy, while in 1962, Burma saw a leftist military's unconstitutional revolution that delinked the country from the world capitalist system. These two cases show likewise that their projects were implemented through the establishment of an illiberal national regime regardless of left—right distinctions.²

The modern concept of nation in Thailand was formed paradoxically on the initiative of the dynasty itself so that it could maintain sovereignty in the face of Western colonial powers by pushing forth official nationalism. However, reform from above by enlightened despotism had its own limitations, which caused the subsequent constitutional revolution by the young elites. The 1932 revolution in Thailand may be compared to anti—monarchy revolutions happened in England and France. But unlike the French Revolution, this was a revolution from above, not based on mass but as a regime change in which it abolished the pre-modern monarchy, liberated the people from subjugation, and wanted to free itself from foreign interference. Instead of Siam's official nationalism based on a trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and King', the young elites suggested a trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and People', which manifested the revolutionary characteristics at that time.

On the other hand, in Burma under the rule of ancient dynasties of Toungoo and Konbaung before the colonization, quasi—religious symbolism functioned in building up the legitimacy of rulers. According to Burmese traditional theory on politics and religion, the monarchy is a quintessential

regime to defend justice under the condition of conflict among human beings incurred by innate selfish desires (Taylor, 1998, p. 35). The British colonial administration, however, abolished the monarchy rooted in the traditional thoughts and directly ruled Burma by incorporating it into India as an annexed province. Thus the concept of Deva-raja (divine king) was replaced by the authority of colonial—secular regime, and religion and politics separated. New rulers discarded laws and norms based on Buddhist doctrines (Silverstein, 1998, pp. 17-18).

As a result, the modern concept of nation in Burma, unlike Thailand that has no colonial history, formed in the process of an anti - colonial movement, having nothing to do with the monarchy, and was influenced by Buddhism as a national religion and socialism. The 'Burmese way to socialism' was promulgated in 1962 by the military forces led by Ne Win, a member of the 'Thirty Comrades' heading the anti—colonial national revolution, and integrated Buddhism and socialism against the backdrop of the bitter memory of imperial exploitation and discrimination and the following inter—ethnic civil wars, by-products of the colonial policy of divide-and-rule. To put it simply, for Thailand, 1932 is the starting point of a national revolution to create the modern Thai nation, whereas for Burma, 1962 is the conclusion of their period of national revolution.

Supposing the uncompromising political confrontations in Thailand and Burma correspond to the 'prolonged and inconclusive political struggle' (Rustow, 1970), I aim at investigating Thailand and Burma from the perspective of comparative history, the focuses of which will be as follows: For the case of Thailand, the historical context of the 1932 constitutional revolution against the monarchy led to the right—wing

² *On the extreme left, there are movements which are both egalitarian and authoritarian, of these Jacobinism is the most important historical example (Bobbio, 1996, p.78).*

national revolution based on state nationalism via the 1957 coup of General Sarit, which is challenged by civil revolution today. For the case of Burma, the historical context of anti-British national revolution sparked by the student's strike in 1936 led to the 1962 left-wing national revolution based on state nationalism by General Ne Win, which is now challenged by civil revolution.

II. National Revolution and Civil Revolution in Southeast Asia

Civil revolution in Western Europe³ started based on the autonomy of the individual against absolute monarchy, passed through liberal nationalism giving birth to modern nations, then was transformed to state nationalism restraining civil liberties of individuals, and finally came back to liberal nationalism.⁴ Capitalism, in the process, with the development of printing skill, helped generate popular nationalism through the medium of vernacular languages throughout Europe (Anderson, 1991, p. 174). Under the pre-modern monarchy before civil revolutions, the legitimacy of kingship emanated not from the people but from the God. People were not citizens but subjects (Anderson, 1991, p. 37). By civil revolution,

the subjects in the empires were promoted to citizens, but subjects in the colonies remained the same as they had been before civil revolution.

Benedict Anderson paid attention to the rise of nationalism in the colonies against Western powers' official nationalism to the outer world, while they domestically saw the swing of pendulum between liberal nationalism and state nationalism. According to him, official nationalism is a consequence from the nation's mingling with dynastic empire, developed as a reaction to civil nationalism that had swept Europe in the 1820s. While this European civil nationalism is an imitation of American or French history, characterized by elections, party discipline, and cultural events, official nationalism is dressed up in the national flag, representing national unity. It was the reactionary strategy adopted by the ruling class who felt threatened, marginalized and excluded in the process of the emergence of the 'imagined community', which is the nation.⁵ The politicians of Prussian-Germany in Europe, the Meiji oligarchs behind the mask of the emperor in Japan, and King Chulalongkorn and Vajiravudh in Thailand were the symbolic figures who galvanized official nationalism successfully. King Vajiravudh, in particular, tried all available measures to inspire official nationalism, such as state-controlled

³ The French Revolution emerged in 1789 and the newly formed National Assembly declared the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" while establishing the principles which would be the basis of the new French constitution. This declaration stated that the purpose of all political associations is to preserve the natural rights of human beings and the content of the natural rights includes the rights to freedom, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

⁴ Liberal nationalism is the classical form of European liberalism that originated in the French Revolution. Nationalism in the mid-19th century Europe signified liberalism or, non-liberalism, on the contrary. The advent of the military, racism, and xenophobia are also related to illiberal nationalism.

⁵ Ernest Gellner was the first person to attempt the modernist interpretation of the nation, and Eric Hobsbawm significantly contributed in popularizing it. They linked the advent of nationalism with the development of capitalism and industrialization. According to them, factors such as ethnicity, language, history, religion, and culture are secondary. It is also argued that nationalism was not created by the nation, rather, the nation was produced by nationalism (Kang, 2004, p.54). A nation is a human group, intertwined with each other through common culture and recognized similarities in language, history, and religion (Shively, 2014, p.65) are stated as forming factors. However, for them, nation is the newly formed 'imagined community' that inherits the role of the past large cultural system such as kingdoms and religions. It is print capitalism that caused this (Anderson, 2004). The development of printing technology contributed to the formation of a nation as an imagined community by creating the common language, history, and religion.

compulsory basic education, state—organized propagandas, official recompilation of history, militarism for display, and continual confirmations of the identity of the Dynasty and Nation. Even he utilized the Great War in Europe as an opportunity to create and promote Siamese nationalism. Vajiravudh aligned Siam with the Allied Powers (Charnvit, 2022, p. 160). His behavior was very similar to that of self—nationalizing European dynasties (Anderson, 1991, pp. 114-144). He is known for his official nationalistic policy which made him the title of Father of Thai Nationalism (Charnvit, 2022, p. 15). However, except for Thailand, almost all other countries in Asia suffered Western colonial rules, and thus developed colonial nationalism through the experience of anti—metropolitan struggles (Anderson, 1991, p. 91).

The nineteenth century saw a full—scale invasion of Western colonialism upon Southeast Asia. All imperial powers, including the British, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and the United States, came to Southeast Asia to paint their own colors on the map. The pretexts for invasion were everywhere: internal dissension within kingdoms, acts of piracy, slave trades, opium smuggling, partial encroachment on established colonies, or usurpation of natural resources, and land. Siam alone remained untouched, but it also suffered drastic economic transformation. In other words, it maintained sovereignty politically as a buffer zone of two imperial powers, Britain and France, but economically became a semi—colony (Kitahara, 1983, p. 212).⁶

Table 1

The Traits of National Revolution by Ideology and the Subject

		Subject	
		official nationalism	civil nationalism
Ideology	state nationalism	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
	liberal nationalism	Ⓒ	Ⓓ

Source: The table is created by author.

This article aims to present the changing characteristics of Thai and Burmese nationalism in reference to <Table 1>. For example, the Western civil revolution through which modern nations

coming into being assumed liberalism⁷ as the ideology (on the vertical axis) and the citizen as the subject (on the horizontal axis), fall into Cell Ⓓ.⁸ The reverse phase of civil revolution in

⁶ *The beginning of Thai modern history comes from the Bowring Treaty signed in 1855 with Britain, a representative unequal treaty. Since then, Thailand has lost free trade and custom autonomy by signing semi-compulsory trade treaties with mostly Western powers including Japan (1898) and Russia (1899) (Kitahara, 1983, p.212).*

⁷ *Liberalism expressed by John Stuart Mill – concerning the need for there to be limits to power, concerning the fruitfulness of conflict, the praise of diversity, the condemnation of conformism, the absolute priority accorded by a well-governed society to the freedom of opinion (Bobbio, 1987, pp.100-101)*

⁸ *Civil-liberal nationalism are based on citizenship as a democracy's guiding principle. This involves both the right to be treated by fellow human beings as equal with respect to the making of collective choices and the obligation of those implementing such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p.7).*

Europe was marked with an arrow moving from Cell ④ to Cell ①.⁹ In Thailand, the leading forces of the 1932 constitutional revolution were composed of the state—nationalist faction and liberal-nationalist faction. So Thai nationalism at first can be said to have existed between Cell ① and Cell ③ along the contest of strength of the two factions, and in the end finished at Cell ①. Unlike Thailand, which has no colonial history, Burmese colonial nationalist forces led by Aung San were at first based on civil—state nationalism seeking anti—Western, anti—capitalist, and anti-multiparty democracy, as in Cell ②; then, after independence, moved to Cell ④, and settled down at Cell ①. The left—wing national revolution under the banner of the ‘Burmese Way of Socialism’ in 1962 took root in state and official nationalism like the Thai right-wing national revolution, as in Cell ①.

In short, this article examines the sequence of formation, evolution and crisis of national revolution, and the historical background of how the Thai right-wing national revolution and Burmese left-wing national revolution both drew near to state nationalism instead of liberal nationalism that had paved the way to civil revolution in Europe, inevitably leading national revolution to collide with civil revolution.

In methodology, the value of this comparative case study of Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) can be justified in reference to Dankwart Rustow who studied the cases of Sweden and Turkey from a genetic approach, subdividing their pathways to democracy into four: background condition, preparatory phase, decision phase, and habituation phase (Rustow, 1970). He points out that, instead of socio—economic indicators often brought forward, national unity should precede

democratization, and otherwise, the timing cannot be appropriate. Besides, he regards the ‘serious and prolonged nature of the struggle’ between factions under different banners such as polarization and hot family feuds on the preparation stage as hallmarks of the transition to the next (decision) phase where democracy is agreed. But this article intends to verify with the cases of Thailand and Burma that national unity is not the background condition for democratization based on liberal nationalism, but that democratization after decision and habituation phases is the background condition for national unity through reconciliation putting an end to a ‘prolonged and inconclusive political struggle’.¹⁰

This article, like Rustow’s case studies in Sweden and Turkey, intends to be a middle ground between inconclusive scholasticism, which avoids conclusions due to numerous uncontrollable variables, and country monograph in the case study of Thailand and Burma (Rustow 1970, pp. 23-35).

III. Right-wing National Revolution, Left-wing National Revolution, and Civil Revolution

1. The Right—wing National Revolution and the Challenge of Civil Revolution in Thailand

Absolute monarchy in Western Europe arose in the turmoil of confrontation between vested feudal strata and newly emerging civil sectors. Absolute monarchs built up strong kingship by harnessing the confrontation and restraint of these two rivals for their own benefit, guaranteeing the interest of commercial bourgeois to a degree on the one hand, and advocating for the interest of vested feudal strata on the other hand.

⁹ Reverse progress is highly related to the “militarization of civil revolution.” These include France’s Bonaparte’s and England’s Cromwell regime.

¹⁰ Democratization at this time encompasses the settlement of electoral democracy that can lead to a compromise between political forces with different interests in terms of class, ethnicity, and region, to consociational democracy as a political democracy that can address the problem of underrepresentation.

King Chulalongkorn, Rama V of Siam who achieved modernist reforms for the kingdom of Siam was an enlightened monarch in Southeast Asia just as those in Europe. The king and his vassals believed a strong state and absolute power were imperative for Siam to advance in the world as a member of magnitude. Most of all, the King himself claimed to be a modernist. He sent his sons and nephews to the courts in St. Petersburg, London, and Berlin to learn the complexity of the global model (Anderson, 1991, p. 40).¹¹

The model he pursued was that of Dutch East India, British Malaysia, and Raj's bureaucratic state (Beamtenstaaten) rather than Britain or Japan. Following this model meant rationalizing and centralizing the royal government and promoting economic growth. Among the most conspicuous efforts for it were the construction of harbor facilities, canals and railways, and expansion of commercial farmers. King Vajiravudh, the successor of Chulalongkorn, is considered to be the monarch who developed a full-fledged nationalism in Thai history on institutional and official dimensions (Cho, 2007, p. 68). A prototype of state nationalism was featured under his reign. King Vajiravudh advanced a theory that the absolute and sacrosanct kingship was necessary to settle the discord among human beings in a society, and despite the advice of his father, King Chulalongkorn, refused to introduce a constitutional system and parliamentarism for the reason that something beneficial to Europe could be harmful to Siam (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 106).

Additionally, he regarded succession based on bloodline of the royal family as inevitable for the stability of the country. According to his theory, a country is like a human body, composed of diverse organs that function as assigned. The king is the brain that gives orders to other physical

organs. From the perspective of this brain theory, loyalism and nationalism are two sides of the same coin. In sum, the loyalty to the king is itself the love of nation. This is because king represents the nation. The commoner should be uniform, obedient, and ready to submit to self—sacrifice. Unless they are ready to sacrifice themselves when the nation is in danger, they are no longer Siamese. King Vajiravudh called on for solidarity to protect 'Nation, Religion, and King'. The king in the schema is the political symbol of Buddhist country and the protector of the nation and religion. The objective of the Red Guard—like "Sueupa" (Tiger of the Jungle), founded by King Vajiravudh, was to protect the nation, Buddhism and the king, and to promote people's unity (Cho, 2007, p. 70). This theory of King Vajiravudh was in fact the traditional concept of kingship dressed in modern terms, an extension of the logic of enlightened despotism (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 107).

But as the newspaper market grew rapidly in the 1920s, public opinion against absolute monarchy began to rear its head. New journalists raised questions such as why Siamese were poorer than people in Europe or the Japanese in Asia, arguing it was because a few vested classes exploited people in a society definitely divided into ruling and ruled classes. Under this mindset, on February 5 in 1927, seven men met in Paris, and for five days, they planned the Siamese revolution. Among them were three military school students including Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun), and the last was a law student, Pridi Banomyong. They called themselves Khana Ratsadon, or People's Party. The term they used, 'people', at that time, had popular vogue among Bangkok journalists as the opposite concept of the ruler.

¹¹ By institutionalizing the succession of primogeniture by law as a fundamental principle, Chulalongkorn aligned with other 'civilized' European monarchies. Royalty from England, Russia, Greece, Denmark, and Japan attended the coronation ceremony for Rama VI (Anderson, 1991, p.40).

The brain of the group was the shrewd Pridi Banomyong, aged 27. While studying in Europe, Pridi learned European contemporary thoughts and detected the importance of putting the kingship under the constitution. The group set two goals. One was to change absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy, and the other was the six-fold objective developed by the Bangkok journalists: the effectuation of substantial independence, welfare, economic plan, the guarantee of equality without exception (including the royal family), people's rights and liberties, and public education for all citizens. Seven more Europe-educated members joined afterward. In 1929, when the world economy was falling into the Great Depression, criticism against absolute monarchy reached a climax in Thailand (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 118).

On June 24 in 1932, a small number of People's Party agents arrested the commander of the Royal Guards with up to 40 royal family members and aides, and declared the overturn of absolute monarchy. Growing antipathy against absolute monarchy helped the coup succeed. People joined the People's Party. Businessmen and laborers hailed. Declarations of support poured in. Political factions opposed to the revolt remained nerveless. The attention of international community was also focused on the events. Minor gunfire was exchanged, but nobody was killed. Pridi Banomyong, the leader of the civilian faction in the People's Party, released the pledge of revolution asserting economic nationalism, social justice, love of humanity, and the rule of law. The pledge contained a revolutionary level of agendas aimed at regime change. By this, the privilege of the king and his families to stand above the law was abrogated. The People's Party promulgated the constitution on June 27, 1932, stating that the supreme power belonged to the People and that the Parliament and People's Committee should organize the Government.

On the night of June 24, the King and his vassals held discussions over whether to accept the Party's action. Royalist military men suggested besieging Bangkok with military forces stationed outside the capital, but the King refused their suggestion for fear of bloodshed and decided to cooperate with the Party. The royalists, however, were looking for a chance to counterattack. They spread a rumor that the revolution was a conspiracy of communists and visited foreign embassies to request intervention against the threat of communists. The police chief, a royalist, bribed rickshaw-pullers to go on a strike to disrupt Bangkok. Notwithstanding the whirl of royalists' resistance, however, the King agreed to participate in the drafting process of the permanent constitution. Among the 70 seats in the transition parliament, 25 nominees under the reign of absolute monarchy were included; 8 nominees took a seat in the cabinet of new government as well. Phraya Manopakorn Nititada (Mano), one of the rare non-royalty members of the former Privy Council, was elected Prime Minister. The permanent constitution wrapped up as a royal grant was promulgated on December 10 in 1932. The constitution was far more favorable to the king than the original draft, but still reserved provisions to curb the exercise of king's privileges (Riggs, 1966, p. 159).

Under the water, however, persistent battles were taking place between the forces of the old and new regimes. The key points in dispute were the position of the king in the constitution and his property. Bangkok journalists insisted on confiscating the land of the royal family and aristocrats to use in boosting the struggling economy. The new government did not accept all those arguments as they were, but still prepared laws on property and inheritance taxes. Pridi wrote the 'draft of economic plan' supposing the royal family should contribute their whole lands to the government voluntarily. No wonder the royal families were thrown into consternation.

Prime Minister Mano, the King's close associate, requested the cabinet to veto the plan on the ground that it was against Thai tradition, and as a warning, dispatched troops to parliament as it planned to discuss the bill. The King and his associates in the government operations withdrew agreements with the constitutional revolutionists. King Prajadhipok wrote an essay comparing Pridi to Stalin. As a result, Pridi had to leave to seek asylum abroad, and his followers lost their positions in the cabinet. Two royalist generals won promotion, while officers affiliated to the People's Party were transferred to separate provinces. The Anti-Communist Law was swiftly passed.

The victory of Prime Minister Mano, however, was short-lived. One month later, in June 1933, young officers of the People's Party pulled a coup again to overthrow the Mano government and remove several royalists within the military. They paid more attention to the nominees in the new government and called in Pridi from exile. Again, royalists launched a counterattack by instigating social disorder and spreading rumors of conspiracy by foreign agents. In October of the same year, a group of royalist ex-officers purged from the military rose in rebellion under the command of Prince Boworadet. As the rebellion broke out, the King escaped to the South. The King did not publicly support the rebels but eventually asked for a pardon. The Party believed King had intervened in the rebellion and secretly provided financial aid. After long negotiations, the king agreed to return but then immediately left for Europe on sick leave. During his stay abroad, he refused to ratify the bills submitted by the government. Among them were legislative bills to transfer the control over the Royal Property Bureau to the government, impose an inheritance tax on the king, and reduce king's privileges. When advised to return home, he asked for a

large-scale constitutional reform in the direction of bolstering the kingship, including veto power of parliament-approved bills. In March 1935, the King declared his abdication. The government nominated his nephew, Prince Ananda Mahidol, aged 10 and studying in Switzerland, as legitimate successor to the throne (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 121).

As the Boworadet Rebellion ended in a failure, the standoff between the old powers and revolutionary powers drew to an end. It was then time for the People's Party to prove that the post-absolute monarchy system could meet the aspirations of a changing society. The Party was divided into two factions, civilian and military; Pridi represented the former, and Phibun, the latter. The two disagreed on state roles and objectives. Pridi's thought was influenced by the tradition of French liberalism, tempered with European socialism. From this perspective, the role of the state was to provide an infrastructure on which each individual could develop one's abilities to the fullest. For this to be accomplished, the rule of law, a judicial system, economic assistance, and educational and health systems were *sine qua nons*. Pridi was supported by businessmen, labor leaders, and politicians who aspired to a more liberal state. His ideas were close to the liberal nationalism that had grown into ideologies for European civil revolutions. On the contrary, Phibun thought of the state as representing the general will of the people, obliged to change individuals through education, law enforcement, and cultural undertakings. His ideas were close to state nationalism. In short, within constitutional revolutionary powers, liberalism and statism coexisted. Notwithstanding these differences, both factions remained in unison until World War II (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 122).

Phibun put emphasis on Rathaniyom, namely, nationalism for the sake of national unity. It was to that effect that Phibun renamed Siam to Thailand.¹² Pridi also expected the nation and constitution to be the new objects of popular allegiance. He urged people to love their nation and defend the constitution through the radio. Phibun and Pridi alike resorted to state nationalism, but the military faction, having achieved solid ground during the defensive war for revolution, came to be absorbed in militaristic nationalism, a most extreme form of state nationalism. In 1934, Phibun organized 'Yuwachon Thahan' (lit. junior soldiers), something similar to Hitlerjugend. As the opposition took seats at the elections, he played it his own way through rule by decree of the Prime Minister without passing through parliamentary procedures. Though a bill to organize the parliament with elected members only was under discussion in 1940, he elongated the system of half-elected parliament by 10 more years. He nominated himself as General of the Army, which had been previously nominated by the king. He tried to build a leadership cult, calling himself Leader. Newspapers ran with the slogan, "The security of our country depends on the confidence in our Leader." He had his picture hung in every house. He enacted restrictive laws such as the State of Emergency Act that approved random arrests without warrant and the Press Act of 1941. He promoted a campaign titled "To demonstrate our nation can act like a person". Critics accused him of trying to imitate Mussolini, and deify himself as a president, or even a king. Phibun was a figure like Cromwell or Bonaparte

who rose through civil revolution on the basis of liberal nationalism, but transformed it into state nationalism. During the same period, Pridi staged the Free Thai Movement and opposed Phibun's line.

The fissure between the military and civilian elite caused both factions to compete to win favor with the royal family, which in turn contributed to the gradual restoration of ground for royalists. Phibun, the leader of the military faction during the constitutional revolution, withdrew his previous position against the royal family and sought compromise for the restoration of royal family's privilege after the cause-unknown death of King Ananda Mahidol. Some royalists gathered together to form the Democrat Party to comply with the changing times. The fact that Phibun joined the royalist coup¹³ in 1947 to oust Pridi, and by this, abrogated the 1946 constitution to restore the king's power to nominate members of the Upper House, clearly points to his position change. In the end, a military clique of General Sarit, who came to power through the 1957 coup, went so far as to consecrate the kingship with the existing trinity theory of 'Nation, Religion, and King' and with the ancient concept of the king as protector of the nation and Buddhism, reviving Deva—raja of the kingdom of Ayutthaya into modern day. Sarit was the leading figure in putting down the Free Thai Movement rebellion, led by Pridi and his navy supporters in February 1949. One year and four months later, he distinguished himself again in clearing the navy rebellion that broke out in June 1952 (Cha, 2003, pp. 151-152).

¹² The change of the country's name by the Phibun government reflected the intention to build the Thai empire by integrating the territories of Cambodia, parts of Burma, and Laos, which are related to Thai or Thai ethnic groups. (Cha, 2003, p. 70).

¹³ The 1947 coup which overthrew Pridi returned Phibun back to power, but he had to share power with Sarit, representing the army, and Pao, representing the police.

Sarit employed traditional authorities, not based on Western culture and that fit in the Thai context, as the footstones of politics and culture. During his administration, 'Thai-style democracy' was advocated. Politically, parliamentarism and electoral democracy were denied, and culturally, American pop music such as rock and roll was banned under the pretext of purging Western values. In contrast, the King, the symbol of traditional authority, was well—encouraged to go on overseas trips, traditional rituals of the royal family were restored, and the King and Queen's birthdays were designated as Father's Day and Mother's Day. Answering the support of Sarit and his elites, King Bhumibol actively engaged in the businesses of social welfare, rural community development, and education.¹⁴ The King himself put in his best effort at establishing a charismatic image of a traditional Dhamma—raja (lit. righteous king) who rules his kingdom according to Buddhist principles (Park, 2001, pp. 168-170).

Following the aforementioned path, the 1932 constitutional revolution resulted in strengthening state nationalism symbolized by the trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and King' on the basis of the military—royalists alliance. Since the 1957 coup that fixed the right—wing national revolution, King Bhumibol stood in the center of official nationalism with the military and was protected by the military, but he never unconditionally endorsed the political lines of the military. He was so wise as to withdraw his endorsement for then ex-army Prime Minister and his associates over the pro-democracy student protests on 14 th October 1973, and came to deeply engage in the building-up process of civilian government. The so-called Octoberists became a prominent political force. Between 1973 and 1976, they continued to work closely with leftwing labor,

farmer, and other grassroots movements. However, the escalation of anticommunist suppression measures and growing ultra-right—wing movement ended their efforts with Bangkok massacre of 6th October 1976 (Kanokrat, 2016, p. 1) In other words, when the situation turned to another phase where student leaders and mass movement leaders started to challenge the trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and King', the King acquiesced in the violent operations of the military, police, and far—right militia. The Communist take—over of Laos that abolished the monarchy in April 1975 stirred up a sense of crisis among the royal family and royalists, which in turn caused the solidarity of anti-Bangkok Massacre on student protesters on October 6 in 1976, was the initial reaction of Thai right—wing national revolutionaries to the civil revolutionary forces in germination. This event proved that while the royal family in Thailand admits the move from state to liberal nationalism, it does not tolerate the move to get out of state nationalism by even mobilizing military forces, if necessary, to control the degree of liberalism. Noteworthy from this case is that liberal nationalists failed to gain popular support strong enough to surmount state ideology represented by the trinity theory.

When the rising business tycoon and powerful politician Thaksin Shinawatra began to awaken the rural poor's political consciousness through populist policies and gather footstones for liberal nationalism to possibly overcome the trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and King', the military—royal family alliance of right-wing national revolution responded with a military coup in the name of protecting the royal family on September 19, 2006. Since then, Thai society has been divided into two: 'Yellow shirts' under the command of royalists in support of the coup and 'Red shirts'

¹⁴ During this time, King Bhumibol promoted development plans to support hill tribes by establishing the Royal Medical Team, artificial limb center, medical service support organization, agricultural research and development center, vocational training center, and royal scholarship foundation (Kim, 2010, pp. 75-176).

under the pro-Thaksin forces in opposition to the coup. The red shirts regard their struggle against royalists, in which the Democrat Party constitutes a major axis, as popular resistance to stop the turning of the clock to before the 1932 constitutional revolution (Park, 2013a, p. 91). This complexion is quite a contrast to the events of October 1976, which lacked nationwide popularity.

On the other hand, as pro-Thaksin forces, supported by the red shirts, won the general elections in 2007 and 2011 consecutively, the yellow shirts indeed disagree on the fact that electoral democracy is a political mechanism to prevent the 'politics of war' and to address political conflicts. Their slogan, "Reform first, and then, election", means they would not join the election unless Thaksin is ousted from the political arena first. They refute the electoral results that favor the red shirts, mainly composed of nationwide low-income strata and people in northern and north-eastern regions. In this context, the yellow shirts supported the 2006 coup. This was, admittedly, a "different coup" justified on the grounds of protecting the monarchy, as well as attacking corruption, the government's interference with independent agencies and political polarization. The army was generally welcomed on the streets of Bangkok and gained considerable prestige as a protector and nation and monarchy (Askew, 2010, p. 13). In contrast, the red shirts, criticizing the coups and the abuse of the criminal article on lese-majesty (the crime of violating majesty) advocated for electoral democracy, and are growing into the civil revolutionary force on the basis of liberal nationalism. In sum, the standoff between the yellow and red shirts that began in April to May 2010 can be interpreted as an Thaksin's revolutionary forces, adhering to state nationalism epitomized in the motto of 'Nation, Religion, and King', and civil revolutionary forces, trying to break through that obstacle so that liberal nationalism can take root.

Octoberists also divided into pro-Thaksin and anti-Thaksin. Octoberists who had been negatively affected by and disagreed with Thaksin government started to perceive the Thaksin's TRT as a political threat (Kanokrat, 2016, p. 232). Thailand's Democrat Party-led administration under the leadership of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva emerged victorious following the dramatic and ultimately bloody confrontations with the red shirts during March-May 2010. But this victory was achieved at the expense of persistent, in fact exacerbated, political polarization. The state's reaction was legitimated by the application of two potent conspiracy discourses, namely "terrorism" and the overthrow of the monarchy. The "monarchy is danger" from evil plotters is a vital dimension of hyper-royalist Thai popular nationalism and an institutionalized discourse embraced and deployed by key palace-aligned conservative actors (notably Privy Council President Prem Tinsulanon)(Montesano, Pavin and Aekapol, 2012, pp. 72-73). A coup broke out again in May 2014, heralding the deepening of political bi-polarization of Thai society, leading to intensified political struggles on a full scale.

2. The Left-wing National Revolution and the Challenge of Civil Revolution in Burma

After losing the First Anglo-Burmese War between 1824 and 1826, Burma had to cede Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim to the British under the Treaty of Yandabo. As a result of the second defeat of the Second War between 1852 and 1853, fought under the pretext that some British ships and crew were abused by Burmese, Burma ceded Pegu province, later renamed Lower Burma. Eventually, threatened by King Thibaw's independent diplomacy that sought cooperation with France to check British influence, the British finally took over all Burmese territory in 1886 and annexed it to India as a province (Yang, 1996, p.84).

Burma had not kept in close contact with and had quite a distinct culture from India before the 19th century, but by the annexation experienced unrestricted immigration of Indians. For that reason, Burmese nationalist movements that developed on a full scale during the 1930s took on a disposition against Indian merchants and officials, apart from the British itself (Yeom, 2007, p. 48).

Before anything else, the British colonial rule degenerated Buddhism. The colonial authorities sanctioned persons in saffron—colored robes as the authentic clergy, but would not accept authorities of any religious organizations (Heidhues, 2012, p. 106). Buddhist schools could not get official assistance unless they accepted subjects assigned by the colonial government. Interestingly, the British pressure on Buddhism inspired the Buddhist movement in Burma (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 283). In 1906, Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) launched forth, modeled after the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Cultural organizations such as the General Council of Buddhist Association and Burma Research Society were set up successively. These organizations urged for national religion and cultural pride, which were hailed by enthusiastic nationalists, young lawyers in particular who had studied in British universities but gained no job in the colonial government. As the British examined a bill to introduce a dual government system into India, the YMBA demanded provincial autonomy for Burma as well in 1917 and 1918, but to no avail. In reaction, the YMBA allied itself with more extreme nationalist organizations to form the General Council of Burmese Association in 1920. Not only Burmans, but many other ethnic minorities joined the organization.

In the 1930s, students of Rangoon University organized Dobama Asiayon (lit. We Burmans Society) and staged the Young Thakin (lit. lord or master) Movement in the cause of modern independent Burma. The Thakins insisted on preparation for an all-out resistance to the colonial rule, including military training and

armaments (Christie, 2005, p. 123). Aung San surfaced as the leader of the Thakins. These mass organizations constituted the core of the 'nation' in the making (Yeom, 2007, p. 48).

Rangoon College was established in 1880, and developed into Rangoon University on December 20, 1920. The colonial government had observed in India that universities had rapidly turned into a hot bed for nationalism. For fear of the similar development, the colonial government tried to hold tight control over Rangoon University after its promotion, which only stimulated the university students to take to the streets in protest. Nationalist movement leaders organized a nationwide education committee and set up nationalist schools all over Burma. All schools affiliated with the YMBA became nationalist schools. Among them, Rangoon University was an unquestionable cradle of nationalist movements. There were some students at Rangoon University who had studied and understood liberalism and socialism in Europe, if superficially. They were naïve but on the verge of explosion. The Thakins, representative of such students, took the lead at student protests in February 1936, which triggered the surge of popular nationalism. The student protests spread all over Burma, even to high school levels, resulting in the shut-down of all Burmese schools for several months. By enacting the Government of Burma Act in 1935, the British separated Burma from India, set up a distinct colonial parliament, and put into practice Provincial Autonomy in 1937, but the Thakins did not join, demanding complete independence. At the core of the organization were the 'Thirty Comrades', with Aung San at the head. During Japanese occupation, Aung San clandestinely organized the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) to resist Japanese colonial rule, which constituted the base for the Burma National Army. The Burma National Army (BNA) began to fight against Japan from March 1945 onwards (Christie 2005, 176).

The AFPFL was an organization based on prototypical nationalism both in name and reality. It comprised various political groups on a national scale, equipped with military forces such as the Burma Independence Army (BIA). By the end of World War II, when Japan's failure became clear, it had grown into a threat to the British, who were pondering the restoration of colonial rule. In the end, Burmese independence was put to a negotiation between the British and the AFPFL, headed by Aung San (Christie, 2005, p. 250). In the dispute, extending from 1946 to 1947, Aung San urged all factions to stand in unity to fight against and obtain independence from the British (Callahan, 1998, p. 65). In January 1947, the British and the AFPFL reached an agreement to call a referendum to set up the Constituent Assembly immediately, to organize a gathering of British representatives, Burmese, and ethnic minorities, and to approve the Aung San Cabinet as an interim government (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 290).

Noteworthy at this point is the ambivalent position of Aung San and his comrades on Western democracy. At the point when World War II broke out, Aung San raised eight principles regarding Burmese democracy. Among them were the nationalization of means of production, guarantee of labor rights and social insurance, and the establishment of a judicial system based on People's interests. However, in the "Blue Print for a Free Burma" in 1941, he is quoted as stating, "What we want is a strong state administration as exemplified in Germany and Italy. We only have one nation, one country, one party, one leader. There shall be no parliamentary opposition, no nonsense of individualism." At this point in time, Aung San clearly disavowed liberal democracy. The core concern of Aung San and his fellows was the nationalization of national assets. This position contradicts Western democracies that recognize private property by law. This reveals the close relationship of the Burmese nationalist project, designed by Aung San and other youths,

with anti-imperialist utopian socialism that can trace back to Karl Marx, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Joseph Stalin, George Bernard Shaw, and so forth. The term democracy, to the young nationalists at that time, was identical with colonialism or imperialism (Callahan, 1998, pp. 52-53). In sum, to the young elite, liberal nationalism that had formed the basis of Western civil revolution seemed nothing more than hypocrisy; in response, they leaned toward Lenin's socialist revolution or Fascism based on state nationalism. However, during the Japanese rule of 1943-1945, the concept of liberal nationalism emerged again. During this period, writers, journalists, and cartoonists gathered in teahouses to discuss contemporary Burmese literature. They strengthened their connection with the public to raise awareness of resistance against fascism (Aung Myo Zaw, 2007, pp. 267-268).

But the nationalist project of Aung San and his fellows, vacillating between statism and liberalism, faced catastrophe from the abrupt assassination of Aung San and his cabinet members by unidentified agents. U Nu, ex-Foreign Minister in the Ba Mo Cabinet under the auspice of Japan and then-chairman of the Constituent Assembly, acceded to Aung San's position. But the AFPFL was torn after Aung San's death. Communists started armed struggles soon after. The Karen people, most of whom believed in Christianity and dwelling around the Delta not that far from the capital, and other ethnic minorities in the mountainous regions rose in revolt as well. Rangoon was besieged until 1948 and returned to normality little by little (Heidhues, 2012, p. 218). In the First 1952 General Election held under the First Constitution, the AFPFL won an overwhelming victory. In 1953, the lands of non-farming owners were confiscated according to the Land Nationalization Act. Lands previously owned by Indian Chettiars (the usurer) were transferred to Burmese farmers, while many Indians left Burma (Heidhues 2012, 219).

In post-war Burma, unlike Thailand, there was no objection to socialism (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 293). Though the ideology of Pridi, the leading spirit of Thai revolution, failed to take root in Thailand, it could in Burma. In other words, in the process of building up an independent republic right after World War II, leaders of a young generation, like Pridi in Thailand, came to power in Burma. This was possible due to Burmese animosity toward British, Indian, and Chinese capitalism. The lack of capital, technology and governance was the problem. Nationalization started. The government banned ownership of more than 50 acres per household. Redistributed lands were prohibited from reselling or monopolizing except under special instructions. The eight-year Pyidawtha (lit. Happy Land) Plan was proclaimed in 1952. The plan set goals such as to make all people live a happy life and to achieve national GDP growth of 9% every year (Jang, 2012, pp. 63-64). But because Burma refused to accept economic and technical assistance from the United States and other Western powers, the funding assigned to the plan was largely insufficient. Foreign assistance was prohibited from entering Burma except for the war indemnity from Japan that started in 1954, worth no more than 200 million US dollars, and lasted until 1977.

Especially noteworthy regarding the threat to sovereignty was that many ethnic minorities, formerly accommodated under British rule, were now pushed out of the mainstream and became worried about ethnic Burmese domination, particularly the Karen in the Southeast. The Karen claimed independence from Burma, or at least a government structure that allowed autonomy for ethnic minorities to a considerable degree. Their claims were turned down, and secessionist movements kicked off (Christie, 2005, p. 250). To make matters worse, the AFPFL, the winner of the landslide victory of the 1956 elections was

soon mired in intra-party dissension. To quell the disturbance, Prime Minister U Nu quit and handed over the caretaker government to General Ne Win who had been at the head of the Army during the civil war. As a member of the 'Thirty Comrades' during the colonial period with Aung San, Ne Win was a socialist and nationalist leader of an authoritarian disposition. Aung San helped him to assume the role of the Tatmadaw's supreme leadership. There had been simmering tensions between ethnic minorities and the Burmans before the 1962 military coup. For example, the Burmans accused the Shans of conspiring to disintegrate the Union of Burma with the help of imperialists and capitalists. On the other hand, ethnic minorities, who demanded the federal government, labeled the Burmans as 'chauvinists and colonialists' and accused them of attempting to establish a unitary state against the Panglong agreement and the 1947 Constitution (Kipgen, 2022, p. 35). In a nutshell, he was a typical state-nationalist. Ne Win's assumption as head of the state echoes Thai history in that Phibun and Sarit grew to secure their positions leading state-nationalist forces in the midst of the revolutionary and anti-revolutionary conflicts after 1932. As anti-colonial struggles and secessionist movements rose, new military elites responded in a typical state-nationalist manner, simply suppressing the independent civil and political society. The military officers held fast to Burman centrism, refusing negotiations with ethnic minorities in the name of preventing disintegration. The deterioration of law and order was a good opportunity to say that the civilian government was incapable of maintaining political stability (Kipgen, 2022, p. 37).

In the midst of intensifying inter-ethnic conflicts and the AFPFL's intra-party dissension in 1962, a military faction led by Ne Win pulled a coup advocating the 'Burmese Way to Socialism'.

The military junta proclaimed a plan to establish a socialist economic system similar to that of the Sino–Soviet bloc and organized the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) (Mya Maung, 1970, p. 539). Ne Win ordered all the parties except BSPP to break up.¹⁵ As the government came closer to the communists' voices, it became more and more authoritarian. But some educators, students, media, and ethnic minorities opposed the military dictatorship. As university self–administration was curtailed and state-control imposed, students mounted defiant demonstrations. Campus riots at Rangoon University on 7–8 July 1962 were met with state brutality, resulting in a hundred deaths. To signal its determination, the government also detonated the student's union building, long focal point for nationalist struggle, and shuttered the university (David and Holliday, 2019, p. 22). Universities re–opened in 1964, but now political activities of students majoring in political sciences were strictly suppressed, the technical fields were emphasized, and study abroad was sent to Eastern Europe. The level of education deteriorated over time (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 297). As did Fascists at the extremity of state nationalism, the junta showed hatred toward intellectualism.

The 'Burmese Way to Socialism' was idealism oriented toward the anti–capitalist system through government control over production, and was a sort of nebulous humanitarianism (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 297). It pursued the 'autarky' model (Tin Maung Maung Than, 2007, p. 113) that is typically claimed in left–wing national revolutions. In fact, during 1962–65, the institutionalization of a command economy was enforced, complying with orthodox Marxist guidance (Mya Maung, 1970, p. 539). Two groups gave

their absolute adhesion to Ne Win faction at that time: the military on the initiative of young officers with pro–communist dispositions and the National United Front (NUF). Following the NUF leader, capitalism was wiped out from all parts of society and agriculture took precedence over industry. In 1965, the tenantry of farming lands was banned (Heidhues, 2012, p. 251). During 1963–65, more than one thousand private companies were nationalized, and Chinese or Indian companies were expelled. Under the banner of Burmanization of the economy, during 1962–65, nationalization was advanced on a full scale but in a haphazard manner.¹⁶ As part of the nationalization policy, foreigners were expelled from national economy and nearly 177,000 Indians and Pakistanis departed Burma during 1962–67. As a result, the government gained control of commerce and industry while losing businessmen, merchants, technical experts, and managers necessary in maintaining and developing the economy (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, pp. 297–299). A notable result of the process is that in spite of the revolutionary government's endeavors to develop the agriculture sector, food production dropped to pre-World War II levels. Food supplies barely met the needs of the growing population, and 1973 was the first year in modern Burmese history when Burma could not export rice. The decrease in rice exports reduced available foreign currency required for industrial development. The decrease in rice production was due to the inefficiency of the state credit system and the state monopoly on rice trade. Farmers did not use government loans as the military government ordered, seeding was inefficient, production was set to meet their own needs, and the surplus was channeled to black

¹⁵ Ne Win mentioned that it was more to learn from Buddha than Marx, and fully accepted U Nu's personal political view of rejecting the communist forces that blindly followed Marx rather than the futility of religion (Jang 2012, 69).

¹⁶ Rapid nationalization was carried out during the crisis management government (1958–1962) when Ne Win's right-hand man, Aung Kyi, was ousted from the Union Revolutionary Council by more radical socialists, Tin Phay and Ba Nyan (Yang, 1996)

markets or to the rebels who paid a third more than the government rate. As Burma was covered with forests over half of its territory, timber, teak in particular, had been the second largest export traditionally. But the volume of teak exports fell to two thirds of the 1940 production level, and the production of minerals and crude oil stayed below pre-War levels. This can be in part ascribed to the actions of the British, who destroyed mines and oil fields at the beginning of World War II, but nonetheless, the losses caused by nationalization in facilities, capital, and managerial and technical expertise, and the government's refusal to receive foreign assistance were to blame. Burma's per capita GNI in 1974 amounted to only 80 US dollars, the least in Southeast Asia (Esterline and Esterline, 1991, p. 298).

In mid-1974, widespread demonstrations stirred up the country. In December, students of Rangoon University raised an anti-government revolt, making use of a symbolic opportunity in the death of U Thant, the former UN Secretary General and a renowned humanist. To put it simply, it was a challenge to state nationalism by civil-revolutionary forces against the left-wing national revolution. Ne Win tackled these popular protests with martial law that lasted for almost two years, resulting in 8,900 people in custody and 300 people to prison. It was a popular movement based on liberal nationalism, heralding the 1988 civil revolution. As student protests resumed in July 1975 over price hikes and the high unemployment rate, the government shut down universities until January and tightened control of prices. When students raised a disturbance

again in March, the government imprisoned the leaders, shut down universities again, and a man identified as leading the student protests was executed for treason.

The resistance of civil society on the initiative of students and monks burst forth again in 1988. While students staged demonstrations for the termination of military dictatorship, monks staged for the withdrawal of government control over the Sangha (assembly of Buddhist monks). Ne Win stepped down in the maelstrom, but several thousands were imprisoned by August. In September, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was launched. Going beyond most expectations, the SLORC promised to dismiss the BSPP and to hold general elections in the multi-party system. The SLORC seemed to be convinced of their victory, which proved to be wrong. In the 1990 General Elections, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of General Aung San, won an overwhelming victory.¹⁷ But it was too soon to conclude that civil revolutionary forces had overcome the left-wing national revolutionary forces. Fearing for their safety after the hand-over of power, the military annulled the electoral results and instead organized a National Convention to draft a new constitution. Civil revolutionary forces and the international community urged a power hand-over to the NLD, but the SLORC brushed this off. The standoff between the military and civil revolutionary forces restarted. After a long political standoff, the military presented a blue print for political reform titled, 'Roadmap to Discipline—flourishing Democracy'¹⁸ in 2003.

¹⁷ In the general elections of May 1990, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 80.8% of the seats, much higher than the 59.9% of the vote. On the other hand, the National Unity Party (NUP), the successor of the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), won only 2.1% of the seats, far below 21.2% of the vote.

¹⁸ The key points of the roadmap are as follows. Phase 1: Reassemble the National Convention (NC), which had been suspended since 1996. Phase 2: Determination of necessary measures for the establishment of democracy at the reconvened National Convention (NC). Phase 3: Drawing up a draft constitution according to the basic principles prepared by the National Convention (NC). Phase 4: Hold a referendum on the approval of the draft constitution. Phase 5: Implement elections for parliament members under the new constitution. Phase 6: Formation of Parliament. Phase 7: Build a modern democratic state.

Civil revolutionary forces, including the NLD, totally refused to participate in the political schedule of the roadmap. Neither the military wanted the NLD to participate in the National Convention.¹⁹

In the so-called 'Saffron Revolution' of 2007, massive protests against the military broke out, led by monks. The international community harshly condemned the bloodshed on protestors by the police. The ASEAN, which had granted membership to Burma in spite of oppositions by the Western world, also expressed dissatisfaction. Despite this, the Burmese military unconcernedly advanced its 'Roadmap to Democracy', passing the new constitution in May 2008, holding general elections in November 2010, organizing the parliament in February and launching the new government with Thein Sein, an ex-army politician, as Head of State in March 2011. Through a deal at an unofficial meeting held on August 19, 2011 between President Thein Sein, representing left-wing national revolutionary forces, and Aung San Suu Kyi, representing civil revolutionary forces, several measures for a political opening followed, alluding to the end of a 'prolonged and inconclusive political struggle'. In response, the NLD discarded the existing boycott strategy to the 'Roadmap to Democracy', and registered as a political party. Thus, the NLD decided to participate in the by-election held on April 1, 2012. Contrary to previous concerns, the elections were conducted comparatively fairly, and the NLD won a sweeping victory. After the by-election, liberalizing measures such as release of political prisoners and expansion of freedom of speech followed. Suspicions by the military elites (Taylor, 1998, p.40), who believed that the NLD

and its overseas supporters would destroy Burmese political and cultural independence, appear to be softening. The military regards the 2008 constitution more favorably as it guarantees military privilege at a constitutional level. Now, the prospective path of ongoing democratization process will depend on the degree of civil revolutionary forces' will to achieve the civilian control of the military equipped with physical forces.

IV. Conclusion

The brutality of state nationalism was coincidentally seen as a kind of democide in universities such as Thammasat University of Thailand in 1976 and Rangoon University of Myanmar in 1962.

The intensive conflicts between yellow shirts and red shirts emerged as a major issue after the 2006 coup in Thailand. The 'slow-burn civil war' (Montesano, 2012) of Bangkok May 2010 was a climax point historically. The 'red shirts' argued the Thai political system had returned to its pre-1932 state. The confrontation between the military-royal-Democratic alliance and the pro-Thaksin political and social forces was compared to the confrontation between 'ammat', which means a bureaucrat or aristocrat in the pre-modern sakdina period, and 'prai' which means commoner or serf (Park, 2013a, p. 91; Somchai, 2011, p. 1). In contrast to Thailand, the process of national reconciliation in Burma between the military, which once regarded autarky as the development model, and Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), which represents the civil revolutionary forces that led the democratic movement, was taking place, amid political transition since 2011.

¹⁹ General Khin Nyunt, who announced the roadmap, often told Asian leaders and UN special envoy Razali Ismail that he wanted Aung San Suu Kyi to participate in the process of national reconciliation. However, General Than Shwe, the top military figure, strongly refused her participation. He argued that she should be given a certain role in the national reconciliation process after passing the new constitution and holding new elections (Jagan, 2006, p. 31).

Burma tested the possibility of entry into stage of national reconciliation after the grand compromise was dealt in August 2011 between President Thein Sein, representing the military and left-wing national revolution, and Aung San Suu Kyi, representing civil revolution.²⁰ However, the illegal coup on February 2021 made elite-level pact broken.

In Thailand, a civil society against absolute monarchy was in the making even before the 1932 constitutional revolution. Against this backdrop, the military—civilian coalition pulled a surprise coup for a system change in June 1932, putting the kingship under the constitution. The trinity theory of ‘Nation, Religion, and King’ as official nationalism was discarded. Noteworthy at this point is the coexistence of the military’s state nationalism and the civilian’s liberal nationalism. The civilian faction, led by Pridi and informed of liberalism and socialism in the European civil revolutions, alarmed the King and his vassals from the start as a potential communist threat. Pridi’s faction aimed at reducing the royal property through land nationalization as a major economic reform. The royalist’s hardline strategy to exclude Pridi continued, but their armed rebellion ended in a failure. As the position of the military, led by Phibun, built up in the meantime through campaigns to subdue armed revolts, state nationalism came to overwhelm liberal nationalism.

Phibun succeeded to official nationalism from the pre-revolution era, renamed Siam as Thailand, and idolized himself. Modeling after the Fascism that haunted Germany and Japan, he suppressed the autonomy of civil society and excluded ethnic Chinese in an effort to materialize the ideologies of state nationalism into policies. When World War II broke out, he supported the Axis powers

of Japan, Germany and Italy. Pridi, his comrade in the revolution, staged the Free Thai Movement in support of the Allies, and the former coalition of state and liberal nationalists from the 1932 constitutional revolution came to be definitively opposed to one another. The Allies’ victory in World War II provided a political condition favorable to Pridi and the Free Thai Movement, but capitalizing on the cause—unknown death of King Mahidol, the royalists carried out their intention to remove Pridi, and the military—royal family coalition took root. In particular, the Democrat Party, organized and ruled by the royalists, made a significant contribution to the success of the 1947 coup aimed at removing Pridi. General Sarit’s take-over of government through the 1957 coup revived the traditional concept of Deva-raja in the pre-modern era, solidified the military-royal family coalition, and completed the right-wing revolution characterized by state and official nationalism. It can be understood from the perspective of historical traits of Thailand that has no colonial past, thus no anti-colonial struggles based on civil nationalism.

The nation-building process of Burma after the abolishment of absolute monarchy by the British shares many similarities with other third-world countries with a colonial past. At first, the movements for national revolution in Burma stemmed from the surge of anti-colonialism like other Third-World countries. As colonial nationalisms that fought against Western powers did, Burmese national revolutionary forces as well assumed the complexion of anti-imperial, anti-Western, and anti-capitalist characters, indignant at the hypocrisy of the Western liberal nationalism who sought after imperialism, regarding people in the colonies as subjects. As backlash, the core Burmese young activists leaned toward state

²⁰ A specific example of the grand compromise is that the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi in November 2011, altered its boycotted strategy for the military-backed “Roadmap to Democracy” (Park 2013b, 297). The most dramatic example of that achievement is the landslide victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi in the by-election on April 1, 2012. In contrast to concerns, Thein Sein government held the election relatively fairly.

nationalism such as Bolshevism or Fascism once. In regards to the nation state—building process, Burma forms a contrast to Thailand.

The national revolution in Burma, however, suffered the same difficulty in evolving toward liberal nationalism. Most of all, the British divide—and—rule policy created conditions that led to inter—ethnic civil wars right after independence, severely hampering ethnic tolerance at a national level. At the bottom of the ethnic conflicts lay the distrust between Burmans who had been excluded and non-Burmans who had been promoted by the British. In the midst of civil wars blocking national unity, the military came to bolster their position as in Thailand, and thus the conditions grew in favor of state nationalism rather than liberal nationalism. The launch of the ‘Burmese way to Socialism’ by Ne Win, one of former leaders of anti-British and anti—Japan national movements, was the completion of the left—wing national revolution in the combination of official and state nationalism, rendering the ascendancy of Burmans over non—Burmans.

Noteworthy here is the fact that Thai society has never had an opportunity to overcome state nationalism adhering to the trinity of ‘Nation, Religion, and King’. The Democrat Party, in particular, has never shown any will to overcome it, instead, joined forces to prevent such activities from taking place. Democratization in Thailand was the result of civil revolution bounded by “Democracy with the King as Head of State”, and there was no prototype civil revolution beyond the royalism as in Europe, at least before the 2006 coup that turned over the Thaksin administration. The coup after democratization triggered intensive struggles between typical civil revolutionary forces based on liberalism and pro—official nationalism based on statism.

In this vein, the ‘yellow-red standoff’ since 2006 can be interpreted as the starting point of a ‘prolonged and inconclusive political struggle’ between the right—wing national revolutionary

forces and civil revolutionary forces. The 2010 May civil war and the 2014 May coup exposed an aspect of intensive political struggles between the two camps.

In Burma the prototype of civil revolution broke up in Burma in 1974, 1988, and 2007, even though all ended in a failure. The Burma case proves that the political conflicts between official—state nationalists and civil-liberal nationalists may not settle down easily, as it shows the 2021 February coup. The ongoing civil war in Burma is revealing atrocities of official—state nationalists. In sum, the cases of Thailand and Myanmar suggest that genuine national unity is not possible without reconciliation after passing through intensive struggles between official—state nationalists and civil—liberal nationalists.

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