Dynamics and Influences: Local and National Politics in Khon Kaen Province's House of Representatives Elections, District 3

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Abstract

This study offers a nuanced exploration of the interplay between national and local political dynamics in Thailand, with a particular focus on Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province. It delves into the complex political environment surrounding the pivotal elections of May 14, 2023, utilizing a Mixed Methods approach to integrate both quantitative and qualitative insights from a stratified sample of 400 voters. At the core of this investigation is a robust regression analysis that rigorously quantifies the impact of various determinants on electoral outcomes. The analysis reveals that policy preferences overwhelmingly influence voter behavior, significantly more than other variables such as political campaigns or party affiliations. This suggests a discerning electorate that prioritizes substantive policy over traditional factors such as campaign dynamics or party loyalty. Additionally, factors like voter engagement and campaign strategies, though less influential, still play notable roles in shaping electoral decisions. This comprehensive study advances our understanding of Thai electoral politics by illustrating how national reforms and local characteristics converge to influence voter decisions in an evolving democratic landscape. It challenges existing political science paradigms and offers critical insights into the efficacy of electoral strategies and the maturation of democratic processes in Thailand.

Keywords: Electoral dynamics, political landscapes, voter behavior, political campaigns, social media in politics, policy influence

Introduction

Elections are multifaceted events influenced by a myriad of dynamics and factors that span political landscapes, economic conditions, demographics, media, and campaign strategies. These elements profoundly shape voter behavior and election outcomes, making it essential for political parties, candidates, and policymakers to understand these complexities as they navigate the electoral process. (Norris, 2014). Additionally, elections serve as reflections of societal values, preferences, and aspirations, thereby functioning as fundamental components of democratic governance. This study aims to: 1) Analyze the national political landscape in Thailand, tracing its evolution from historical to contemporary times; 2) Examine the local political landscape in Khon Kaen Province, particularly the changes before and after the May 14, 2023 elections; 3) Investigate the interplay between national political dynamics and local factors that influenced the 2023 elections in Khon Kaen Province. The recent electoral reforms in Khon Kaen Province, announced by the Election Commission on March 3, 2023, which expanded the electoral districts from 10 to 11, underscore the evolving nature of political representation and are pivotal for analyzing electoral impacts in the province. The shift observed in the 2023 elections, where a candidate from the Move Forward Party was elected for the first time over a candidate from the Pheu Thai Party in Electoral District 3, illustrates the dynamic nature of political engagement and the evolving voter preferences in the region.

This literature review synthesizes these foundational theories to set the stage for examining the specific dynamics of political interactions in Thailand's electoral context. By critically analyzing these seminal works, this study identifies a gap in the nuanced understanding of how formal and informal political processes are interwoven in Thai politics. The upcoming research will employ new methodologies to explore these interactions, bringing fresh data to light that may redefine our understanding of political systems in Southeast Asia. This analysis not only contributes to the theoretical landscape but also enhances practical understandings that could inform policy formulation and democratic practices in similar contexts.

This shift was driven by enhanced access to information about candidates, party policies, and media, which in turn stimulated political movements within parties and increased public participation in the electoral process. This research is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how local and national political factors coalesce to influence electoral outcomes in Khon Kaen, a key region

that reflects broader political trends in Thailand. By exploring the specific case of Electoral District 3, this study contributes valuable insights into the mechanisms of political change and voter behavior in emerging democracies. These insights are crucial for developing strategies that ensure more informed, transparent, and effective electoral processes. Furthermore, the findings from Khon Kaen can serve as a microcosm for understanding similar electoral dynamics across Southeast Asia, thereby offering implications for political strategy and policy-making that transcend national boundaries.

The electoral dynamics within Khon Kaen Province, particularly in Electoral District 3, witnessed a pivotal transformation during the elections held on May 14, 2023. Mr. Chatchawal Apirakmanokong from the Kao Klai Party, secured a commanding victory with 36,731 votes, representing 39.40 percent of the total vote share. This significant electoral shift saw Mr. Chatchawal, a fresh face in the political arena, unseat Mr. Jatuporn Charoencheun of the Thai Raksa Chart Party, who had previously maintained a strong electoral presence across five consecutive terms. This election outcome not only highlights a distinct departure from past preferences but also underscores the electorate's burgeoning inclination towards candidates who advocate transformative and forward-looking policies. This change suggests a growing demand among the voters of District 3 for governance that champions ethical integrity, transparency, and societal alignment with contemporary values—factors that are becoming increasingly critical in shaping electoral decisions. The shift towards Mr. Chatchawal indicates a palpable desire for policies aimed at sustainable development, including better education access, stable job creation, and long-term societal planning.

The recent electoral outcomes in Khon Kaen underscore a profound shift in both local and national political landscapes, influenced heavily by increased political engagement among the populace. The rise in active and informed participation has redefined interactions among political entities, candidates, and the electorate, facilitated by the rapid dissemination of information through digital platforms and social media. This phenomenon has not only reshaped voter behavior but also played a crucial role in redefining the political atmosphere throughout the election period.

A systematic examination of these developments provides crucial insights into the complex interplay between local aspirations and national political currents, illuminating the multifaceted influence of political parties, candidate profiles, and public involvement on electoral outcomes. By delving into these dynamics, the study aims to enrich our understanding of electoral processes in

Thailand and offer comparative perspectives relevant to global democratic practices. This analysis is instrumental for crafting nuanced political strategies, enhancing policy-making, and fostering a deeper trust and engagement among voters, which are essential for the vitality and integrity of future electoral contests.

Research Questions

1. How do national and local political dynamics interact to influence voter behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province?

2. What are the primary determinants of electoral outcomes in the May 14, 2023, elections in Khon Kaen Province?

3. To what extent do policy preferences influence voter behavior compared to other factors such as political campaigns and party affiliations?

4. How do voter engagement and campaign strategies contribute to shaping electoral decisions?

5. What insights can be drawn from the interplay of national reforms and local characteristics in the context of Thai electoral politics?

Hypotheses

1. H1: Policy preferences have a significant positive impact on voter behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province.

2. H2: Political campaigns have a lesser impact on voter behavior compared to policy preferences.

3. H3: Party affiliations have a minimal influence on voter behavior compared to policy preferences.

4. H4: Voter engagement positively influences electoral outcomes, though to a lesser extent than policy preferences.

5. H5: Campaign strategies, while important, are less influential in determining voter behavior compared to substantive policy preferences.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework to understand the complex interplay of national and local political dynamics influencing electoral outcomes. The framework integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive view of voter behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province.
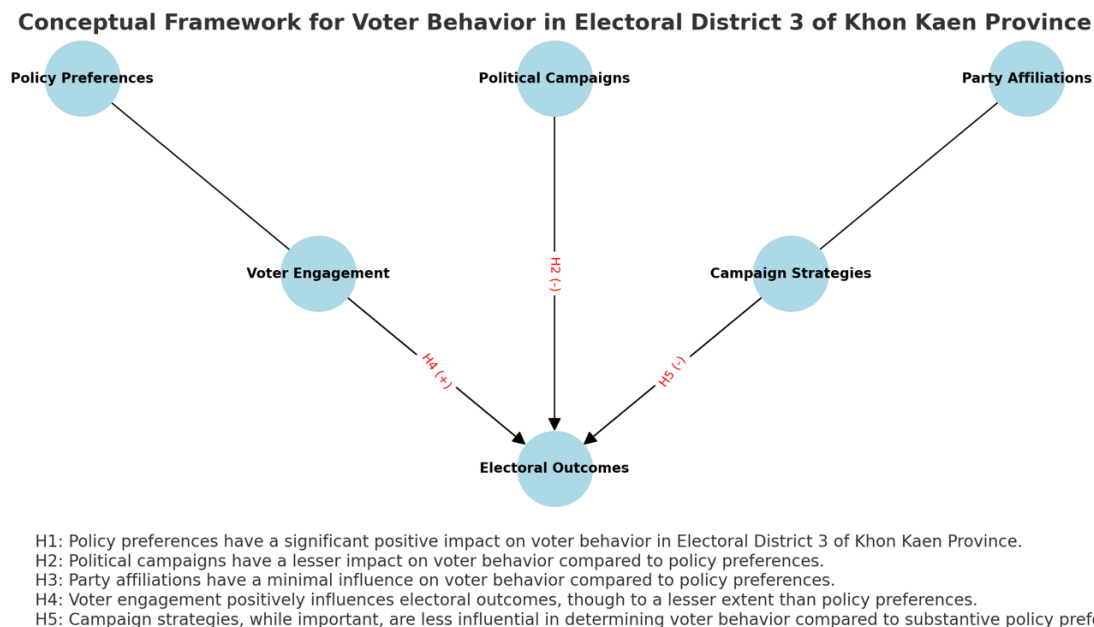

Conceptual Framework for Voter Behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province

H1: Policy preferences have a significant positive impact on voter behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province.
H2: Political campaigns have a lesser impact on voter behavior compared to policy preferences.
H3: Party affiliations have a minimal influence on voter behavior compared to policy preferences.
H4: Voter engagement positively influences electoral outcomes, though to a lesser extent than policy preferences.
H5: Campaign strategies, while important, are less influential in determining voter behavior compared to substantive policy preferences.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Voter Behavior in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province.

Politics and Elections: Concepts, Theories, and Phenomena in Thailand

In the realm of comparative political science, the conceptualization of "politics" as a system for public policy formulation has been extensively debated. The discourse is rooted in the notion that robust political systems with stable institutions, underpinned by the rule of law, are pivotal for crafting public policies that drive economic development. Almond and Powell's (1978) seminal work posits that institutionalized politics—characterized by distinct and non-interfering sovereign powers—typically aligns with economic prosperity. This view underscores the systemic interaction between politics and other societal systems such as the economy and social structures, highlighting a bidirectional influence that shapes and is shaped by broader systemic dynamics. The theoretical framework presented by Almond and Powell illustrates a sophisticated understanding of politics as an integral component of the

social-ecological system. They articulate a complex and formalized conception of the political system, which also accommodates informal political activities, thereby ensuring these activities do not disrupt systemic balance. This dual perspective on politics as both a formal institution and a conduit for informal activities provides a nuanced view of how political processes operate within larger societal contexts. Limpaisal (2005) emphasizes the democratic imperative that elections should grant equal rights to all citizens, encapsulated in the "One Man, One Vote" doctrine. This principle is foundational, ensuring that each individual's vote carries equal weight, which is a cornerstone of equitable democratic practices. Elections are not merely a procedural aspect of democracy but are also substantive, reflecting the democratic commitment to equality and fair representation. Cohen (1971) further elaborates on the importance of elections, positing that they are a fundamental principle of democratic governance. He argues that while it is impractical for all citizens to engage directly in governance due to their sheer numbers, representative democracy enables citizens to exercise their sovereign power through elected officials. This system of delegated authority allows for a more manageable and effective governance structure, where citizens' preferences are represented by capable individuals elected to uphold their interests.

In analyzing the synthesized literature on electoral decision-making processes and political party functions, it's apparent that the relationship between voter information and the eventual electoral outcome is multidimensional and profound. Klaodee's (2021) framework underlines the sequential nature of voter decision-making, yet it may not fully capture the complexity of spontaneous or emotional factors that also play into voting behavior. While the model emphasizes rational assessment, further exploration might reveal the extent to which non-rational factors, such as identity politics or candidate charisma, disrupt this sequence. The significance of political parties, as Easton (1957) discussed, in translating societal demands into public policies, raises questions about the responsiveness and adaptability of these institutions to changing public sentiments. Research by Mettler and Soss (2004) highlights the policy-shaping role of parties, but it also opens an avenue for critical examination of the effectiveness of these policies in actually addressing the needs of marginalized groups, as noted by Gaddie and Evans (2021). This gap points to the potential for parties to act as gatekeepers, which can either facilitate or hinder the reflection of diverse societal demands within the public policy arena. Moreover, the role of social media in political participation and election outcomes cannot be overstated. The study by Adeshina, Ojo, and Adeshina (2020) on e-voting adoption in Nigeria's general elections highlights the complexity of implementing e-voting technologies and adds depth to our understanding

of technology adoption in elections. It stresses the need for a comprehensive analysis of both the enabling factors and barriers, which is especially pertinent given the rise of digital platforms' influence in political engagement (Effing et al., 2011; Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020). While social media platforms have undeniably expanded the scope and reach of political participation, the challenges of digital literacy and the risk of misinformation cannot be overlooked. The concerns about echo chambers and their role in reinforcing existing biases present in the studies of Effing et al. (2011) and Omotayo and Folorunso (2020) mirror the complexities outlined in Adeshina et al.'s (2020) findings on e-voting. These challenges emphasize the need for robust digital frameworks that can withstand the dual pressures of technological advancements and the dynamic nature of digital communication.

The upcoming study will aim to bridge this gap, scrutinizing how traditional models of political participation and technology adoption adapt to the evolving landscape of digital engagement. This involves not only understanding the mechanisms of digital literacy and echo chambers but also considering the multi-level factors influencing technology adoption in elections as evidenced by Adeshina et al. (2020). By doing so, the study will contribute to the theory building in political participation and e-voting adoption while providing practical insights for digital engagement strategies in future elections.

The emerging role of social media in election campaigning has transformed the political landscape, as evidenced by research from Boonsiri (2023), who studied election campaigning through social media by candidates for the Songkhla Provincial Administrative Organization from the Democrat Party. The study identified a hierarchy of social media effectiveness: websites for their credibility, Facebook for image and momentum, and Line groups for targeted grassroots mobilization, underscoring the tailored strategies candidates deploy to reach distinct voter segments. Meanwhile, Muenjong (2016) and Chawaratsakulkit (2013) explored demographic influences on electoral decisions in Rayong and Chiang Mai provinces, respectively. Their findings suggest that, contrary to traditional assumptions, voter demographics like gender, age, and income did not significantly correlate with electoral decisions, pointing towards a shift in Thai political engagement where policy issues, candidate characteristics, and campaign strategies play more substantial roles than demographic predictors. The aforementioned studies reveal a nuanced shift in voter behavior, highlighting the sophistication of electoral decision-making beyond basic demographic profiles. Social media has become a critical platform for political communication, challenging traditional media's dominance and necessitating an understanding of its

complex dynamics. These insights invite further exploration into how digital campaign strategies can both influence and reflect the socio-political landscape, thereby requiring candidates and parties to adapt to a rapidly evolving electoral ecosystem. This literature review and critical analysis suggest that while traditional models of voter behavior based on demographic predictors provide a foundation, contemporary electoral politics increasingly demand an understanding of the interactive effects of media, communication strategies, and voter agency. The upcoming research will thus aim to synthesize these findings into a more comprehensive model of electoral behavior, with a particular focus on the interplay between digital media strategies and voter decision-making processes in Thailand. This approach will provide a more detailed understanding of the current electoral dynamics and their implications for democratic engagement and representation.

Synthesizing the concepts and implications of public participation in politics, the grassroots movement emerges as a critical dimension, reflecting the vigorous agency of citizens in supporting societal change. This analysis distills grassroots movements including political party dynamics, previous election outcomes, and impacts at both the local and national levels. In their studies, Power and Warbuton (2020); Norris (2017); Magaloni and Kiricheli (2010) argued that an understanding of grassroots dynamics provides insights into how citizens mobilize to address diverse issues, contributing to multi-faceted civic participation (as cited in Dadi et al., 2024). Public participation extends beyond formal political processes to the community level, considering initiatives, organizations, and collaborative actions that mold community dynamics (Tajuddin, 2016). A closer examination of community-level participation offers a detailed perspective on grassroots engagement, emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusive and participatory governance (Yeh, 2019; Mietzner, 2018). Media plays a pivotal role in shaping citizen discourse by disseminating information, framing narratives, and influencing public opinion (Schedler, 2013; Cox, 2009). This analysis will delve into how media contributes to constructing citizen discourse, considering the role of mass communication, social media, and other platforms in shaping public perception. Understanding the media's influence on citizen discourse provides insights into the relationship between information dissemination and civic engagement (Barton et al., 2021; Long, 2016). Beyond shaping discourse, media also serves as a vital tool in mobilizing voters and informing the electorate (Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2013; Cheeseman & Klaas, 2018). Firmansyah (2007) asserts that in the relationship between political parties and the electorate, the most critical aspect parties should consider is public satisfaction. He defines this satisfaction as the degree to which individuals positively assess their overall quality of life. When people feel their quality of life is improving, satisfaction with

the ruling party increases. Conversely, when they perceive a decline in living standards (high inflation, unemployment, low human rights standards), satisfaction with the government party decreases. In summary, based on the concepts, theories, and related research explored, it is concluded that the act of voting implies using one's right to make a decision to vote for a member of the House of Representatives, including the Prime Minister, for the people in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3. This decision encompasses five dimensions: 1) The personal qualifications of the candidate, which are the inherent characteristics required before entitlement or position; 2) The policies of the candidate, which are the principles and practices that guide the candidate's actions; 3) The benefits or rewards associated with the candidate, which include familiarity and assistance among voters and candidates; 4) The media that facilitates access to the candidate's policies, connecting voters' and candidates' political ideologies; 5) The campaign methods used by the candidate, ranging from billboard advertising, public relations, door-to-door campaigning, handing out flyers, or showcasing activities on social media.

Politics and Elections in National and Local in Thailand

Thai elections prior to May 14, 2023, represent a historical tapestry dating back to 1932, marked by political upheavals, coups, and various constitutions. The outcome of each election serves as a reflection of the political, economic, and societal contexts of each era. Elections were often marred by military intervention, evident electoral fraud, and the curtailment of citizen roles through various means such as limited media, campaigning restrictions, and policy dissemination. After 1992, elections began to exhibit greater transparency and citizen participation. The political landscape before the May 14, 2023, election was complex and rapidly changing, influenced by deep political divisions that split the country into pro-government and opposition factions. These divisions stem from decades-long political conflicts, including multiple coups and street protests. In 2014, the military assumed a significant role, albeit indirectly, maintaining influence over politics and ready to intervene if national security or the monarchy was perceived as threatened. The 2019 election led to the emergence of new political parties that attracted voters dissatisfied with the two main parties. This proliferation of new parties added complexity to the political landscape and may play a crucial role in the upcoming elections. Recent years have seen significant protests and social movements demanding political and social reform, exerting pressure on the government and potentially influencing election outcomes. The role of social media began to take center stage in Thai politics as a platform for disseminating information and garnering support, albeit with the spread of misinformation and propaganda potentially affecting public opinion. (Selway, 2011). The elections before May 14, 2023, were significant, with meticulous

preparations and election day set by the Cabinet. Before the elections, multiple parties united and new parties were created to participate in the race. However, not amending Article 90 of the Constitution meant voters had to remember different candidate numbers and different party numbers in the party list ballot, adding to the electorate's difficulty in remembering numbers and distinguishing between candidates and parties. Especially where money was used to incentivize voting, the emphasis was on individual candidate numbers to reduce confusion. The current election has been detrimental to parties that traditionally relied on vote-buying, as despite significant expenditures, influential and well-funded households lost to parties with stronger public support, such as the Move Forward Party, Pheu Thai Party, and Thai Sang Thai Party in many areas. The prevailing sentiment in this election was a competition between the currents of "anti-uncle" sentiment, a desire for change away from Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha, with the Move Forward Party and Pheu Thai Party reaping the benefits of this wave. (Sombatsiri, 2020).The pre-May 2023 electoral phase in Thailand underscores a transformative period, suggesting a shift towards issue-based and ideologically driven politics over traditional practices like vote-buying. The dynamics reveal a population engaging in the political process through new, often digital, channels that circumvent conventional controls and influence. These trends reflect a maturing democratic process and an electorate increasingly assertive in their demands for transparency, accountability, and reform. (Wilson & Phillips, 1958).

Elections in Khon Kaen Province's Electoral District 3 prior to May 14, 2023, hold significance as a measure of regional progress and civic engagement. Recognized as a development hub in the National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982–1983), Khon Kaen has experienced rapid growth over the past decade, asserting its position as a key city in Northeast Thailand. With a population of approximately 1.8 million as of December 31, 2020, the demographic composition of Khon Kaen is nearly equally split between male (49.2 percent) and female (50.8 percent) residents. The electorate comprised 1,448,758 individuals, indicating a wide base of voter participation. (Department of Provincial Administration, 2020). The province's first general election for House of Representatives members took place in 2001, following the establishment of new electoral districts under the 1997 Constitution, which introduced a single-number system for districts and the addition of party-list MPs. Since then, elections in Khon Kaen, particularly in District 3, have consistently seen candidates from the Pheu Thai Party, notably, Mr. Jatuporn Prompan, emerge victoriously, reflecting the party's strong influence in the region. However, the emergence of new parties and the increasing role of young voters suggest a shift in the political landscape of Khon Kaen by 2023. Youthful electorates began to play a pivotal role in shaping the

political vista, influencing election outcomes significantly. Elections in District 3 have become a reflection of diverse aspirations and motivations of residents desiring change, thereby directing the future governance and policy directions in the province. The participation of new parties and movements in 2023 elections in Khon Kaen could signify transformative shifts, indicating a move towards more dynamic and pluralistic political engagements and outcomes. (Worrakittimalee, 2020).

Understanding the interplay between national and local political dynamics is essential for comprehending the electoral behavior in Thailand, particularly in the context of Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3. The theoretical framework for this analysis draws from decentralization theory, which posits that transferring powers from central to local governments can enhance political responsiveness and accountability. The Move Forward Party exemplifies this dynamic by emphasizing decentralization in its policy platform. The party advocates for local authorities to manage and administer their own budgets, ensuring that development initiatives are tailored to local needs. This approach aligns with the theoretical perspective that decentralization fosters more effective governance and political engagement. Empirically, the success of the Move Forward Party in Khon Kaen can be seen as a validation of this theory, as voters responded positively to the promise of greater local autonomy and responsiveness. The Move Forward Party also emphasizes substantive policy issues such as human rights, gender equality, and LGBTQ+ rights. This focus reflects a broader theoretical shift towards issue-based politics, where voters prioritize policy content over traditional party loyalties (Dalton, 2000). Empirical evidence supports this shift, showing that voters are increasingly influenced by specific policy proposals that address their immediate concerns and long-term aspirations. For example, the party's commitment to reducing the military's role in politics and reallocating military expenditure towards national development resonates with voters who prioritize governance reforms and social justice.

In education, the Move Forward Party's policy to update curricula and ensure access to quality education across regions aligns with the theoretical understanding that education policy is a critical determinant of electoral behavior. Voters tend to support candidates who advocate for educational reforms that meet labor market demands and promote social mobility. Empirically, the emphasis on education by the Move Forward Party likely contributed to its electoral success, as it addressed a key concern for many families in Khon Kaen. Sustainable economic development is another cornerstone of the Move Forward Party's platform, promoting renewable energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and encouraging environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Theoretical perspectives on sustainable

development suggest that such policies are increasingly important to voters, especially younger generations who are more environmentally conscious. Empirically, the party's focus on sustainability likely appealed to voters in Khon Kaen, contributing to its electoral gains. Moreover, the Move Forward Party's comprehensive welfare system, including universal health coverage and financial support for children and the elderly, reflects the theoretical link between welfare policies and electoral support. Voters are more likely to support parties that offer robust social safety nets, especially in times of economic uncertainty (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The empirical evidence from Khon Kaen suggests that the party's welfare policies resonated with voters, enhancing its electoral performance.

In the local context of Khon Kaen, the emphasis on agriculture, rural development, and environmental sustainability highlights the importance of addressing specific local issues. The theoretical framework of local issue salience suggests that voters prioritize candidates who address the most pressing concerns in their communities. Empirically, the success of the Move Forward Party in Khon Kaen can be attributed to its focus on these local issues, which were critical to the electorate. Additionally, the increased youth participation and representation in politics, with young candidates advocating for progressive policies, aligns with the theoretical perspective that political engagement among younger generations can drive electoral change (Norris, 2002). Empirically, the infusion of youthful energy and ideas has been shown to foster optimism and hope for the future, which can significantly influence electoral outcomes.

Post-May 14, 2023, elections in Khon Kaen Province's Electoral District 3 saw a decisive victory for Mr. Chatchawal Aphirakmankong from the Move Forward Party, candidate number 4, with 39.40 percent of the votes. (Office of the Election Commission of Thailand, 2023). This notable win by a newcomer over a former Pheu Thai Party representative who had previously secured the seat for five consecutive terms signals a significant shift in the political landscape. The electorate's growing interest in transformative policies, governance principles, and societal values has led to a heightened emphasis on transparency, fairness, and sustainable long-term change. The support for Mr. Chatchawal reflects the public's desire for initiatives addressing ongoing societal issues, such as education access, job stability, and a sustainable future for the next generation. This electoral phenomenon showcases a considerable shift in voter dynamics within Khon Kaen's District 3, with an increase in political engagement and rapid dissemination of policy information and news via mobile communication and social media. The election aftermath has significantly altered the political vista, marked by a surge in

voter turnout, the rise of new political players, and a focus on local issues. These include agricultural challenges, rural development, and environmental sustainability, underscoring a commitment to meeting the distinct needs and aspirations of Khon Kaen's residents. The increased involvement and representation of youth in the political sphere is particularly notable, with young candidates stepping into leadership roles, advocating for their generation's interests, and promoting progressive policies. This absorption of the energy and ideas of the new generation fosters optimism and hope for the province's future. The post-election situation in Khon Kaen reflects an ever-evolving political landscape with a larger electorate, emergence of new political figures, emphasis on local issues, and greater youth participation, all contributing to a sentiment of change and the potential for positive governance development in the province. (The Citizen Plus, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore electoral behaviors in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3. Stratified random sampling was utilized for the quantitative segment, targeting a well-defined population of 131,940 eligible voters. The sampling criteria and strata have been clearly defined, with the population stratified by key demographic factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status. The sample size was calculated via Krejcie & Morgan's formula resulting in 400 respondents. Additionally, in-depth qualitative insights were gleaned from 20 structured interviews encompassing a diverse group of participants, including local government officials, political representatives, academics, community leaders, and local voters.

The number of participants in each group interviewed is as follows: 5 local government officials, 5 political representatives, 3 academics, 4 community leaders, and 3 local voters.

To ensure the reliability of the research tools, several methods were employed. The structured questionnaire and interview questions underwent a rigorous development process, including a pilot test with a small subset of the target population to identify and correct any issues. Content validity was assessed through expert reviews, and the tools were revised based on their feedback. Reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

A comprehensive justification for starting with a qualitative (QUAL) approach is now provided, emphasizing its relevance to our research objectives. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the nuanced political dynamics and voter perceptions that are not easily captured through quantitative measures alone. By beginning with qualitative methods, we were able to identify key themes and variables that informed the subsequent quantitative analysis, ensuring that our survey instruments were grounded in the real-world experiences and insights of the study population.

Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic details of the respondents, factors influencing electoral outcomes, the impact of national politics on local elections, and open-ended questions for additional insights. The qualitative component comprised 13 questions spread over three sections, designed to explore the historical and current political landscape, assess pre- and post-election scenarios, and delve into the impact of broader political dynamics on local elections.

Data collection involved distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews over a three-week period, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the study's target demographic. Upon collection, data underwent rigorous verification processes to ensure accuracy and completeness. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis methods, assessing content validity, and categorizing data to align with established research hypotheses. The logical connections between qualitative and quantitative findings have been clearly articulated. Specifically, insights gained from the qualitative interviews were used to develop and refine the quantitative survey, ensuring that the quantitative data collection was targeted and relevant. This iterative process allowed for a robust examination of the relationships between identified themes and electoral outcomes. The qualitative findings provided context and depth to the quantitative results, creating a cohesive narrative that integrates both sets of data.

We have outlined the process for triangulating results from the two strands, including strategies for reconciling any conflicting findings. Triangulation was achieved by cross-validating the qualitative themes with quantitative data, ensuring consistency and reliability in our findings.

For the comprehensive analysis also employed a multivariate regression analysis to quantify the influences of local and national factors on electoral outcomes. Detailed descriptions of the measures and indicators for each variable in the multivariate regression model, including their scales of

measurement, have been provided. Each variable was carefully operationalized, and their scales were specified to enhance the clarity and robustness of the analysis.

The unit of analysis has been specified clearly. The primary unit of analysis is the individual voter, whose behavior and preferences are analyzed to understand broader electoral trends. The specified model is given by:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

Y is the dependent variable representing electoral outcomes, likely related to election results or candidate success metrics.

β_0 (Intercept): The baseline value of Y when all independent variables (X to X_6) are zero.

β_1 to β_6 (Coefficients): These coefficients correspond to the impact of each independent variable on Y. Each coefficient quantifies the expected change in Y for a one-unit increase in the respective X variable, while keeping all other variables constant.

X_1 represents policy preferences whereas β_1 will show the impact of policy preferences on electoral outcomes. It reflects how strongly voter preferences regarding specific policy issues influence their voting decisions.

X_2 represents the political campaign represents "Political Campaigns", β_2 with indicating the effectiveness of campaign activities in influencing voter behavior.

X_3 represents the party affiliations, where β_3 measures the extent to which affiliation to a political party affects the voting decisions.

X_4 represents the voter engagement, with β_4 capturing the influence of voter turnout and participation on the election results.

X_5 represents the campaign strategies such as the use of social media, and other marketing tactics, and β_5 quantifies their impact on the electoral outcomes.

ϵ is the error term, representing unobserved factors that affect the electoral outcome not captured by the model.

The analysis aimed to bridge the understanding of local and national influences on electoral outcomes, leveraging both statistical data and qualitative insights. This robust methodology facilitated

a nuanced analysis of the political dynamics in District 3, providing a detailed examination of factors influencing voter behavior and election results.

Result

The research "Local Politics and National Politics: Dynamics and Factors Influencing House of Representatives Elections in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3" provides a comprehensive analysis through both qualitative and quantitative lenses, offering a holistic view of voter behavior and electoral dynamics.

The combined analysis highlights a significant shift towards policy-centric politics in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3. The electorate's focus on substantive policy proposals over traditional political dynamics emphasizes the need for political strategists and policymakers to develop robust policy frameworks and communication strategies that resonate with voter preferences. This comprehensive understanding is crucial for enhancing democratic processes and governance, ensuring that political strategies align with the evolving preferences of a discerning and informed electorate.

Quantitative results reveal that policy impact is the most influential factor in electoral decisions, with a Beta value of 0.677 and a highly significant p-value ($p < .001$). This underscores that voters prioritize substantive policies over other factors. In contrast, campaign efforts and party affiliations, with Beta values of 0.141 and 0.084 respectively, have less impact, indicating a shift away from traditional campaign strategies and party loyalty. Additionally, the negligible influence of candidates' previous performance, reflected by a Beta of 0.014 ($p = .706$), suggests that voters are less concerned with past achievements. Political participation exhibits a subdued impact with a Beta of 0.067 ($p = .068$), indicating that while engagement is present, it does not directly correlate with electoral success.

Qualitative results from interviews support these findings, showing that the electorate values detailed policy proposals and critically evaluates their potential impact. There is a noticeable shift towards assessing candidates based on current issues and future policies rather than traditional loyalties or local influence. The role of the 1997 Constitution reforms appears significant, as these reforms may have reduced the impact of local patronage networks, enhancing the importance of policy alignment.

Synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative data reveals a coherent narrative of policy-centric voter behavior. Voters prioritize detailed and substantive policies, diminishing the significance of traditional campaign efforts, party affiliations, and previous performance. While quantitative data shows limited direct impact of political participation, qualitative insights reflect broader political engagement and awareness. This nuanced understanding of voter behavior suggests that reforms, particularly those from the 1997 Constitution, are likely influencing these trends by reducing local patronage and emphasizing policy alignment.

Analysis of the Evolution of Thailand's Political Landscape

The political landscape in Thailand has significantly evolved, especially regarding political party dynamics. Historically, a limited number of parties dominated Thai politics, restricting voter choices. Recent years, however, have seen a dramatic diversification in the political arena, offering voters a broader range of parties and fostering a more vibrant and competitive electoral environment. Interviews reflect this shift, highlighting increasing complexity in voter preferences and party strategies. This analysis underscores the dynamic evolution of political parties in Thailand and aligns with global trends of democratization and political diversification.

"I believe that political parties in Thailand have a significant influence on the changes in the election of members of the House of Representatives, especially in the context of the new 1997 Constitution and subsequent electoral reforms. The new Constitution introduced a party-list system aimed at diminishing local vested interests and promoting national representation. Therefore, the emergence of new political parties has become immensely important." -)Male, 53years old, affiliated with Rajabhat University under the Royal Patronage: Interviewee)

Divergent Perspectives on the Impact of Political Parties in Thai Elections

While most respondents believe that political parties have significantly influenced legislative changes in Thailand, a minority disagrees. This group argues that historically, political parties have minimally impacted legislative membership changes before the national elections scheduled for May 14, 2026. Specific instances, such as the lack of significant electoral changes in Khon Kaen province during past elections, support this view. This dissent underscores the complexity of political influence, suggesting that the impact of political parties varies across regions and electoral cycles.

"In my view, political parties in Thailand right now are not that significant. Look around, so many parties are emerging, some are so obscure that I haven't even heard of them. The rise of these new parties is confusing to the public. That's why I think they are not as important as the candidates themselves or their policies." -)Female, 45 years old, affiliated with a local government agency: Interviewee)

Influence of Previous Election Outcomes on Legislative Changes in Thailand

Analysis of previous electoral outcomes in Thailand shows a significant impact on legislative membership changes, as noted by most interviewees. Past election results have been crucial in evaluating legislative members' performance, leading to improvements in their effectiveness. These outcomes reflect shifts in political and public service quality, highlighting a dynamic relationship between voter feedback and legislative accountability. This pattern underscores the evolving nature of Thailand's electoral politics and its implications for governance reforms, as evidenced by specific interview data examples.

"I believe it impacts the next election, as it pushes political parties or candidates themselves to evolve in line with the times and previous election results. The results from the last election demonstrate that a party's vote share can change dramatically from one election to the next. A party that was previously at the top might not secure the most votes currently. This dynamic also stimulates political activism, as we see today where public interest in politics has increased. This is a result of the previous election outcomes and the performance of the former government." - (Male, 41years old, national politician: Respondent)

Minority Views on the Impact of Previous Elections on Legislative Changes in Thailand

Despite the prevalent belief that past elections have significantly shaped legislative changes in Thailand, a minority of respondents offers a different perspective. These individuals argue that historical election outcomes have had minimal impact on the transformation of membership in the House of Representatives. This view is substantiated by specific responses collected through interviews, suggesting that the influence of past electoral results on legislative evolution may be less substantial than

commonly perceived. This nuanced perspective highlights the variability in the perceived effectiveness of electoral outcomes in driving legislative change.

"I don't consider the results of the previous elections important because he chooses candidates based on those he admires, their virtues, their local engagement, and their work, rather than their past election outcomes." – (Male, 60 years old, political leader: Respondent)

Impact of Civic Engagement on Legislative Membership Changes in Thailand

Interview responses consistently indicate that civic engagement has historically significantly influenced changes in Thailand's House of Representatives. This consensus highlights the profound impact of public participation on shaping legislative election outcomes. The data show that active citizen involvement substantially alters electoral dynamics, facilitating significant changes in legislative representation. Specific examples from the interviews support these findings, illustrating the critical role of civic engagement in the electoral process.

"It's very important; it has a significant impact because the votes for representatives come from the people." - (Female, 35 years old, entrepreneur: Respondent)

"It has a great effect, because the votes come from the people. Furthermore, the participation of the citizens helps in spreading information about the party or candidate effectively." - (Female, 41 years old, community leader: Respondent)

Analysis of the Local Political Landscape in Khon Kaen Province Before and After the May 14, 2022 Elections

Interviewees agree that civic participation significantly influenced Khon Kaen Province's political landscape around the May 14, 2022, elections. Local election results often reflected clear political divisions within communities, which did not notably affect the legislative election in Khon Kaen's third district. Despite these local divisions, political parties played a crucial role in connecting voters with candidates and their policies, especially where voter preferences aligned with specific party policies or

candidate characteristics. The interviews underscore the importance of political parties in shaping electoral outcomes through strategic engagement and policy dissemination.

> *"It greatly influences change because the local parties really help promote the parliamentary candidates, making them more well-known and establishing a stronger voter base in each locality."* - (Female, 30 years old, private sector employee from a different region: Respondent)

Divergent Perceptions of Local Political Parties' Impact on Electoral Outcomes in Khon Kaen Province

While most respondents acknowledged the significant impact of local political parties on electoral dynamics in Khon Kaen Province, a minority disagreed. This dissenting view suggests that local parties had negligible influence on the electoral outcomes for Khon Kaen's third district before the May 14, 2022, elections. They argue that the influence of local parties is overstated, pointing to a lack of substantial change in results attributable to these entities. This perspective highlights the complexity of electoral politics in the region and the need for a deeper examination of local political structures' roles in shaping voter preferences and outcomes.

> *"I don't think local political parties have an effect on changing the election of representatives. Even if local political parties support and campaign, if we don't know the candidate or understand the party's policies, I won't choose them."* -)Male, 20 years old, student in political science and governance: Respondent)

The Disconnect Between Local Election Outcomes and National Legislative Selections

Respondents unanimously agreed that local election outcomes have a limited impact on the selection of national legislative representatives. This suggests a clear separation between local and national political groupings, with local dynamics not significantly affecting the national political landscape. The findings highlight a distinct demarcation, showing that local electoral results do not heavily influence national parliament selection processes. This calls for a nuanced understanding of how local political environments interplay with national political outcomes, as detailed in the interview responses.

"It doesn't have any effect because local elections are not about choosing representatives or candidates." -)Male, 28 years old, affiliated with a local government agency: Respondent)

"I think that local political election results don't have an impact because they are completely separate issues. Local politics are more about supporting groundwork and campaigning at the national level rather than influencing local outcomes." -)Male, 50years old, former local politician: Respondent)

The interviewees consistently articulated that citizen participation in the political process significantly influences the direction of legislative elections. They emphasized that voting is a fundamental form of civic engagement, enabling the electorate to actively shape the country's future towards progressive and positive development. This perspective highlights the critical role of public engagement in steering electoral outcomes and democratic evolution, as evidenced by the responses detailed below:

"The involvement of citizens at all levels is a transformational element in the election outcomes of parliamentary members, whether it involves supporting candidates or assisting in their campaigns." -)Male, 32years old, political scholar: Respondent)

"Even a single vote from your participation, whether at the local, village, or community level, represents a direction towards positive change in the election outcomes of parliamentary members." -)Male, 41years old, national-level politician: Respondent)

Interviewees from District 3 of Khon Kaen province emphasized the critical role of legislative candidates in influencing voters' decisions during elections. Voters assess candidates based on personal attributes, qualifications, and policy positions as presented during the campaigning period. This process underlines the significance of candidate visibility and the articulation of clear policy platforms in shaping electoral outcomes, as illustrated by the following examples from the interview responses:

"I choose parliamentary members based on the candidates themselves; this factor is very important. Every time we vote, we must first know the candidate, looking into their family background, education, past employment, and community involvement." -)Male, 40years old, from another region: Respondent)

However, a subset of interviewees believed that candidate factors did not significantly impact the decision-making process for electing members of the House of Representatives in Khon Kaen province. This perspective highlights a divergence in voter perception, suggesting that other elements may play a more pivotal role in electoral decisions, as evidenced by the following responses from the interviews:

"I think most candidates have similar profiles, but what I decide on is the candidate's policies more than anything. You know the campaign period, right? Everyone is on the ground, participating in activities, helping out, and showing support. But what differentiates them are their party, the party leader, and the party's policies." -)Male, 43years old, political leader representative: Respondent)

Moreover, the majority of interviewees expressed the opinion that policy factors play a crucial role in deciding who to elect as members of the House of Representatives in Khon Kaen Province, particularly within a democratic system where voters have the freedom to choose their representatives. This perspective underscores the significance of policy-oriented considerations in shaping electoral decisions, as illustrated by the following interview responses:

"I choose candidates because their political stance aligns with mine." -)Male, 30 years old, local politician: Respondent)

"Policies influence my decision more than the candidates themselves. Looking at past elections, the candidates who were elected came from parties whose policies addressed the needs of the people and were realistically achievable." -)Female, 28 years old: Respondent)

However, a subset of interviewees held the view that policy factors did not significantly influence the decision-making process of voters in Khon Kaen Province regarding their choice of representatives in the House of Representatives. This perspective highlights a divergence in how policy relevance is perceived in the electoral process, as evidenced by the following interview responses:

"I chose him because he is from our area. We know him and have seen his work in the community firsthand. I don't care which party he is from." -)Male, 67years old, representative of a political leadership group: Respondent)

Regarding the media's role, the majority of interviewees indicated that the dynamics and media factors are critical in facilitating access to party policies, the identities of candidates, and their various activities. These elements significantly assist citizens in making informed decisions when electing members to the House of Representatives in Khon Kaen Province, as illustrated by the following interview responses:

"I think the election campaigning in Khon Kaen this time was mostly similar— there were speeches, advertising banners, parades around villages, and meetings with villagers. However, a noticeable change in this election was that the people did not choose the same old leaders from the major households, but instead opted for a newer party. Khun Mai Aiem Aong, running for a second term as a representative for Khon Kaen, had not been elected previously. Despite that, Khun Mai continued to visit locals, helping solve various problems and participating in community events in every district and village. This commitment and dedication to work won over the villagers in this election." -)Male, 40years old, local government official: Respondent)
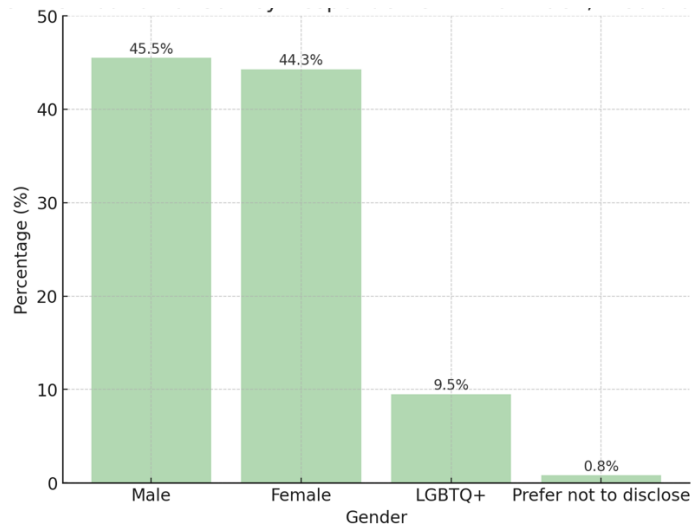
Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents in Khonkean, Electoral District 3

Figure 1 from the survey in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, shows a nearly balanced gender distribution with 45.5 percent males and 44.3 percent females. This parity suggests that both genders' perspectives could equally influence electoral issues and policies. Notably, the LGBTQ+ community represents 9.5 percent of respondents, highlighting significant engagement and indicating that gender diversity and inclusivity are important to many voters. The 0.7 percent of respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender suggests a transparent participation environment. This gender distribution is crucial for understanding electoral dynamics and crafting inclusive policies that reflect the district's diverse demographic. Acknowledging these diverse needs is essential for political strategists to create resonant messages and policies, enhancing democratic processes and ensuring equitable governance.
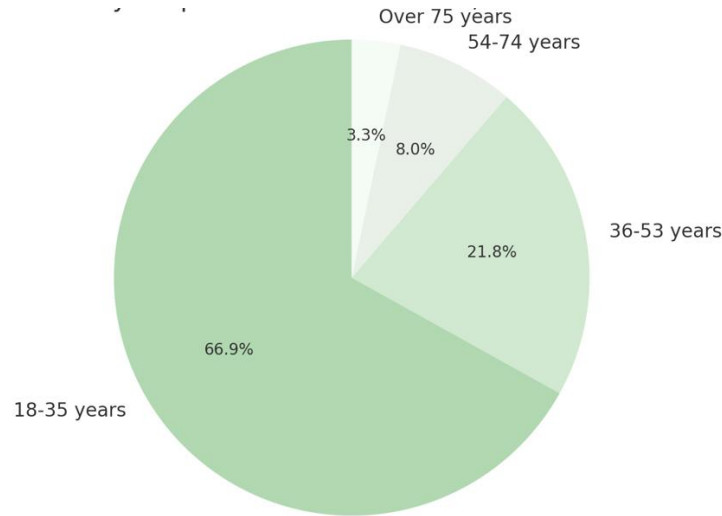
Figure 2. Age Distribution of Survey Respondents in Khon Kaen, Electoral District 3 (Pastel Green)

The age distribution in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, shown in Figure 2, highlights a predominantly youthful electorate, with 66.9 percent aged 18-35. This youthful majority suggests a tilt towards progressive policies and a preference for digital campaign strategies. The 36-53 age group, representing 21.8 percent, likely focuses on economic stability, education, and healthcare. The older electorate, comprising 8 percent aged 54-74 and 3.3 percent over 75, may prioritize retirement security and senior services. This demographic insight is crucial for political strategists to formulate inclusive policies and campaigns that address the diverse needs and preferences of all age groups. Understanding these dynamics can lead to more engaged and satisfied constituents.
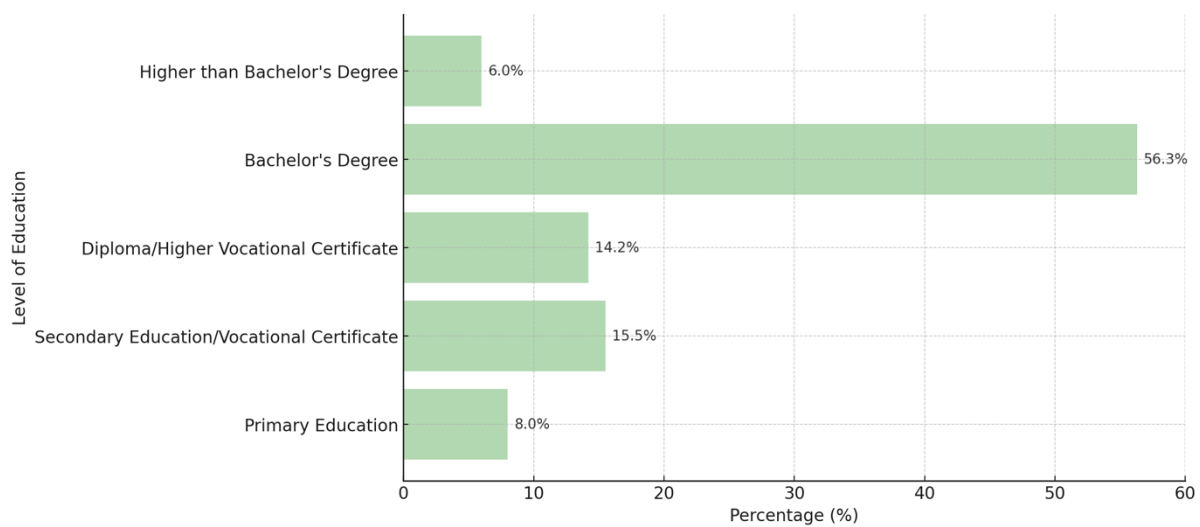

Figure 3. Distribution of Highest Education Level Among Survey Respondents

The educational attainment in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, as shown in Figure 3, reveals a predominantly well-educated electorate, with 56.3 percent holding a bachelor's degree. This suggests voters have a nuanced understanding of policy issues and high expectations for political representatives. Secondary education or vocational certificate holders make up 15.5 percent, and those with associate degrees or vocational diplomas comprise 14.2 percent, adding diverse perspectives. Only 8 percent have completed primary education, and 6 percent hold qualifications higher than a bachelor's degree. These educational profiles influence political engagement and priorities, requiring tailored political strategies that address both sophisticated policy discussions and practical daily concerns. Understanding these demographics is crucial for effective and inclusive political engagement, leading to more informed and responsible policy development.
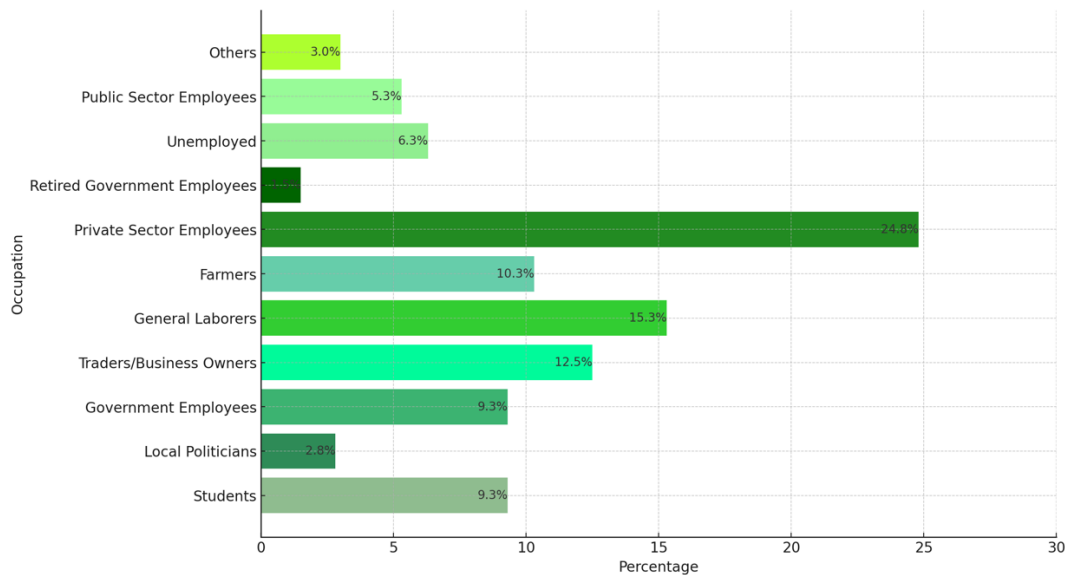

Figure 4. Occupational Distribution of Respondents in Khonkean, Electoral District 3

The occupational diversity in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, depicted in Figure 4, provides insight into voters' economic backgrounds and potential political influences. Private sector employees are the largest group at 24.8 percent, indicating a business-oriented perspective favoring economic growth and stability. General laborers (15.3 percent (and traders/business owners (12.5 percent (highlight key economic drivers, with laborers focusing on labor rights and job security, and traders on economic policies and taxation. Government employees (10.8 percent (prefer stability and public sector benefits. Students (9.3 percent (and unemployed individuals (6.3 percent (prioritize education, innovation, and employment policies. Understanding this occupational diversity is crucial for

effective campaign strategies and policymaking, ensuring engagement with diverse economic interests and enhancing the democratic process.
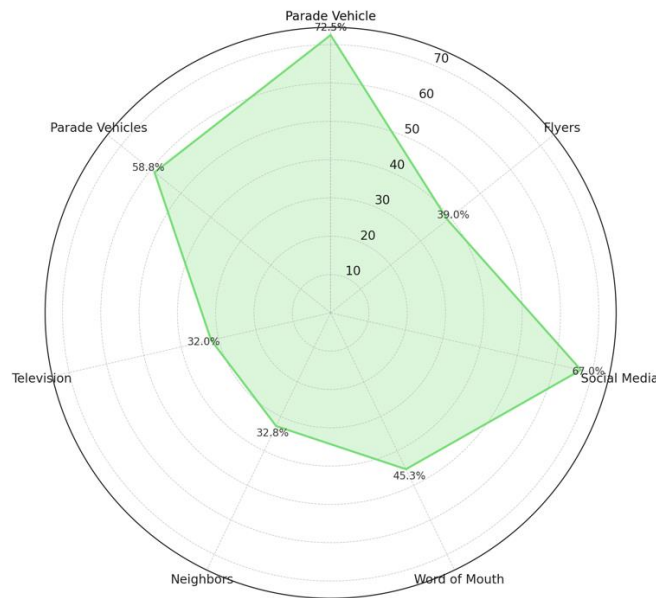

Figure 5. Voter Preferences for Campaign Methods in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3

The radar chart analysis from Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, highlights the effectiveness of various communication methods on voter decisions. Billboards are the most effective at 72.5 percent, emphasizing the importance of traditional visual advertising for name and face recognition. Social media follows closely at 67.0 percent, showing a significant shift towards digital campaigning and targeted messaging. Parade vehicles, preferred by 58.8 percent, underscore the appeal of in-person engagement. Word of mouth (45.3 percent (and flyers (39.0 percent (remain important, emphasizing personal relationships and community trust. Television and interactions with neighbors, at around 32 percent, are declining in influence, indicating a shift towards modern communication strategies. Effective campaign strategies should blend traditional and digital methods to optimize voter outreach and engagement, reflecting both local and national trends. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing nuanced political strategies that resonate with evolving voter preferences.
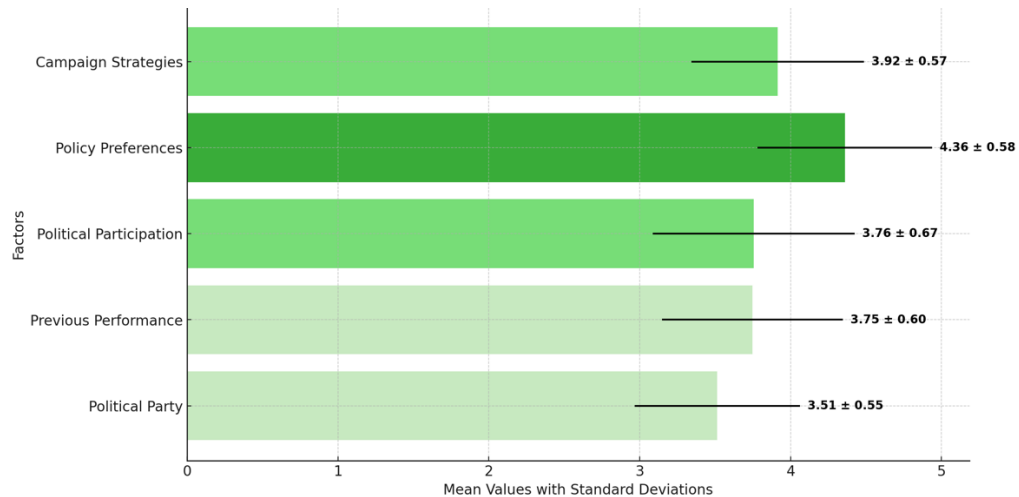
Figure 6. Local Politics and National Politics: Dynamics and Factors Influence House of Representatives Elections in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3

The survey data analysis from Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, highlights key factors influencing voter decisions in local and national contexts. The highest mean rating is for "Policy" at 4.3595, indicating voters' emphasis on the substantive content of political platforms. "Candidate" quality follows with a mean of 4.1876, underscoring the importance of personal attributes and credibility. Other significant factors include "Previous Performance" and "Political Participation," with means above 3.7, showing voters' focus on accountability and engagement.

These insights are crucial for understanding voter behavior, guiding political strategies to focus on policy communication, candidate credibility, and encouraging political participation. The data reflects a complex interplay between policy specifics, candidate qualities, historical performance, and voter engagement, providing a detailed picture of the electoral landscape in Khon Kaen Province.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Vote for Candidate in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	0.833	0.151		<.001
Factor_PoliticalParty (X3)	0.072	0.028	0.084	.012
Factor_PreviousPerformance (X2)	0.011	0.028	0.014	.706
Factor_PoliticalParticipation (X4)	0.046	0.025	0.067	.068
Factor_Policy (X1)	0.558	0.030	0.677	<.001
FactorCampaign (X6)	0.115	0.030	0.141	<.001

Note: This table presents the results of the regression analysis with 'Sig.' values less than 0.05 indicating statistically significant predictors of voter decision in the electoral context of Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3.

The regression analysis on electoral outcomes in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province provides significant insights into the factors influencing voter behavior in Thai elections, especially in the light of the country's evolving democratic processes. The results underscore a strong influence of policy-related factors on electoral success, with a Beta value of 0.677 and a highly significant p-value (p < .001), indicating that voters place a paramount importance on the policy content proposed by candidates. This highlights a discerning electorate that prioritizes substantive policy details over superficial elements of campaign strategies or party loyalty.

Furthermore, the study reveals that campaign efforts and party affiliations, with Beta values of 0.141 and 0.084 respectively, have much less impact on electoral outcomes. This suggests a shift in voter behavior away from traditional campaign dynamics and party loyalty, pointing towards an electorate that is increasingly favoring policy over personality. The relatively lower importance of these factors might reflect a broader national movement towards issue-based politics, spurred by reforms such as those introduced in the 1997 Constitution, which aimed to reduce local patronage networks in favor of broader policy alignment.

Interestingly, the analysis also indicates a negligible influence of candidates' previous performance on voter decisions, with a Beta of only 0.014 and a non-significant p-value (p = .706). This suggests that voters are less concerned with past achievements and more focused on current issues

and future policy proposals, indicating a readiness to pivot away from traditional loyalties. Additionally, the subdued impact of political participation, with a Beta of 0.067 and a marginal significance (p = .068), suggests that while political engagement is present, it does not directly correlate with electoral success, serving instead as a barometer of broader political involvement and awareness.

These findings are critical for understanding the dynamics at play in local and national politics in Thailand, especially significant in light of the 1997 Constitution reforms in Thailand, which aimed to dilute local patronage networks in favor of a more policy-aligned, proportional representation system. The findings suggest that these reforms might be influencing voter behavior as intended, diminishing the impact of local political networks and enhancing the role of policy in elections.

To demonstrate model fit, tests for heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity have been incorporated. The test for heteroscedasticity ensures that the variance of errors is consistent across all levels of the independent variables, which is crucial for validating the reliability of regression results. Multicollinearity tests check for correlations among predictor variables, ensuring that the predictors independently contribute to the model without redundancy, thereby enhancing the robustness of the analysis. These findings are critical for understanding the dynamics at play in local and national politics in Thailand, particularly in how various elements influence the electorate's decision-making process. For political strategists and policymakers, these insights could be pivotal in aligning more closely with voter preferences and concerns in the district. It prompts a reevaluation of traditional political strategies within Thai political contexts, suggesting that political parties and candidates may need to shift from relying heavily on personal networks and local influence to developing robust policy frameworks and communication strategies that address national concerns and voter-specific issues. This evolution towards policy-centric politics could potentially lead to a more engaged and informed electorate, ultimately enhancing the quality of democracy and governance in Thailand.

Discussion

In the context of Thailand's evolving national political landscape, the presented regression analysis critically examines the factors that influence voter behavior, drawing from a dataset in Khon Kaen Province's Electoral District 3. This discussion explores the extent to which policy-related factors, rather than traditional campaign dynamics or party loyalty, shape electoral outcomes, reflecting a

broader trend towards issue-based politics in Thai democracy. The study highlights a significant shift in voter preferences, where policy content has emerged as the predominant factor affecting electoral decisions, evidenced by a Beta value of 0.677 with a highly significant p-value (p < .001). This underscores a discerning electorate that places substantial importance on the substantive aspects of policy offerings rather than the superficial elements of campaign strategies or party affiliations. The diminishing influence of traditional campaign efforts and party loyalty, with Beta values of 0.141 and 0.084 respectively, points to an electorate increasingly disengaged from personality-driven politics and more focused on policy implications.

Moreover, the minimal impact of candidates' previous performance (Beta = 0.014, p = .706) suggests a forward-looking voter attitude that prioritizes prospective policy initiatives over past achievements. This inclination aligns with the objectives of the 1997 Constitution reforms, which sought to dilute the influence of local patronage networks in favor of a more policy-centered political process. The subdued influence of political participation (Beta = 0.067, p = .068), while indicative of existing political engagement, does not translate directly into electoral success but serves as a barometer of broader political involvement and awareness. These findings are critical for understanding the dynamics at play in local and national politics in Thailand, particularly in how various elements influence the electorate's decision-making process. For political strategists and policymakers, these insights could be pivotal in aligning more closely with voter preferences and concerns in the district. It prompts a reevaluation of traditional political strategies within Thai political contexts, suggesting that political parties and candidates may need to shift from relying heavily on personal networks and local influence to developing robust policy frameworks and communication strategies that address national concerns and voter-specific issues. This evolution towards policy-centric politics could potentially lead to a more engaged and informed electorate, ultimately enhancing the quality of democracy and governance in Thailand.

The discussion of electoral outcomes in Electoral District 3 of Khon Kaen Province provides a critical reflection on the distinct separation between local and national electoral dynamics as observed in Thai politics. This separation reflects a deeper, systemic division within the country's political structure, often described as "Two Democracies" or a division between urban and rural democracies. The findings from the survey indicate that local election results do not directly influence national electoral outcomes, supporting the thesis that voters distinguish between local and national issues when casting

their ballots. Interestingly, the study aligns with broader research, such as the work by Arakanan and Patimaviporn (2022), which posits that Thai voters do not necessarily base their national electoral decisions on the outcomes of local elections but rather consider factors such as party policies, party popularity, and broader economic or cultural trends. This notion is further supported by research from Mankhoksoong (2012), which examined political movements and voting behaviors in the 2011 Sakon Nakhon parliamentary elections. This study found that the primary reasons voters did not choose certain candidates were not tied to previous local election results but were instead influenced by policy positions, party dynamics, capitalist currents, consumerist trends, and patronage. Such findings critically underscore the complexity of voter behavior in Thailand, suggesting that while local politics may provide a context or background, they do not necessarily predict or determine national political outcomes. Voters appear to employ a more nuanced approach to elections, possibly indicative of an evolving political awareness and sophistication that transcends local allegiances or past performances. This evolution could be a response to the broader national reforms, like those introduced in the 1997 Constitution, which aimed to diminish local patronage and enhance policy-focused governance.

The significance of these media in campaigning underscores a shift from traditional outreach methods to more dynamic, interactive forms that resonate with today's electorate. Qualitative research further substantiates the importance of media in crafting a candidate's image and effectively communicating campaign messages, enhancing voter understanding and engagement with policies and candidates. This shift towards interactive campaign strategies aligns with global trends where digital engagement plays a crucial role in mobilizing the electorate. For instance, Tsai, Tan, and Jung (2019) highlight how the Internet, particularly through targeted party mobilization efforts, significantly boosts voter turnout in contexts like the New Zealand general election. Their findings indicate that while direct effects of online campaigning on voter turnout might be limited, the broader use of the Internet substantially enhances electoral participation, especially when combined with clear party orientation. Moreover, the complex dynamics of election control and the influence maximization within voter networks, as studied by Mehrizi et al. (2022), suggest that sophisticated algorithmic approaches, though effective, raise ethical concerns regarding the manipulation of electoral outcomes. This discussion is pertinent as it highlights the necessity to balance technological advancements in campaign strategies with the integrity of democratic processes. The research contrasts with Reményi et al.'s (2023) exploration of spatial contextual factors in electoral outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where regional disparities significantly impact voting behaviors. This divergence emphasizes the unique electoral

environments in different regions, suggesting that neighborhood factors in Electoral District 3 may not hold the same influence, pointing to a more nuanced understanding of local versus national electoral dynamics. Furthermore, the predominant influence of social media and parade vehicles in Khon Kaen contrasts with findings from other studies such as those by Sides, Vavreck, and Warshaw (2022), who document the significant impact of television advertising in U.S. elections. This discrepancy underscores the varied nature of effective campaign strategies across different sociocultural and media landscapes, necessitating adaptable approaches that cater to local preferences and technological advancements. In summary, the integration of social media and parade vehicles as primary tools in Khon Kaen's campaign strategies reflects a broader shift towards more engaging, interactive campaign methods that are not only impactful but also align with contemporary communication trends. This critical analysis highlights the importance of evolving campaign strategies to meet the changing dynamics of voter engagement and participation, ensuring that electoral campaigns remain effective and ethically sound in the modern political landscape.

The study underscores the crucial nature of civic engagement in both developed societies and, importantly, in developing countries like Thailand where democratic practices are evolving. This significance is emphasized through both quantitative measures and qualitative insights, illustrating a robust correlation between political participation and electoral outcomes. Political participation is portrayed as a decisive factor in influencing the electoral choices of Thai citizens, with quantitative data indicating that consistent electoral participation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42) is a leading predictor of voter behavior. This aligns with historical research by Bangyikhan (1994), which asserts the foundational role of civic engagement in democratic societies. The discussion also draws on seminal works by Lester (1968) and Huntington and Nelson (1976), who define political participation as actions performed by ordinary citizens rather than professional politicians, such as voting or engaging in political discussions, which are crucial for the sustenance of a democratic framework. Further, the narrative is enriched by referencing Bardhan et al. (2008), who examined the implications of political clientelism in rural West Bengal, highlighting how grassroots involvement can significantly sway electoral outcomes in developing countries. This is juxtaposed with Rujinatra Sanguanpong's (2000) insights on political behavior, which emphasize the multifaceted nature of political participation, spanning from active engagement to passive information consumption. The findings from Thai contexts resonate with Nguyen and Nguyen's (2023) analysis of local elections in Vietnam, where the dynamics of electoral success are influenced significantly by the initial and ongoing engagement of citizens in the electoral process. Similarly,

Arceneaux and Vander Wielen (2023) challenge conventional assumptions about the impact of candidate education, suggesting that voter preferences for educated candidates reflect deeper societal values that associate education with capable governance. Moreover, the discussion incorporates perspectives from Suaib et al. (2016) and Harrison et al. (2023), who explore the importance of a political party's image and candidate branding in shaping voter perceptions and loyalty. These insights illustrate that the public image of political entities and their representatives plays a pivotal role in securing electoral success, affirming the need for political strategies that are responsive to the evolving values and expectations of the electorate. This comprehensive discussion underscores the critical need for political strategies that not only encourage broad voter participation but also ensure that such engagement is meaningful and informed. It highlights the essential role of political participation in shaping electoral outcomes and stresses the importance of continuous and dynamic interaction between voters and political entities to foster a robust democratic environment. This analysis, grounded in empirical evidence and enriched by comparative studies, offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities of electoral dynamics, providing valuable insights for policymakers, strategists, and scholars interested in the intersections of participation, policy, and political change.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics influencing the House of Representatives elections in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, against the backdrop of Thailand's evolving democratic landscape. Through a Mixed Methods approach, combining both quantitative regression analysis and qualitative assessments, the research has revealed nuanced insights into how voters in this specific electoral district make their electoral choices. The findings underscore that policy preferences are the primary determinant driving voter behavior, significantly overshadowing the impact of traditional elements such as campaign dynamics or party affiliations. This points to a mature electorate that critically evaluates policy content, suggesting a shift towards a more substantive and policy-oriented political engagement within the region. Such a shift is indicative of a broader national trend, catalyzed by ongoing democratic reforms aimed at enhancing policy engagement and reducing the influence of patronage in political processes. Furthermore, while factors like voter engagement and specific campaign strategies were found to be less influential compared to policy preferences, they nonetheless contribute to the complex tapestry of factors that shape electoral outcomes. The study highlights that even less dominant factors have roles to play, particularly in how they support the broader dynamics of voter education and information dissemination, which are critical in a maturing democracy. The implications of these findings extend beyond the local context, suggesting that both

local characteristics and national reforms are pivotal in shaping electoral behaviors. The electorate's preference for policy-based voting over traditional loyalty or charismatic campaigning suggests a need for political strategies that are more aligned with substantive issues and voter education. This research contributes to the field of political science by challenging traditional paradigms and providing fresh insights into the effectiveness of electoral strategies in the context of Thailand's political evolution. It underscores the importance of continued reforms in promoting an informed and policy-savvy electorate, which is crucial for the sustainability of democratic processes. As Thailand continues to navigate its complex political environment, the insights from this study will be invaluable in informing both future electoral strategies and ongoing democratic reforms, ensuring that the electoral mechanisms not only reflect but also enhance the democratic ideals of the society.

Recommendations

To optimize electoral strategies in Khon Kaen Province, Electoral District 3, and potentially across broader regions, we propose several concrete recommendations. Firstly, political entities should develop targeted policy communication campaigns. This involves utilizing multimedia presentations such as infographics, interactive webinars, and localized town hall meetings to demystify complex policies. Such initiatives ensure that voters not only understand the policies but can also relate them to their daily lives and regional concerns.

Additionally, it is crucial to expand civic education initiatives. Implementing community-based educational programs that enhance political literacy can profoundly impact voter engagement. These programs should include workshops that elucidate the electoral process, the significance of each vote, and the impact of government policies on community welfare. Forming partnerships with local schools, universities, and non-profit organizations will facilitate a broader reach and deeper impact.

Another strategic recommendation involves leveraging digital platforms for engagement and feedback. Developing a robust digital campaign strategy that includes social media outreach, interactive apps, and dedicated campaign websites offers detailed policy explanations. These platforms should be used not only for broadcasting but also for engaging with the electorate through live Q&A sessions, feedback surveys, and virtual town halls. This two-way communication model empowers voters to

express their concerns and preferences, enhancing their involvement and perceived value in the electoral process.

Moreover, customizing campaign messages to address the specific needs and cultural nuances of different demographic groups within the electorate is essential. For younger voters, harnessing trending social media platforms and influencers is key, while for older demographics, more traditional media channels or community meetups may be more effective. Such targeted strategies ensure that the campaign resonates with all sections of society.

Finally, it is imperative to adapt strategies post-electoral reforms continuously. This involves monitoring and analyzing the impacts of national and local electoral reforms and adapting campaign strategies to align with new regulations and voter sentiment shifts. Establishing a dedicated team to track legal changes and recommend adjustments in campaign tactics will ensure compliance and effectiveness, keeping the strategies aligned with the evolving political landscape.

Limitations

While this study provides insightful observations on electoral dynamics in Khon Kaen Province's Electoral District 3, it does carry limitations that must be considered. The study's focus on a specific geographical area limits the generalizability of its findings to other regions, which may exhibit different socio-political dynamics. The reliance on a sample size of 400 voters, though statistically adequate, might benefit from expansion in future studies to include a more diverse demographic range, enhancing the robustness and applicability of the findings. Political landscapes are inherently dynamic, and the rapid changes within them could diminish the relevance of these findings over time, necessitating ongoing research efforts. Furthermore, the study's dependence on self-reported data introduces potential biases that could skew the interpretation of voter behavior. Lastly, while the research highlights the preeminence of policy preferences, it may underrepresent the influence of emerging factors such as international political shifts or economic fluctuations, which could increasingly impact voter decisions. Addressing these limitations in future research will not only refine the strategies recommended but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of electoral processes in Thailand.

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