

# The University of Chicago

## Military Control and Perceived Levels of Corruption: A Study of Thailand

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to understand how military coups and control have affected the perceived levels of corruption within Thailand from 2011 to 2021. High levels of corruption in previous governments have been used as justification for military coups and control, yet no existing empirical evidence has demonstrated that there is a decrease in corruption after military intervention. By utilizing a concurrent mixed methods approach, this thesis reveals the effects of military intervention on perceived levels of corruption. Quantitative data from Transparency International and the World Bank, for the years 1997 to 2021, are employed in a series of multivariate regressions. In addition, this thesis collects and analyzes qualitative surveys from 300 Thai nationals including interviews with 17 of these individuals. The thesis finds that, on average, military coups and controls are correlated with increased perceived levels of corruption within the country. Further, there is a generational effect: younger generations are more likely to view the Prayut Regime after the election as most corrupt, while older generations tend to view the Yingluck Regime as most corrupt. Finally, I recommend that there should be stricter enforcement of laws regarding corruption as well as increased transparency in government expenditures.

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## Introduction

Thailand transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. Nevertheless, the subsequent 90 years have seen 13 military coup d'états and more than five decades of military control. The vicious cycle of coups, frequent military intervention, and democratic instability seemingly has left Thailand in a fragile political state (Lindman, 2017).

Military coups are not uncommon globally, and viewing Thailand in comparison with other countries can be instructive. In particular, the Chilean coup d'état of 1973 and the Georgian coup d'état of 1992 were quite violent and not supported by the citizens of their respective countries – yet these conditions do not apply to Thailand. Specifically, most of Thailand's coups were bloodless and the military successfully gained power and seeming legitimacy without using violent means. For instance, in 2014, General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Commander of the Royal Thai Army, launched a successful and bloodless coup d'état, following six months of political unrest within Thailand. One could say that in Thailand (and perhaps elsewhere) coups have become a norm for change in political leadership and one that possesses standard cyclical features (Lindman, 2017). Specifically, after a coup there is a period of military control followed by an election and a short period of open politics, before political conflict occurs within the country leading to yet another coup (Bunbongkarn, 2004). However, the 2014 coup in Thailand is unique given that there was no subsequent period of open politics. In 2016, a referendum resulted in the adoption of a new constitution that was favorable to the military authorities. A 2019 election then resulted in the coup leader, Prayut Chan-o-cha, continuing in his role as Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the validity of the elections has been questioned by many critics, whose concerns

involve the conditions under which the referendum and elections were held and the suppression of dissenting voices, particularly in the media space.

Many military coups have been justified by claims of prolonged periods of conflict and corruption. This justification was presented for Thailand's 2014 coup. In a broadcast on May 30, 2014, Prayut Chan-O-Cha mentioned that the reason for imposing martial law was prolonged conflict within Thailand, along with corruption:

*“There were also various violent situations, use of warfare weapons, including corruption and widespread illegal activities, affecting the well-being and livelihood of all people.”* (MFA, 2014)

On June 6, he further elaborated on the narrative of corruption in the previous government (2011-2014) under Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra:

*“State officials and other systems were being controlled and manipulated in every way by corrupt individuals, political parties and populist schemes. [...] We need to solve many issues; from administration to budget system, corruption, and even the starting point of democracy itself – the election. Parliamentary dictatorship has to be removed.”* (MFA, 2014)

While the broadcast mentions corruption as an issue in Thailand, it does not utilize any substantive figures or evidence to back these claims. Hence, there has been much debate about the validity of the corruption narrative. In particular, some people believe that military dictatorships are Thailand's solution to ensuring stability and curbing down on corruption. Many suggest that without military coups some countries would have gone bust due to uncurbed corruption by populist figures, which is reflected, it is argued, in the cases of Argentina, Turkey

and countries of West Africa. Others have viewed coups, however, as merely “another attempt to limit political rights and to design a constitution that controls the masses” (Hewison, 2007).

Some episodes were offered as evidence for corruption in pre-coup Thailand. A prominent example cited by the military occurred during Prime Minister Yingluck’s reign, when she enacted a scheme heavily subsidizing farmers for grain prices – a subsidy that led to a net loss of between 300 to 600 billion THB (Disakul, 2016). There were many irregularities in the bureaucratic process implementing the subsidies, ranging from disappearing rice, lack of exports and false government trades to private businessmen. These irregularities led Yingluck to be charged under Article 157, which addresses official malfeasance for failing to take action against corruption and losses. Many people were outraged by the losses and rightly wondered what would happen if more schemes like this one were created in the future. Nonetheless, has Thai corruption truly been so severe that it is worth being dealt with through a military coup and harming democratic processes along the way?

The aim of this paper is to try to understand whether the claims the military used to justify their frequent involvement in politics is backed by empirical data. Most previous research primarily focuses on the reasons why coups occur and their theoretical implications, not so much the post-coup impact based on empirical analysis. The research question is as follows: How have military coups and control affected the perceived levels of corruption within Thailand between 2011 to 2021?

## **Overview of Methods and Findings**

This paper begins with a background on why coups are so prevalent, a brief history of the Thai political landscape, the metric of perceived levels of corruption and terminology employed in the paper, followed by a review of previous research on military coups and corruption, which is used as the foundation for the analysis. This paper uses a mixed-methods approach to understand whether there is a correlation between perceived levels of corruption and military coups and control. Specifically, I use findings from my qualitative survey and interview results to provide context for my quantitative analysis. I employ data from Transparency International's CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) and the World Bank's WGI (Worldwide Governance Indicator) to measure corruption, and run univariate and multivariate regressions to explore connections between corruption and military coups and control. I then conduct a survey using the snowball sampling method where I send surveys to close friends, relatives and coworkers, and they in turn send the survey to their network. I analyze the survey results to find whether there are trends amongst people of different age groups, educational backgrounds and political affiliations in views about corruption between 2011 to 2021 within Thailand. Lastly, I conduct in-depth interviews with willing participants from the survey sample in order to provide further context to the survey results. Through this approach, I hope to gain a better understanding of the effects of coups and military regimes on the broader Thai society.

## **Background**

### **Why coups are so prevalent in Thailand**

The literature indicates three overarching reasons for why coups occur: 1) the unique structure of the Thai Army; 2) the government structure that results in political polarization beginning in the early 2000s; and 3) the unfair creation and implementation of law by the powerful. As first identified by the scholar Duncan McCargo, Thailand hosts a unique government system known as a “network monarchy”. The term essentially describes a governing system where the monarchy lacks any legal authority and yet still controls the state, military and society by indirect means. Later, Eugénie Mérieau challenges this idea and advocates for the use of the concept “deep state”. Similar to the concept of the network monarchy, the monarchy is at the center of the governing system but is more institutionalized than the network monarchy model accounts for.

In particular, in the deep state account, the army and the monarch have a strong anti-democratic alliance and by setting up a surrogate monarch through the use of courts to hinder electoral politics – in a process called judicialization of politics – the monarchy is able to support coups. The formation of the Thai Ruk Thai party (an early form of the Pheu Thai party) in the early 2000s gave rise to the most recent form of political polarization. Prior to the Thai Ruk Thai party, no party in Thai history has ever garnered the same amount of votes to win an overwhelming majority in the election. This electoral success caused some groups of people to view Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Thai Ruk Thai as a threat. In particular, the royalist establishment felt that Thaksin’s fast growing popularity was a threat to the King as Thaksin was seen as the “champion of Thailand’s rural poor” (Sombatpoonsiri, 2020). This trend positioned

Thaksin in competition with the King for the “hearts and minds of the masses” (Hewison 2010). Furthermore, the royalist establishment felt Thai Ruk Thai’s efforts to promote social mobility challenged the hierarchical worldview of Thailand’s establishment. Therefore, in 2005 a group of royalists known as the “Yellow Shirts” banded together under the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD), and campaigned against Thaksin. This was the start of a long feud in Thai politics and the spark of the 2006 coup d’etat. Further, the legal penalty for fomenting unsuccessful coups is not that large. An article by Eugénie Mérieau emphasizes how coup-making is a low-risk activity for Thai generals. As such, no coup leader has ever been prosecuted as amnesty provisions for coup makers are written into each Constitution to protect them. Therefore, given the upside possibilities from coups and the comparatively low risks, many coups are attempted in Thailand.

### **A Brief History of the Thai Political Landscape**

The political history of Thailand is marked by an immense number of military coups and political unrest. Given the data constraint presented by the start of the Corruption Perceptions Index in 1997, I give a brief overview of the political history from then. In 1997, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh's New Aspiration Party won the elections after the previous government was tainted by corruption charges and forced to call early elections. Prime Minister Chavalit was confronted by the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and came under strong criticism, which caused him to resign that same year, and Chuan Leekpai of the Democratic Party came back into power. During the elections in 2001, Chuan’s campaign to use IMF funds to boost the economy was a cause for debate, while Thaksin’s policies appealed to the mass electorate (Thabchumpon, 1999).

Thaksin Shinawatra won a sweeping victory, with a larger popular mandate than any Thai Prime Minister has ever had. Thaksin then held the position of Prime Minister from 2001-2006, being overthrown by a coup d'état in September of 2006. After that coup a military government led by Surayud Chulanont was in power until 2008. In 2008, Somchai Wongsawat was elected by the National Assembly and came into power as Prime Minister. However, soon after Thailand's anti-corruption body found Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat guilty of neglecting his duties, resulting in the Constitutional Court banning him from office. Many of the pro-government supporters at the time viewed the court's decision as being a "judicial coup". In particular, many viewed the Constitutional Court as being an extension of the "deep state". Later in 2008, Abhisit Vejjajiva was elected and remained Prime Minister until 2011. However, he dissolved the parliament and resigned before his term was over due to loss of confidence and serious challenges in the streets from Thaksins' supporters. In particular, Abhisit faced allegations that his party, the Democratic Party, swayed the decisions of other parties to join the government through military influence. Furthermore, during a crackdown on protests in 2010, a number of people died, fomenting anger in many citizens. The 2011 elections were won by Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin's sister, and her party, the Pheu Thai party; they remained in power until 2014, when yet another coup d'état occurred. This time, the military justified their need to intervene with the political unrest and the corruption charges against the leaders in Yingluck's cabinet, including herself. Subsequently, General Prayut Chan-ocha came into power from 2014 to 2019. An election held in 2019 saw General Prayut Chan-ocha elected as the Prime Minister of Thailand, a position he holds up to the present day. It is important to recognize that throughout the history of Thai politics most if not all Prime Ministers have faced allegations of corruption,

whether proven or not, and so there has always been an obstacle to creating a system of trust between citizens and government within Thailand.

### **Metric of Perceived Level of Corruption**

From *Manual on Corruption Surveys: Methodological guidelines on the measurement of bribery and other forms of corruption through sample surveys* written by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, we find that there are two main types of methods used to measure corruption: direct and indirect. Direct methods will look at collecting information through statistical and standardized procedures. These measures capture actual experiences of corruption, using reported cases of corruption from official sources and surveys. Indirect methods, on the other hand, do not gauge the actual occurrences of corruption but are based on perceived levels of corruption. The popularity of indirect measures arises in part from the difficulty to gauge actual occurrences of corruption, many of which do not become public. This shortcoming of direct measures applies to Thailand; therefore, this paper employs the metric of perceived levels of corruption. It should also be noted that while the perceived level of corruption may strongly differ from the current level of corruption, the latter often influences the former and vice versa (Melgar et al, 2010). Hence, given that we want to understand how different government regimes affect corruption levels, it would be best to consider the perceived levels of corruption as data for actual corruption levels may be inaccurate or non-existent.

For this paper, the two datasets used for perceived levels of corruption will be Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the Worldwide Governance Indicators' Control for Corruption (WGI). CPI ranks countries around the world based on how

corrupt their public sectors are perceived to be based on expert assessments and opinion surveys. The results are given on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is highly corrupt and 10 is slightly corrupt. The Control for Corruption Index is one of the six governance indicators in WGI. The indicators are formed from opinions of large enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. It is also based on 30 individual data sources produced by various organizations. The results are given on a scale of -2.5 to 2.5, indicating low and high governance respectively. For the robustness of the analysis, we will utilize both percentile rank and absolute number to compare the results of regressing military coup and control and perceived levels of corruption. How the data are manipulated will be explained in the Methodology section.

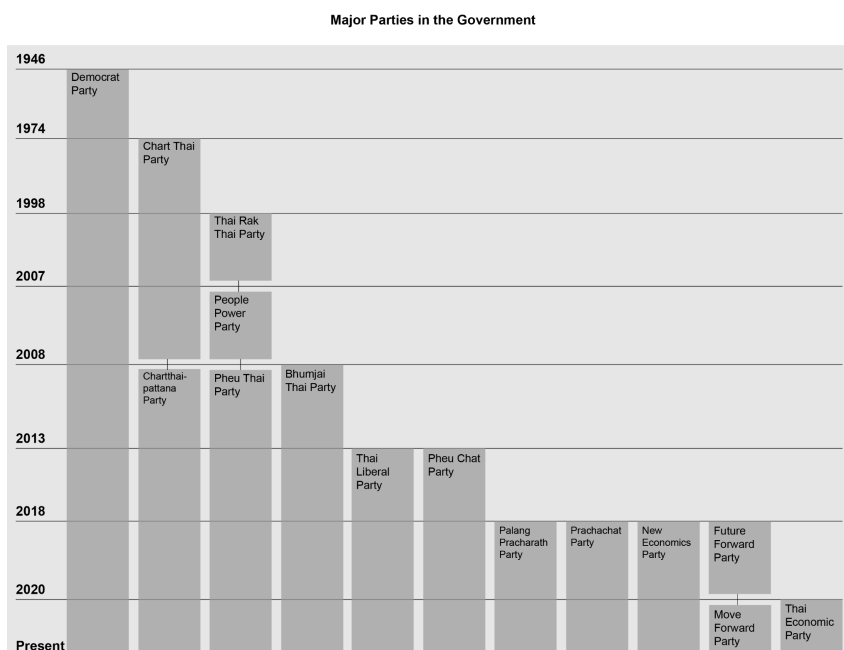
### **Language and Terminology Used in This Paper**

While it is noted that there exist multiple coups in the history of Thai Politics, this paper focuses on the period surrounding the 2014 coup and corruption within Thailand from 2011 to 2021. The terminology used to refer to the regimes in this paper are as follows:

1. Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime)
  - a. This refers to Yingluck Shinawatra's regime between 2011 and 2014.
2. Post-Military Coup (Prayut Regime)
  - a. This refers to Prayut Chan-o-cha's regime between 2014 and 2019, where he was the Leader of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) as well as appointed Prime Minister by the national legislature.
3. Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime)
  - a. This refers to Prayut Chan-o-cha's regime from 2019 to present. It must be noted that his party, Palang Prachrath Party, won the elections in 2019 and so he was elected to be Prime Minister in this period.

Furthermore, given the complexity of the Thai party system throughout the years, the flow diagram below summarizes the changes and additions to the political party system.

**Figure 1, Major Parties in the Government of Thailand since 1946**



Particularly, it must be noted that the party system within Thailand is complicated in that many parties are dissolved due to various reasons but then reformed with the same leadership under a different name. Notable parties that together captured the majority votes in the 2019 election include the Democrat Party, the Pheu Thai Party, the Future Forward Party and the Palang Pracharath Party.

Furthermore, there will be a lot of discussion about generational differences in viewpoint within the paper. For the purpose of this paper the younger generation will be defined as those between ages 18 and 39 and the older generation will be defined as those ages 40 and above. I chose the generational gap split in this paper by distinguishing, speaking generally, between

millennials and non-millennials. Psychologist Jean Twenge defines millennials as those born between 1980 and 1994 – a close but not exact definition of that used here.

## **Literature review**

This section presents findings and empirical strategies from previous research which will be used as a foundation for the subsequent analysis in the paper. The literature review will be split into four subsections: Impact of Military Coup on Economic Variables, Impact of Military Coup on Political Variables, Impact of Military Coup on Perceived Levels of Corruption, and Gaps in the Literature. Though this paper focuses on military intervention in politics which include military coups and control, not much literature has been written on the impact of military control. While the reasons for the lack of literature remain unclear, it could be speculated that this lack is due to the minimal number of periods of military control in recent history. Hence, the discussion of previous literature on military control will be mentioned in the Gaps within the Literature subsection. Furthermore, it must be noted that this paper is not a case-study of the broader phenomenon of military coups and control on perceived levels of corruption, but rather an in-depth study of the impact of military coups and control on perceived levels of corruption in Thailand and thus the literature review section will reflect that.

### **Impact of Military Coup on Economic Variables**

In Lumjiak et al.'s paper "Good coups, bad coups: evidence from Thailand's financial markets", they investigate the short and long term impacts of coups on Thailand's financial markets. By analyzing data from the stock market and foreign exchange markets during the period of 2005 to 2017, their study found that the 2006 and 2014 coups both exert short-run impacts on Thailand's stock and foreign exchange markets. However, it is important to note that the direction and magnitude of the impact are different and opposite between the coups. Despite

negative public sentiments toward coups, their study also concludes that the uncertainty that accompanies such coups can not only provide investment opportunities for investors but also helps drive stability and development in the long run. Similarly, in Rujiranrangsana and Chancharat's paper "The impact of Coup d'etats on the Relationship between Stock Market and Exchange Rate: Evidence from Thailand", they find that in the short run, the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) index shocks in all pre-coup and coup periods negatively affect the exchange rate of THB/USD, except the coup period of 2014 on which it had a positive effect. This is consistent with Dunning's paper that also indicates that a change of political regime influences the financial market. Overall, they find that there are some discrepancies between the actual effect of the 2006 compared to the 2014 coup, but can conclude that when military coups have taken place, there will be mispricing in both short-run and long-run relationships of the stock market and the exchange rate.

Furthermore, Bhanupong Nidhiprabha's paper "Macroeconomic Policy for Emerging markets Lessons from Thailand" concludes that coups have disrupted the steady growth path of the Thai economy. Particularly, by using the year 2005 as a benchmark for comparison of the relative success of economic development from 2005 to 2016, Nidhiprabha finds that Thailand has a slower GDP per capita growth compared with other East Asia and Pacific regions. This indicates that coups could slow down GDP per capita growth more significantly than the usual cyclical patterns. Thus, for the multivariate regressions run in this paper, I control for GDP growth in order to isolate the effect of military coups and control on perceived levels of corruption.

Moreover, Suheyla Cavdar's paper "Income Inequality's Impact on the Occurrence of Coup d'etats" makes an observation that in Thailand coups only occurred at points where the Gini coefficient is increasing and never when it is declining. In other words, military coups occurred when there was increasing inequality within the country. While it would be possible to control for the Gini coefficient within the regressions run for this paper, the Gini coefficient as a whole is an imperfect measure for inequality as a few outliers could greatly affect the statistic and so to avoid over controlling for variables it is omitted from this paper.

Though there is more literature on the impact of economic variables on military coups or vice versa, from the papers discussed above we can make an educated conclusion that military coups have an effect on economic variables. Whether this effect is negative or positive is inconclusive as it will depend on whether we are studying the 2006 or the 2014 coup. Thus, it is important that the timeframe of study for this paper includes only one of the coups. Lastly, it is noted that for my quantitative analysis, GDP growth will be controlled to acknowledge, though not fully account for, the impact of coups on economic variables.

### **Impact of Military Coup on Political Variables**

Compared to the impact of military coups on economic variables, not a lot of studies have been done on the impact of coups on political variables. The reason behind this could be attributed to the limitations in data that was also faced within this paper. Therefore, to discuss the impact of military coups on political variables, analysis from Freedom House will be used. Freedom House conducts research on democracy, political freedom and human rights. However, for the purpose of this literature review we will look at the political freedom within Thailand.

Particularly, Freedom House finds that in 2016, press freedom in Thailand continued to deteriorate for the second consecutive year following the 2014 coup. The underlying reasons include the delay of a new permanent Constitution and lack of elections. Furthermore, it is noted that the NCPO “aggressively enforced defamation and lese-majeste laws, banned criticism of its rule, and harassed, attacked and shut down media outlets. Journalists, critical academics, activists, and others continued to face intimidation, summonses from authorities, and arbitrary detention and arrests throughout the year” (Freedom House, 2016). Thus we see that military coups can have negative effects on political variables in the country, mainly in terms of press freedom.

One key aspect to highlight is the reason for the lack of literature on the effect of military coups on political variables. In particular, one explanation for this lack could be the political censorship in Thailand. Specifically, we find that there has been a lot of evidence of prosecutions of the critics of the coup and the military, opposition politicians and pro-democracy activists since the coup. This mainly comes in the form of sedition charges and censorship of media within Thailand. As such, the criminalization of peaceful expression in Thailand is apparent as shown by this quote from Prime Minister Prayut in September of 2015 “No one can oppose me. If they still don’t learn that, they will be detained again and again.... I might tape their mouths shut, too” (Prayut, 2015). Therefore, it is speculated that not many academics have been able to publish research about the negative effect of coups on political variables out of fear and oppression.

## **Impact of Military Coup on Perceived Levels of Corruption**

In Chen and Weiss's book "The Political Logics of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Asia", and particularly chapter 5 of the book "Anti Corruption politics in Thailand: From Regime Institutionalization to Sovereignty Wars" written by Michael K. Connors, Connors examines the political dynamics behind anti-corruption efforts. Particularly, through using Transparency International's CPI, the paper looks at corruption perceptions of Thai institutions and concludes that CPI has steadily decreased over the last decade, despite the range of campaigns against corruption. However, it is important to recognize that the changes in CPI after the coups in 2006 and 2014 do not move in the same direction. As such, we find that after the 2006 coup there is increased perceived levels of corruption. On the other hand, we find that after the 2014 coup there are decreased levels of perceived corruption. Thus, this paper takes in account the potential differences in the impact of the coup on levels of perceived corruption within the country by focusing solely on the 2014 coup.

In Supruet Thavornyutikarn's paper "Did the Military spearhead the Fight against Corruption in Thailand?", he examines the relationship between military coups and perceived levels of corruption. Through using a quantitative approach, Thavornyutikarn finds that the military in fact did not successfully fight against corruption such that the levels of corruption in Thailand worsens after a coup. By using military expenditure as the independent variable and percentile rank of control of corruption as the dependent variable, he finds that higher military expenditure significantly increases the ranking, meaning there is increased corruption. Thavornyutikarn summarizes that the military "does not fight against corruption at all, despite the fact that it always alleged so in many coup d'etat" (Chambers, 2013). Furthermore, Janjira

Sombatpoonsiri summarizes that the contrast between royal morality and the corruption of democratically elected politicians contributed to the growing mistrust of electoral democracy within Thailand. Therefore, as Thavornyutikarn's paper finds that military expenditure influences the perceived levels of corruption, military expenditure will be controlled for the multivariate regressions run in this paper.

Furthermore, it is noted that the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce conducted a yearly survey to measure the Corruption Situation Index (CSI) from 2012 to 2017. The results from the survey were split into 4 main sections: the severity of corruption, attitudes towards corruption, efficiency in anti-corruption efforts and the corruption situation index. The results indicate that right after the military coup of 2014, perceived levels of corruption improved relatively. As such, after the military coup people felt that there was less corruption for a year. Furthermore, it is also noted that the efficiency of anti-corruption efforts greatly improved in the years following a military coup in that the proportion of those indicating that anti-corruption efforts were efficient increased from an average of 30% to 50%. The reasons the survey was discontinued is unknown. The structure of the survey sent out by the University of Thai Chamber Commerce will inspire the surveys sent out to the public in this paper.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Previous scholarly literature explores the impact of coups on two main dimensions: economical and political. Within the economics realm, the impact of military coups and control on GDP, exchange rate, levels of inequality and much more have been studied. Within the political realm, the impact of military coups and control on business freedom, press freedom and

corruption levels have been studied. However, I believe that my research has the potential to greatly contribute to the findings of existing literature. Particularly, prior research on the topic of military coups and perceived levels of corruption has focused on quantitative analysis of corruption, utilizing data sets from Transparency International and the World Bank, but in my thesis I will be providing a more qualitative approach to supplement the findings of my quantitative study. This will be done in the form of a survey as well as in-depth interviews with selected participants. In addition, this paper will not only focus on the impact of military coups but also military control on the perceived levels of corruption, which will provide a context to the prolonged effects of military coups and control. Furthermore, it is noted that Thavornytikarn's paper which closely resembles the topic I am exploring, helped inspire the aspects of my quantitative analysis. Particularly, his explanatory variables include military expenditure, whether there was a coup d'état and number of years since the last coup. However, for my analysis I extend the controls of the multivariate regression and include previous year's levels of corruption, whether the military is in control and GDP as I want a broader overview of explanatory variables rather than just focusing on military spending and imports. Furthermore, my qualitative findings through surveys and interviews will provide context and an insight to why particular changes in levels of perceived corruption occur during military coup and control. It is noted that the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce conducted similar qualitative findings through surveys but my research will extend beyond surveys to include an in-depth interview section that will provide a more comprehensive overview of the trends.

## **Methodology**

This research paper utilizes a concurrent mixed methods approach. I use the findings from my qualitative data in order to provide context for the results found from my quantitative data analysis. First, I investigate correlations between military coup and control and perceived corruption. To do this, I regress perceived levels of corruption on the presence of military coups and control, controlling for other political and economic variables in a multivariate regression. I identify statistically significant correlations between military coup and control and perceived levels of corruption, yet also test the robustness of the results by controlling for external factors. I also conduct a survey to gain a preliminary understanding of whether different demographics view the level of perceived corruption differently. Further, I conduct interviews with selected participants who had completed the survey to further understand how military coup and control impact the levels of perceived corruption within the country among various groups of people.

### **Quantitative Methods**

As this paper acknowledges the difficulty and subjectivity of measuring corruption, this paper employs the use of indexes from multiple credible sources in order to best gauge the effect of military coup and control on corruption throughout different periods. More specifically, the two main data sources for levels of perceived corruption are from the World Bank and Transparency International. It must be noted that there has been a debate about which index is better suited to measure the perceived levels of corruption. Particularly, there are claims that CPI is highly correlated with itself. Therefore, keeping the claims in mind, I decided to run regressions using both WGI and CPI to dictate whether they come to similar conclusions. While

I initially considered running a time series analysis from 1997 for perceived levels of corruption against economic and political indexes such as GDP, rule of law index, overall economics freedom, there was a lot of missing data prior to 2009, which would require extrapolating data back for more than 10 years. Hence, I chose to run a regression for CPI and WGI holding the previous year index, military expenditure and GDP growth constant against whether there was a military coup and whether the military is in control.

There are two methods of statistical analysis presented in the Findings. They are as follows:

1. Univariate Regression of CPI and WGI raw and ranked data
2. Multivariate Regression of CPI and WGI raw and ranked data

In order to effectively run the regressions, the data manipulation methods utilized are explained below. The reason both univariate and multivariate regressions were used as opposed to other forms of modeling is explained in the Limitations to Quantitative Research section. The background on the model is explained in the Findings section.

### ***Data Manipulation***

In order for the regression results from CPI and WGI to be comparable, the data has to be manipulated. There are three differences between the two indexes that need to be accounted for:

1) the scale of CPI runs from 0 to 10, where 0 is highly corrupt and 10 is slightly corrupt. The scale for WGI's control for corruption runs from -2.5 to 2.5, where -2.5 is weak governance and 2.5 is strong governance. Hence, for both the indexes, higher absolute value means less corruption; 2) for CPI, there is not a constant number of countries in the dataset as it ranges from

52 to 180 countries. For WGI, the number of countries is constant, and the values given in the dataset is the percentile rank of each country compared to the absolute rank given in the CPI dataset; 3) for CPI, higher absolute rank means more corruption. For WGI, higher percentile rank means less corruption. In terms of comparing the absolute numbers, no data manipulation is needed as regressions should account for the difference in the scale of the country and compare the relative change. In terms of comparing the rank, CPI is manipulated. Particularly, the CPI absolute rank is converted to a percentile rank from the number of countries available in the dataset that year and inverted by doing 100 minus CPI rank. This would allow us to compare the ranks for WGI and CPI. For all regressions, higher values mean less corruption. All data manipulation was done in Excel before being imported to RStudio for further analysis.

In terms of the other control variables, no data manipulation is needed for Military Expenditure as well as GDP Growth as they are continuous variables. However, for the variables of whether there is military coup and whether there is military control, the data is transformed into a dummy variable where 1 denotes military coup or control happening that year and 0 denotes the lack of military coup or control that year.

### ***Limitations of Quantitative Research***

One limitation of the analysis was the use of regression as opposed to other econometric tools. In particular, I considered running a time series analysis along with linear modeling to analyze military coup and control with various economic and political variables. The time series would have also allowed me to segment the time periods and see specific changes each year. Alternatively, my regression approach will only allow me to see an overarching trend between

the variables and, therefore, it could have been the case that corruption increased only after the 2014 and not the 2006 coup, for instance. However, given that there was a lot of missing data for economic and political variables including the rule of law index and economic freedom, I would have had to interpolate the data back for more than 10 years. This could have significantly hindered the results of the analysis as there was not an abundance of sources to accurately predict changes for years we had data for many of the variables. Therefore, instead, I chose to run a regression that did not account for as many political and economic variables as I wanted. Given the complete data set for levels of perceived corruption, GDP growth, previous year ranking, military expenditure, whether there was a military coup and whether the military was in control, I utilized these variables. Although this choice could greatly impact the validity of my analysis, I believe that interpolating data for more than 10 years would have hindered the analysis more than not including the variable. While these limitations exist, the quantitative aspect of my research is meant to be exploratory and not explanatory in nature. Thus, the regression does a sufficient job of finding statistically significant factors, where the p-value is smaller than 0.01 while controlling for variables we have data for.

### **Qualitative Methods**

I use a two-pronged approach in my qualitative methods section. Particularly, a survey was sent out to the general population via Google forms and distributed by word of mouth, LINE group chats and snowball sampling. The survey results will give a general overview of whether the consensus of the population aligns with the findings from the quantitative analysis results. Later, in-depth interviews will be conducted in order to better understand aspects of why there is

a correlation or no correlation between military control and perceived levels of corruption accounting for age, educational background, and political affiliation.

### *Survey*

The first part of my qualitative research involved conducting a web-based survey that was intended to understand how different demographics viewed the relative levels of perceived corruption in Thailand during different regimes, reasons for corruption, whether the military should get involved in ensuring peace within the country and how the government should deal with corruption. The method of survey was chosen as it would allow me to gather information from a large number of participants at little cost to both myself and the participants while allowing participants to remain anonymous if desired. Particularly, given that the questions are directed towards Thai Nationals in Thailand, conducting a web-based survey was the most feasible solution from abroad. Overall the survey includes 3 sections: general demographic questions, corruption-specific questions, and policy recommendation questions. The survey is inspired and adapted from a discontinued survey conducted by the University of Thai Chamber of Commerce. Further, the survey includes both multiple-choice and short-answer questions, which provide a mix of data points and robust explanations for their choices. The specific questions sent out will be in Appendix C. The survey was sent in both Thai and English in order to reach specific demographics that may be more comfortable completing it in Thai.

The survey was completed by 300 Thai nationals from a broad range of age groups, educational backgrounds, political affiliation and occupations. The following table provides an overview of the demographic of the participant sample.

**Table 1, Demographic Breakdown of Survey Participants**

Demographic Information	Participant Sample (n = 300)	
		Number of Respondents
Gender	Female	179
	Male	117
	Prefer not to answer	4
Age	18-24	49
	25-29	31
	30-39	51
	40-49	56
	50-59	70
	60+	43
Highest level of education	Bachelor's degree	144
	Masters degree or higher	120
	Primary school	1
	Secondary school	20
	Technical training school	15
Political Affiliation	Democrat Party / Prachatipud	14
	Future Forward Party / Anarkod Mai	44
	Others	16
	Palang Pracharath Party	6
	Pheu Thai Party	42
	Prefer not to answer	178

Compared to the 2022 statistic on Thailand's gender ratio, we find that in my survey, there is an over-representation of women. In particular, Thailand's current gender ratio is 97 men to 100 women, however in the survey the gender ratio is 65 men to 100 women (States101, 2022). Further, it is also noted that there is an over-representation of the older generation in my survey such that there are 169 older-generation and only 131 younger-generation survey respondents. Moreover, in terms of highest level of education, there is an over-representation of highly educated individuals in the survey, with more than 85% of the sample having completed a bachelor's degree, and almost half the sample having completed a master's degree or higher. Similarly, in terms of political affiliation almost two-thirds of the survey respondents choose not to state their political affiliation. However, among those who choose to state their political affiliation, we have an over-representation of Future Forward Party and Pheu Thai Party

supporters and a significant under-representation of Palang Pracharat supporters. Hence, while the survey respondents are not entirely representative of the population, given the data we have we can segment the answers based on gender, age and political affiliation to understand whether demographic differences affect perceived levels of corruption.

### *Interviews*

40 subjects agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. However, due to time constraints, 17 interviewees were chosen and interviews were conducted by phone, zoom, or other preferred methods of contact. The main purpose of the interviews were to get a better grasp of why perceived levels of corruption were highest in a particular regime and not another.

Firstly, I receive the subjects' informed consent about my research project prior to starting and also emphasize the anonymity of interviews. Further, as corruption is a very sensitive topic, the questions will be carefully framed to avoid sensitivity bias on the topic. A semi-structured methodology will be used as this will allow the interviews to maintain some structure in terms of staying on-topic but also gives the flexibility to explore several avenues that could lead to answering the research question. The guiding questions used will be in the Appendix D. However, all interviews started with stating the individual's political affiliation and ranking their knowledge on politics. All interviewees were then asked the following question: "What do you believe the trends from the survey will show in terms of how different generations view which regime is most corrupt?" before they were asked to elaborate on their own choices "Could you elaborate further on your response regarding corruption across the different governments from the image below - why did you pick the choices you did?". Often, participants

would begin elaborating on factors they considered in ranking the different regime, which provided further opportunity for follow up questions. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

### ***Qualitative Coding***

Each interview was conducted and recorded and later transcribed using an online platform, Otter.ai, for interviews that were conducted in English. Other interviews that were conducted and recorded in Thai were transcribed by hand and translated into English for easier comparison. The transcription and translation sets me up to best utilize the method of inductive reasoning in order to draw conclusions from the qualitative interviews. Particularly, I read through all the interviews before noting major themes and conclusions from the interviews.

### ***Limitations of Qualitative Research***

There are many limitations to the qualitative methods conducted. In particular, there could be selection bias such that only a certain type of individual would agree to participate in the survey and in-depth interview. From the sample, we see that the majority of subjects were a part of or affiliated with the government that was overthrown by the military coup— therefore, their perceptions and opinions on the perceived levels of corruption post-coup could be skewed. This could have led to implicit bias that subjects were unaware of. However, given that we are measuring perceived levels of corruption, this should not matter. Moreover, snowball sampling could also have contributed to selection bias in that students, blue-collar workers and government officials often recruited their peers to participate in the in-depth interviews. These

peers most likely had similar backgrounds and viewpoints as them. Therefore, to best combat this for the in-depth interview, I choose participants with diverse ages, political affiliations, viewpoints on perceived levels of corruption in order to understand the reasoning behind choices of varying demographics. If this method of research were conducted again, it would be useful to recruit more subjects from the Pracharat Party (PCP) or those who play a role within the military government. The reason I am not too concerned with this limitation is that the Pracharat Party only existed in 2019. Therefore, prior to this their supporters could have come from a range of different parties. Further, it was difficult to recruit those who were affiliated with the Pracharat Party as the majority of leads supported the Pheu Thai Party or the Future Forward Party. However, it is not to say that we did not have any Pracharat Party subjects as many choose not to indicate their political affiliation.

Another limitation of the qualitative methods conducted was that although the survey was anonymized, many choose not to enter their political affiliations. As such, it is unclear whether we have a skewed or representative sample. However, similar to stated above, among participants that stated their political affiliation, there was a diverse sample that was selected for the in-depth interview. Further, another limitation of the survey was for the question “Which government was most corrupted?”, where I had the participants rank the three regimes in terms of most, medium and least corrupt. However, I did not account for the fact that some survey participants may feel that two time periods had very similar levels of corruption. I am not too concerned with this because only a few subjects reached out to indicate their concern. Lastly, I did not account for surveying participants from different regions in the country. However, given that the protests and coups mainly occur in Bangkok, I think the sample should be representative

in terms of those directly exposed to coups. Furthermore, given that there were limitations to word of mouth especially in areas outside of Bangkok, the sample would be very skewed to include members of the same family which will likely not be representative of the population.

### *Addressing a Literature Gap*

This study deviates from existing research in that it includes a qualitative research aspect. As noted previously, the only source of existing qualitative data available on the perceived levels of corruption in Thailand was from the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The survey conducted by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce examined participants from 2012 to 2017. However, there was no in-depth interview aspect to the survey, so the conclusions were based purely on the empirical findings from the survey rather than on the opinions of citizens and their reasoning. The conversations analyzed in this paper highlight the experiences of Thai nationals living through military coups and control. Quantitative analysis by itself does not take into account the frustrations and perspectives of these individuals.

## Findings

### Quantitative Methods

This section will explore the relationship between military coup and control and perceived levels of corruption by running univariate and multivariate regressions for the CPI and WGI raw as well as rank datasets. Thus, there will be 8 regression results that will be run. For the Univariate Regression, the following linear model is estimated:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Intervention'_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Term:	Interpretation:
$Y_i$	Dependent variable (perceived levels of corruption measured by either CPI or WGI Raw or Rank data)
$\beta_0$	The constant measuring the perceived levels of corruption when there is no military intervention
$\beta_1$	The regression slope that shows how much one unit of military intervention changes the perceived levels of corruption
'Military Intervention'	Dummy variable measuring whether there is military coup or control that year depending on the regression
$\varepsilon_i$	Idiosyncratic effect on perceived levels of corruption

For the Multivariate Regression, the following linear model is estimated:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Intervention'_i + \beta_2 'Previous Year Y_i' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

Term:	Interpretation:
$Y_i$	Dependent variable (perceived levels of corruption measured by either CPI or WGI Raw or Rank data)
$\beta_0$	Y-intercept (the constant measuring the perceived levels of corruption when there is no military intervention)
$\beta_1$	The regression slope that shows how much one unit of military intervention changes the perceived levels of corruption
$\beta_2$	The regression slope that shows how much one unit of previous year CPI/WGI raw/rank changes the perceived levels of corruption
$\beta_3$	The regression slope that shows how much one unit of military expenditure changes the perceived levels of corruption
$\beta_4$	The regression slope that shows how much one unit of GDP growth changes the perceived levels of corruption
'Military Intervention'	Dummy variable measuring whether there is military coup or control that year depending on the regression
$\varepsilon_i$	Idiosyncratic effect on perceived levels of corruption

## Univariate Regression

### Results

**Table 2, Univariate Regression Results**

#	Specification	Beta ( $\beta_1$ )	P-Value	Interpretation for perceived levels of corruption
1	$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$	0.266		Decrease
2	$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$	-0.107		Increase
3	$CPI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$	11.976		Decrease
4	$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$	-6.221		Increase
5	$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$	0.241	***	Decrease
6	$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$	-0.157	***	Increase
7	$CPI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$	7.109		Decrease
8	$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$	-8.754	***	Increase

Note: \* p-value <0.1; \*\* p-value<0.05; \*\*\* p-value<0.01

Table 2 shows the result from the univariate regressions. Particularly, we find that for all metrics of CPI, military coup and control leads to an increased level of perceived corruption. On the other hand, we find that for all metrics of WGI, military coup and control leads to a decreased level of perceived corruption. From the eight regressions run, we find that running CPI raw, WGI raw and WGI rank against whether there is military control leads to highly significant results.

### *Discussion of Results*

Overall in the univariate models, we find contradicting results for CPI and WGI in all metrics. The CPI model claims that there is a decrease in perceived levels of corruption within the country. In contrast, the respective WGI model claims that there is an increase in perceived levels of corruption within the country. As such, the CPI models all conclude that military coup and control result in decreased perceived levels of corruption within the country. On the other hand, the WGI models all conclude that military coup and control result in increased perceived levels of corruption within the country. This is surprising in many aspects such that it means accounting for both CPI and WGI, the results from the univariate models are highly inconclusive. Particularly, we find that the coefficients of the regressions are not all ambiguous in nature in that if we consider the standard error, the sign of the coefficients do not change. Therefore, from this we cannot be certain that the correlation, even with significant p-values, is true. For this reason, we will need to run multivariate regressions to account for other confounding variables that could be affecting the validity of the univariate model.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the correlation betas for the WGI raw models are relatively small compared to that of CPI raw models. However, this is not surprising as the WGI raw data only ranges from -2.5 to 2.5, so the magnitude of CPI and WGI should not be compared directly. Similarly, it should be mentioned that the contradiction in the univariate dataset is not entirely surprising. Given that the regressions were run on 25 data points, only 2 of which were when coups occur, any changes in CPI and WGI that year could cause large fluctuations in the beta. Therefore, we should be careful in interpreting the quantitative regressions.

What's surprising is the fact that the regressions for CPI raw, WGI raw and WGI rank univariate regressions on whether the military was in control yielded highly significant results. Specifically, the p-value, for all those three regressions, was less than 0.01. Focusing on the CPI raw and WGI raw we find that these regressions yielded a beta of 0.241 and -0.157 respectively. Therefore, it is interesting to see that they yield statistically significant results in completely opposite directions. This again shows how the univariate model is not as reliable despite the low p-values.

## Multivariate Regression

### Results

**Table 3, Multivariate Regression Results**

#	Specification	Beta ( $\beta_1$ )	P-Value	Interpretation for perceived levels of corruption
1	$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Coup'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ CPI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP\ Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	0.190		Decrease
2	$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Coup'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ WGI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP\ Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	-0.143	***	Increase
3	$CPI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Coup'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ CPI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure'$	9.041		Decrease

	$+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$			
4	$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Coup'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	-8.396	***	Increase
5	$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous Year CPI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	0.061	***	Decrease
6	$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	-0.089	**	Increase
7	$CPI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous Year CPI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	5.816		Decrease
8	$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control'$ $+ \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI'$ $+ \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure'$ $+ \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$	-6.552	***	Increase

Note: \* p-value <0.1; \*\* p-value<0.05; \*\*\* p-value<0.01

Table 3 shows the result from the multivariate regressions. Particularly, we find that for all metrics of CPI, military coup and control leads to an increased level of perceived corruption. On the other hand, we find that for all metrics of WGI, military coup and control leads to a decreased level of perceived corruption. The results are consistent with the univariate regressions

and existing literature. We find that running WGI raw and WGI rank against whether there is a military coup leads to highly significant results. Further, we also find that running CPI raw, WGI raw, and WGI rank against whether there is military control also leads to highly significant results.

### ***Discussion of Results***

Overall in the multivariate models, similar to the univariate models, we find contradicting results for CPI and WGI in all metrics. That is in a metric at which the CPI model claims that there is a decrease in perceived levels of corruption within the country, the respective WGI model claims that there is an increase in perceived levels of corruption within the country. As such, the CPI models all conclude that military coup and control result in decreased perceived levels of corruption within the country. On the other hand, the WGI models all conclude that military coup and control result in increased perceived levels of corruption within the country. Though this is surprising, it shows that there are inherent differences in the data set that have led to contradicting results. Therefore, to form a coherent conclusion, it is necessary to choose one of the metrics that will anchor the arguments used in this paper. As the results from the WGI model are more statistically significant than those from the CPI model for the multivariate dataset in terms of both military coup and control, this paper will follow the quantitative results from the WGI model. Furthermore, the results from the WGI model are more aligned with the literature, which state that military coup and control result in increased levels of perceived corruption. While it is acknowledged that the regressions for military control and CPI resulted in statistically

significant results in the univariate model, that may have been a result of sheer luck and lack of controlled explanatory variables.

### ***Summary of Quantitative Results***

Given that WGI results in more statistically significant results for the multivariate regressions of both military coup and control for the raw and rank dataset compared to CPI, we will conclude the results using the WGI model. We find that both military coup and control result in decreased WGI and WGI percentile rank. This means that, on average, military coups and controls are correlated to increased corruption within the country. Both our results from the WGI and CPI model align with their respective literature. What is interesting to note is that both CPI and WGI are metrics for perceived levels of corruption and yet they are not highly correlated. As such, running regressions for CPI rank-adjusted on WGI rank data results in a correlation coefficient of -0.648 and an  $R^2$  of 0.11. That is, when there is 1 unit increase of WGI rank, there is a 0.648 unit decrease of CPI rank-adjusted.

## **Qualitative Methods**

### **Survey Results**

This section will summarize the findings from the survey which will be used to craft the questions asked in the in-depth interview portion of the qualitative methods.

**Table 4, Demographic Breakdown of Survey Participants**

Demographic Information	Participant Sample (n = 300)	
		Number of Respondents
Gender	Female	179
	Male	117
	Prefer not to answer	4
Age	18-24	49
	25-29	31
	30-39	51
	40-49	56
	50-59	70
	60+	43
Highest level of education	Bachelor's degree	144
	Masters degree or higher	120
	Primary school	1
	Secondary school	20
	Technical training school	15
Political Affiliation	Democrat Party / Prachatipud	14
	Future Forward Party / Anarkod Mai	44
	Others	16
	Palang Pracharath Party	6
	Pheu Thai Party	42
	Prefer not to answer	178

Overall 300 Thai-identifying participants filled in the survey. For the demographic information, participants were asked about their gender, age, highest level of education, education background, political affiliation and occupation. As we see from Table 4, the survey is slightly more biased towards female participants, those aged 50-59, and those whose highest level of education is a bachelor's degree. However, overall there is quite a uniform distribution in terms of age, which will be one of the main independent variables for the analysis. While not included in the table above, there is quite a diverse range of occupations from the survey participants which range from students, teachers, lawyers, politicians, business owners to pensioners and unemployed individuals. Hence, it is deduced that there is a strong combination of public and private sector employees within the group of survey participants.

### *Perceived Levels of Corruption*

In terms of perceived levels of corruption, we find the general trend to be that 52.3%, 34.7% and 13% of participants believe that Post-Military Control after Election (Prayut Regime), Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) and Post-Military Coup (Prayut Regime) is most corrupt respectively. However, to better understand whether the general trends hold for those of different gender, age and highest level of education, the proportion of those in each category voting for each regime to be most corrupt will be analyzed. While, it is noted that the following analysis was not done for political affiliation, the reason behind this is because results will most likely not show anything substantial as 65% of individuals indicated that they would prefer not to state their political affiliation.

**Table 5, Proportion of each gender response to which regime is most corrupt**

Gender	Pre-Military Control (Yingluck Regime)	Post-Military Control 2014/2015	Post-Military Control 2020/2021
Female	35.75%	11.73%	52.51%
Male	31.62%	14.53%	53.85%
Prefer not to answer	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%

The results from the survey show that there is no significant difference in how different genders perceive which government is most corrupt. In particular, 35.75% of women compared to 31.62% of men viewed the Pre-Military Control (Yingluck Regime) as the most corrupt, 11.73% of women compared to 14.53% of men viewed the Post-Military Coup (Prayut Regime) as the most corrupt and 52.51% of women compared to 53.85% of men viewed the Post-Military Control after Election (Prayut Regime) as most corrupt. It is noted that those who prefer not to state their gender, had drastically different proportions in terms of how they voted for which regime was most corrupt such that 75% and 25% of them viewed the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) and Post-Military Coup (Prayut Regime) as most corrupt respectively. The

reasons for the difference in proportions could be attributed to the relatively small sample size of those who prefer not to specify their gender. Overall there were only 4 survey participants out of 300 that preferred not to specify their gender, therefore each individual choice had a much greater weighting than those in the female and male gender category. For those reasons we will focus more on answers from those who specified their gender as female and male.

From the survey, we see that if we were considering the subtle differences in proportion, more women than men believe that the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) was the most corrupt. This is a little surprising in that, out of the three regimes, the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) is the only regime with an elected female Prime Minister. Therefore, this could provide insight to scholars of Gender Economics that having a female prime minister does not affect the perceived levels of corruption disproportionately between men and women in Thailand. However, given the limited data points of study and female Prime Ministers, this can not be concluded with confidence.

**Table 6, Proportion of each age group response to which regime is most corrupt**

Age	Post-Military Control 2014/2015	Post-Military Control 2020/2021	Pre-Military Control (Yingluck Regime)
18-24	6.12%	71.43%	22.45%
25-29	16.13%	70.97%	12.90%
30-39	17.65%	64.71%	17.65%
40-49	14.29%	48.21%	37.50%
50-59	11.43%	37.14%	51.43%
60+	13.95%	32.56%	53.49%

There are few key trends that can be derived from the table showing the proportion of each age group's response to which regime is most corrupt. Most notably, we find that although the overall trend from the survey shows that Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) is perceived to be the most corrupt, breaking this down into age groups shows that not

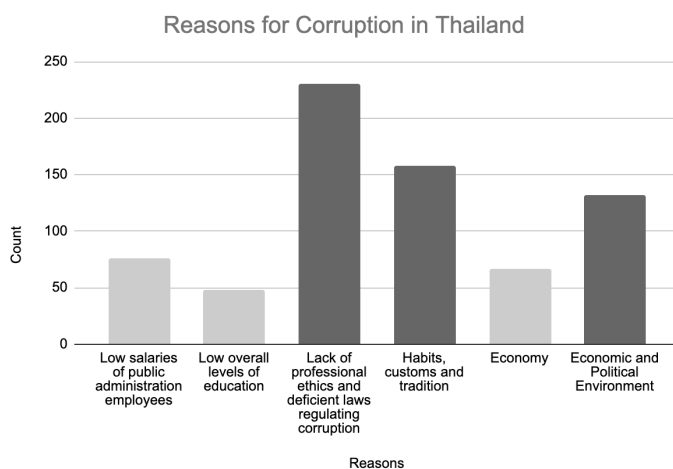
all age groups share the same attitudes. In particular, we find that the younger generation are more likely to perceive the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) as the most corrupt, while the older generation are more likely to perceive the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) as the most corrupt regime. Furthermore, within the same regime choice we find that a larger proportion of younger generations compared to older generations view the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) as the most corrupt. The opposite trend holds for the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime). What's fascinating about the trends is that it reflects the more conservative nature of the older generation who, in line with literature, are more likely to support the monarch and the military (Thai PBS World's Political Desk, 2022). Therefore, the question arises whether there are other reasons that describe this trend as well as why particular individuals would have different viewpoints than those within their age group?

Moreover, it is also important to acknowledge that the generational trend in viewing which regime is most corrupt is not perfect. Particularly, we find that the age groups of 25-29 and 30-39 have lower percentages than that of 18-24 for choosing the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) as most corrupt. However, the overall trend still suggests that the younger generation is less likely than the older generation to vote for the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) as the most corrupt. There are many reasons that could be the imperfect trend. This includes the fact that the 18-24 and 25-29 age group is the smaller age bracket compared to the other choices of 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60+. Therefore, if we were to combine the age bracket, the trend would hold perfectly. Furthermore, we find that the number of survey participants in the 25-29 age bracket is significantly less than that of the 18-24 and 30-39 bracket, which could

mean the results for the age bracket are more skewed and unreliable than those of other age brackets.

### ***Reasons for Corruption in Thailand***

**Figure 2, Response to Reasons for corruption in Thailand**

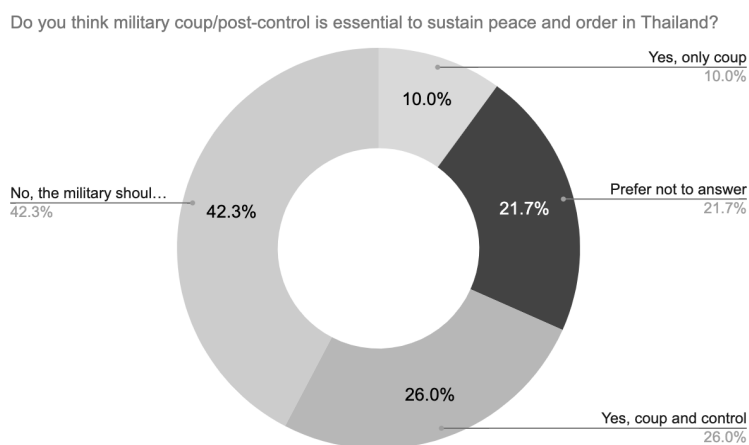


This graph shows responses describing the potential reasons for corruption in Thailand. The top three reasons are as follows: Lack of professional ethics and deficient laws regulating corruption, Habits, customs and tradition, and Economic and Political Environment. The count of the 300 survey participants choosing those options are as follows: 230, 158 and 132 respectively. It must be noted that while there are only 300 survey participants, each participant was allowed to choose more than one reason for corruption; the numbers reflect this fact. The reasons for why the choices above were chosen will be explained more fully in discussion of results in the in-depth interviews subsection. It must also be noted that other reasons stated for corruption include: being forced by supervisor to commit acts of corruption, fundamentals of one's

upbringing, lack of morals and good conscious, lack of belief in religion and as well as the education system that does not teach students to problem solve but find the easiest way.

***Is Military Coup and Control essential to sustain peace and order***

**Figure 3, Response to ‘Do you think military coup/post control is essential to sustain peace and order in Thailand?’**



In response to the question of whether or not the military coup and/or post control is essential to sustain peace and order in Thailand, 42.3% of people believe the military should not get involved at all, 26.0% believe the military should get involved in both coup and control, 10.0% believe the military should only get involved in coup, and 21.7% preferred not to answer. It is surprising that almost half of the respondents believe the military should not get involved in any capacity in order to sustain peace within Thailand. Yet, recent history shows that the military holds a coup, on average, once every seven years. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the

general sentiment and the actions undertaken by the military. Thus, the question arises: does public sentiment influence the military's decision to hold a coup?

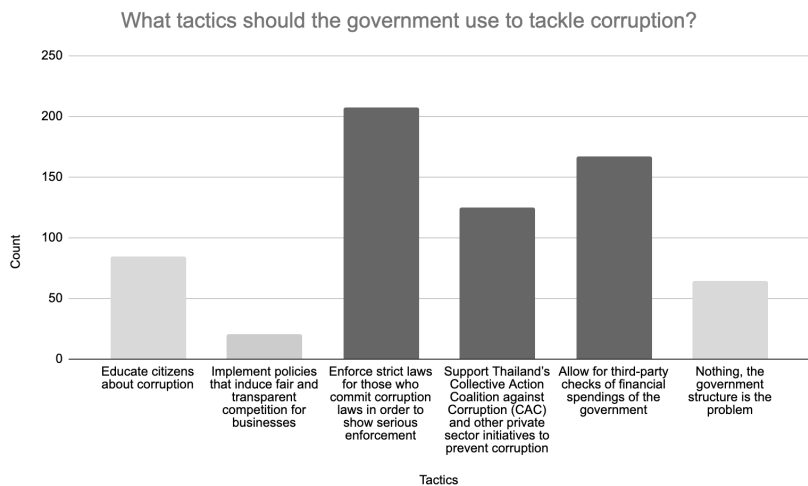
**Table 7, Proportion of each age group response to 'Do you think military coup/post control is essential to sustain peace and order in Thailand?'**

Age	No, the military should not get involved	Yes, coup only	Yes, coup and control	Prefer not to answer
18-24	51.02%	22.45%	18.37%	8.16%
25-29	54.84%	22.58%	12.90%	9.68%
30-39	49.02%	25.49%	19.61%	5.88%
40-49	32.14%	25.00%	30.36%	12.50%
50-59	42.86%	17.14%	30.00%	10.00%
60+	27.91%	18.60%	39.53%	13.95%

In terms of the proportion of each age group's response to 'Do you think military coup and/or post control is essential to sustain peace and order in Thailand?', there are a few key trends that must be noted. Firstly, we find that the younger generation is more likely than the older generation to believe that the military should not get involved. Similarly we find the opposite is true for those voting that there should be coup control. As such we find that the older generation are more likely than the younger generation to believe there should be coup and control. Following similar logic to the generational differences in choosing which regime is most corrupt, we find that this trend could also reflect the conservative nature of older generations who, as stated before, are more likely to support the monarch and the military (Thai PBS World's Political Desk, 2022) and thus by choice will support both coup and control.

## Policy Recommendations

**Figure 4, Response to ‘What tactics should the government use to tackle corruption?’**



This graph shows responses describing the potential tactics the government could use to tackle corruption in Thailand. The top three tactics are as follows: 1) enforce strict laws for those who commit corruption laws in order to show serious enforcement 2) allow for third-party checks of financial spendings of the government 3) support Thailand’s Collective Action Coalition against Corruption (CAC) and other private sector initiatives to prevent corruption. The respected count of the 300 survey participants choosing those options are as follows: 207, 167 and 125 respectively. As with the response to the reasons for corruption within Thailand, given that each participant was allowed to choose more than one reason for the tactics at which the government should use to tackle corruption, the numbers reflect that fact. What is interesting to note is the fact that very few people chose the option for the government to implement policies that induce fair and transparent competition for businesses. As such, this could imply that people believe the issue of corruption is more prevalent in the government system, which includes their

financial transparency and education program, and less prevalent within the private sector that involves businesses. Another possible explanation for this is that people believe the government will be more able to enforce policies in their own systems compared to the public sector.

However, the more specific policies the government should employ will be elaborated in the in-depth interview discussion of results subsection.

### ***Participants for In-depth Interviews***

In the survey responses, participants were asked to provide contact information if they were willing to participate in the in-depth interview. Below shows the demographic breakdown of survey participants that agreed to participate in the in-depth interview as well as the participants that actually participated in the in-depth interview. As noted previously, due to time constraints, only 17 out of the 40 participants that agreed and were able to participate in the in-depth interview.

**Table 8, Demographic Breakdown of Survey Participants that agree for In-Depth Interview**

Demographic Information	Participant Sample (n = 40)	
		Number of Respondents
Gender	Female	18
	Male	20
	Prefer not to answer	2
Age	18-24	8
	25-29	3
	30-39	6
	40-49	9
	50-59	10
	60+	4
Highest level of education	Masters degree or higher	18
	Bachelor's degree	16
	Technical training school	2
	Secondary school	4
	Primary school	0
Political Affiliation	Pheu Thai Party	9
	Future Forward Party / Anarkod Mai	8
	Democrat Party / Prachatipud	2
	Palang Pracharath Party	1
	Others	5
	Prefer not to answer	15

Overall 40 participants agreed to participate in the in-depth interview. As we see from Table 8, the survey is slightly more biased towards male participants, those aged 50-59, and those whose highest level of education is a master's degree. However, this would not be a concern for the interview as from the sample of willing participants, only a few selected participants will be chosen to ensure diversity and uniforming across genders, age, education level and political affiliation.

**Table 9, Demographic Breakdown of Survey Participants that participated in In-Depth Interview**

Demographic Information	Participant Sample (n = 17)	
		Number of Respondents
Gender	Female	7
	Male	9
	Prefer not to answer	1
Age	18-24	5
	25-29	3
	30-39	3
	40-49	2
	50-59	3
	60+	1
	Highest level of education	Bachelor's degree
Masters degree or higher		8
Primary school		0
Secondary school		1
Technical training school		1
Political Affiliation	Pheu Thai Party	6
	Future Forward Party / Anarkod Mai	1
	Democrat Party / Prachatipud	2
	Palang Pracharath Party	1
	Others	4
	Prefer not to answer	3

In terms of choosing survey participants for the in-depth interview, I focused on getting a diverse group of ages and political affiliation. The reason I am not too concerned about balancing the gender perfectly is because, as found in the survey analysis, there are no significant gender differences in perspective about corruption. With regards to the procedure of the interview, each individual was sent their previous responses via email or preferred form of communication, then guaranteed the anonymity of their responses and prompted to answer the questions in Appendix B. As corruption is a sensitive topic, each participant was given the opportunity to not answer questions they did not feel comfortable with. The questions asked could be segmented into 4 parts. First, each participant was asked for their perceived level of knowledge and involvement in politics. The purpose of this question is to understand whether individuals of different ages viewed their understanding of politics differently. Secondly, each participant was asked questions

about the trends that the survey may show. More specifically, they were asked how they believe different generations responded to which regime is most corrupt. Later, they were shown the actual trends from the survey and asked to elaborate on why they believe the trends show as such and how the results compare to their initial beliefs. Thirdly, each participant was asked to elaborate on their own rankings as well as the reasoning behind those choices. In particular, I asked the participants what variables they considered when choosing the ranking regarding corruption across the different governments as well as whether they had specific events in mind that caused them to feel one regime is more corrupt than another. Further, each participant was given the opportunity to elaborate on their policy recommendations on how the government could tackle corruption. While it is noted that not all interview participants covered the topic of whether the military should intervene for peace and control as well as of the reasons for corruption, I believe that focusing on their responses to which regime was most corrupt will best inform answers to the question posed in this thesis.

### ***In-Depth Interview Results***

The main purpose of the in-depth interview was to understand why different individuals choose rankings that are aligned or not aligned with the majority of their age group and to allow each individual to elaborate on their responses from the survey if they were comfortable doing so. While 40 participants agreed to participate in the in-depth interview, only 17 interviews were conducted due to time constraints. Furthermore, some participants did not feel comfortable sharing their opinions. This section will first go through the general findings from the in-depth interview and then delve into the specific findings from each age group.

### ***Overall Findings***

The results from the in-depth interview found the following:

- 1) Many individuals did not state their political affiliation because they were not registered or voted based on policy rather than party.

From the sample of 17 individuals, 11 were willing to state their political affiliation, 6 chose N/A and 1 chose not to state their political affiliation. The majority of the in-depth interview participants were willing to state their political affiliation if they had previously registered or shown strong support for a party. However, we found that the reason many chose not to state their political affiliation in the survey, either through stating “prefer not to answer” or “others”, was not due to omission of information but rather because they were younger individuals that had not registered and voted before. Similarly, some individuals did not state their political affiliation because they do not affiliate with a particular party, rather they affiliate with the policies that are presented by each party during the different elections. Furthermore, it is not surprising that some individuals affiliated with more than one party during the time period of study because, as seen in Figure 1, there was an increase in parties after the 2014 coup. Hence, a party which they supported in 2011 could be completely different from the parties they supported in the 2019 election.

- 2) All individuals indicated that age plays a large role in determining how people view the perceived levels of corruption among different regimes

All the participants view that the younger generation, in contrast to the older generation, will feel that the Post-Military Coup (Prayut Regime) is more corrupt than the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime). Some individuals indicated how the younger generation, though they have

less memory and experience with the political rhetoric of the country, have more access to quick news sources such as social media, which allows them to make quicker decisions and conclusions compared to the older generation. Nevertheless, it is also indicated that the older generation may less likely view the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) as most corrupt compared to the younger generation as they are more conservative in their upbringing.

- 3) Each individual had different justifications for why they indicated a particular regime was most corrupt. The reasons can be categorized in terms of personal experience, media coverage, events that occurred during a regime, the level of democracy and freedom within the country and the ability to check financial statements.

It must be noted that the most frequent reason for why an interview participant indicated a particular regime was most corrupt is attributed to media coverage. Specifically, there were a lot of mentions of Yingluck's rice buying scheme, where the regime was caught guilty as justifications for why the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) was most corrupt. On the other hand, the reasons for why the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) was most corrupt was explained through how they handled the COVID situation, specifically regarding vaccines distribution.

- 4) Each individual had different elaborations for policy recommendations to curbing corruption. These range from allowing for third-party checks of financial statements, educating the newer generation through the education system, to the fact that nothing can be done because of the current government structure and belief system in the country.

### ***Breakdown of the Findings by Age Group***

In order to better understand the results, I break down the discrepancies in findings within each age group. Particularly I focus on the reasons why individuals' perceived levels of corruption may or may not align with the majority trend of their age group and generation.

#### ***Younger Generation***

It is important to note that the younger generation derived their viewpoints primarily from the opinions of those around them, media outlets, and personal experience. As such, these opinions arose from sources that are by no means objective. Within these general forms of information sources, each interviewees had distinct and specific sources.

As stated earlier, all participants agree that the generational trend will show that the younger generation are more likely than the older generation to view the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) to be the most corrupt.

Those within the younger generation who have viewpoints that align with the majority of their generation gave several reasons explaining their position. First, there is a general consensus that the Post-Military Control after Election (Prayut Regime) lack accountability for their actions. As such, there is a general concern regarding the transparency of government spending, wherein the parliament failed in its function to pass meaningful decisions and policies but rather a formality that allows for corruption to easily occur.

*“While determining the level of corruption accurately is impossible, I feel corruption was higher during the Prayut regime due to the lack of checks and balances. This was most pronounced in the Post-Military Coup period as Parliament was essentially a rubber*

*stamping body. After elections in 2019, there are now opposition parties that help act as a balancing mechanism to Prayut's regime. But the constitution is still written in such a way that makes it very hard for opposition parties to get into power. After all, half of the upper house was nominated by the military junta, and so I think the Thai government in 2021 is still more corrupt than the Yingluck regime."*

Second, some interviewees discussed how the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) implemented structures in place that facilitated corruption. In particular, many mentioned the 2017 Constitution and its amendments as a cause for concern.

*"The Constitution, written by the junta, included policies that favored the junta for the upcoming election as well as the continuation of their power after the election. Specifically, the constitution ensured a strong military coalition government after the 2019 election, which involves more favor-trading than a single-party dominated government like with Yingluck's government."*

Third, many indicated their dissatisfaction with the Post-Military Control after Election (Prayut Regime)'s poor handling of the COVID situation. Particularly, many interviewees mentioned the Sinovac vaccine purchase and distribution as a cause for concern.

*"It still confuses me why the government would purchase such a large amount of Sinovac vaccines given that at the time of purchase there was no proof for its effectiveness. Furthermore, the distribution process involved a substantial amount of nepotism to the extent that we see poor people waiting in line for hours and days but do not receive the vaccine. On the other hand, rich people just call up their government friends to get them an early spot in the immunocompromised or old people group. This is just unfair."*

Further, most interviewees indicated that they believed the older generation are fixed in their viewpoints in that they do not recognize the misinformation that pervades the media nor are they willing to confront viewpoints that contradict with their own, regardless of the truthfulness of such viewpoints.

*“Indoctrination regarding the institution throughout the Thai education system has been very strong so any perceived attack of the institution can lead to not completely accurate accusations including corruption accusations and indoctrinated people would believe it as they don’t know any better. This explains why older generations’ views differ.”*

Those within the younger generation who acknowledged that they have opposite viewpoints to those of the general trend gave several reasons explaining their position. We ought to note that people who hold opposite viewpoints to the majority of their generation cannot be classified as conservative because their opinion on this matter is not representative of their standpoint on all matters. Yet, several literature note that the older generation hold a more conservative viewpoint with regards to politics. First, some interviewees recognized that they derived their opinions by talking to members of the older generation, such as their parents, and that these interactions influenced their opinions accordingly.

*“I mostly talk to my parents about this. They are older so that's why I think corruption is less than before. If I only talked to young people, I'm sure I would think differently.”*

Second, some interviewees recognized that they were more conservative than the people within their age group.

*“When thinking about my position, I believe I’m more conservative than most people in my age group. But I don’t feel that on a day-to-day basis because all the news sources*

*and people around me seem to agree. I also think people don't care enough to do their own research or fact-check and will just believe the prevailing consensus."*

Third, some interviewees believe that many people within their age group are easily-persuaded to adopt certain opinions by external factors.

*"I think a lot of people in my age group get peer pressured or echo-chambered into believing in stuff they don't understand. That's why the age group's opinion may be skewed to one side."*

Evidently, people who disagree with the main trend are aware that they hold a minority viewpoint relative to those of their generation. This awareness speaks to the fact that these individuals believe they are well informed to a certain extent despite knowing they are within the minority group. As one individual puts it "the older generation knows more of the truth than the younger generation these days."

### ***Older Generation***

It is important to note that the older generation derived their viewpoints primarily through word of mouth, media outlets, and personal experience. These opinions also arose from sources that are by no means objective. Within these general forms of information sources, each interviewees also had distinct and specific sources. However, compared to the younger generation their reasoning for aligning with or not aligning with the generational trend are more homogeneous.

As stated earlier, all participants agree that the generational trend will show that the older generation are more likely than the younger generation to view the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) to be the most corrupt.

There are several reasons as to why the older generation hold such a viewpoint. First, a significant portion of the older generation support the monarchy and think that the monarchy does not prefer Yingluck's government, whereas most of the younger generations support democracy and are against Prayut, who once tagged a coup to come into power. While none of the interviewees explicitly said that they are anti-democratic, the reasoning above is implied from the interviews conducted, especially with those of the older generation whose views did not align with the generational trend. Furthermore, there is tension between some members of the older and younger generation insofar as the former believes the latter is inexperienced and uninformed, while the latter believes the former lags behind the times and lacks the skills to effectively process the information overload in this age of technology.

*“I think the older generation have lived through many more political regimes to understand what is good and what is bad. The younger generation have only recently been involved in politics and so do not have a good baseline to understand what is happening. They just act radically to make a point instead of being fully informed about what is happening. Look at all the protests and chaos that occurred during COVID, it shows the lack of maturity.”*

Furthermore, one of the main justifications for holding such beliefs comes from the news on corruption in which they consume. Considering that the coverage for corruption news during the Yingluck regime was more extensive and severe, particularly many interviewees referred to

Yingluck's rice buying scheme scandal. The military control, on the other hand, faced some corruption claims but many do not believe it is of the same proportion. These include Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan's borrowed luxury watch case.

What's surprising is that most interviewees of the older generation did not provide much evidence to back their claims. Their justification primarily comes down to the belief that they know the truth. Therefore, we ought to state the results as is rather than looking at them in terms of their validity.

At the same time, there are also members of the older generation who hold the same viewpoints as the main trend of the younger generation. These interviewees believe that the younger generation, given that they grew up with technology, are more apt in processing information in a way that allows them to adapt to the fast-changing world.

*“Kids these days have so much more access to technology compared to when I was younger. In the olden days we would have to rely on newspapers and word of mouth to gain knowledge. But nowadays information moves so quickly that people, especially the younger generation have more resources to be informed. What's also important to note is that the younger generation are not only more informed but also more willing to take actions against the government than in previous generations.”*

Some interviewees have quoted that they have had experience within the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) in the form of being a part of the government, so they understand the actual statistics for corruption within each regime. In particular, those with political experience in the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) talk about the fact that the Prayut regimes, both during

the Post-Military Coup and Control after Election, have abused their power to influence the Constitution in a way that facilitates their pursuit of corruption.

*“While there exist some checks and balances by independent organizations, I believe that the Prayut regime after the election had the most corruption since these independent organizations do not perform their functions properly. Most members were appointed with the support of Prayut, whereas the Yingluck regime is the least corrupt because Yingluck’s administration faced the heaviest scrutiny from opposition parties, the courts, and independent organizations.”*

Lastly, similar to the older generation whose views were aligned with the majority of their age group, those within the older generation whose views did not align with the majority of their generation believe they have the correct facts and justifications for their opinions.

*“I knew what was going on and got reliable information about corruption during the three periods.”*

### **Policy Recommendations**

In my survey, I included the question “What tactic should the government use to tackle corruption” to best understand and formulate my policy recommendation. The results from the survey indicated that the most important policy recommendations identified by the survey participants were 1) to enforce strict laws for those who commit corruption crimes in order to show serious enforcement and 2) to allow for third-party checks of financial spendings of the government.

Firstly, it could be said that corruption is more prevalent in a society that allows corruption. In particular, it is noted there are so many cases of corruption in Thailand each day, whether this is paying officers off when you drink and drive or evading taxes on a yearly basis by not submitting their income. The reason many do this is because they believe they can easily get away with the allegations and that there is more upside than downside. Therefore, a policy recommendation to help alleviate corruption in smaller scale situations would be the creation of an Electronic Government (E-GOV) program. Specifically, this program should encourage government officials and citizens to use a centralized resource for general processes, such as paying for fines or obtaining a driver's license. This would increase the barrier to corruption for lower level government officials and possibly reduce the amount of day-to-day corruption. However, one critique of the recommendation would be the accessibility of such a system. Given that Thailand is a developing country, and many individuals do not have internet access or even phones, there would need to be other measures implemented prior to the execution of the E-Government program.

Secondly, in terms of allowing third-party checks of financial spendings of the government, I have reason to believe from the interviews that citizens want the government to be more transparent with spending, so they are better able to understand the destination of taxpayer money. Given the current structure, there is no easily accessible source of financial statements and checks available to citizens, so many do not know whether their taxpayer money is used to fund weapons or education. Furthermore, records of financial spendings could disincentivize people from unjustly lining their own pockets, which would form a culture of more trust between citizens and the government. Therefore, I recommend that the government allows for many independent auditors to view their financial statements as well as publishes a detailed spending report of their purchases and criteria for major expenditures for the year.

While the first and second recommendation tackle the issue of corruption within Thailand following the perspectives of the survey participants, it is important to understand the current efforts for dealing with corruption in Thailand. In particular, the National Counter Corruption Commission is an independent organization formed under the Constitution to act as police for corruption within the country. One of the methods utilized by the National Counter Corruption Commission is to check financial spendings of major politicians to uncover any discrepancies. While the organization should help control and reduce political corruption, the neutrality of the organization has been compromised by the new Constitution. The current members appointed to the National Counter Corruption Commission must be approved by the Senate, which under the Constitution were chosen by the National Council for Peace and Order or, in other words, Prayut's military junta. Hence, we can see that there is a conflict of interest as the Senate will only appoint members who they have a previous relationship with, which defeats the purpose of

the organization to stay neutral and control corruption. It is also critical to understand that other independent auditors in the country are also facing the same issue of bias. Therefore, one critical policy recommendation is to restore the neutrality and impartiality of independent auditors in Thailand by changing the Constitution and not allowing any government related officials to influence the members of these organizations.

Thirdly, the government should embed anti-corruption sentiment into the curriculum. This could be in the form of showing how corruption affects people individually, such as showing how much money each citizen has lost due to corruption. Many people view corrupt practices such as bribery as an acceptable common practice, so the first step is to eradicate these beliefs through instilling the right values in children. While it is noted that educating citizens about corruption is not one of the top three recommendations chosen by the survey participants, I believe that working on incorporating anti-corruption sentiment into the curriculum is feasible and could yield large benefits for the generations to come.

Furthermore, from the survey we find that 64.3% of survey participants do not believe the military should get involved in order to sustain peace and control of the country. 28.6% believe that there should be military intervention in forms of coup and control and 7.1% believe that there should be coups but no military control post coup. As such, another policy recommendation I propose for dealing with political instability and conflict is to draft measures to deal with unpredictable circumstances. First, there should be a means of conflict resolution that does not involve violence in the forms of water guns or even rubber bullets. There could be a council that could serve as a third party mediator between the protestors and the government entity in times of conflict so a peaceful solution could be formed. Moreover, if it is difficult to prevent military

intervention due to the quick escalation of events and if there must be a coup, there needs to be a clear expectation for how many days after the coup must there be elections so a new democratically elected government could be formed.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I explored the impact of military coup and control on perceived levels of corruption from 2011 to 2021 using a concurrent mixed methods approach. For my quantitative analysis, I ran regressions for military coup and military control on perceived levels of corruption, holding constant previous year's index, military expenditure and GDP growth. Though the CPI and the WGI models showed contradictory results, by focusing on the WGI model, I found that both military coup and control led to increased levels of perceived corruption. For my qualitative analysis, I sent out a survey to Thai nationals inquiring on the perceived levels of corruption and received 300 responses. From the survey, I found that the younger generation are more likely to view the Post-Military Control after Elections (Prayut Regime) after the election as most corrupt, while the older generations tend to view the Pre-Military Coup (Yingluck Regime) as most corrupt. Further, I also conducted 17 in-depth interviews with selected participants from the survey. Overall, I found that the reasons members of the younger generation agree with the general consensus for their generation are because they believe the Prayut government lacks accountability, implemented structures that facilitated corruption and handled the COVID outbreak poorly. Those of the younger generation that did not agree with the general consensus credited their lack of political awareness and the bias to lean toward their parents' viewpoints. I also found that the reason members of the older generation agree with the general consensus for their generation is because they support the monarchy. Given that there is a sentiment that the monarchy supports Prayut's regime, these members of the older generation also support Prayut's regime.

Four main policy recommendations were presented in this paper, three of which address the levels of corruption and one of which address military control. The policy recommendations to address corruption include forming an Electronic Government program in order to centralize the existing bureaucracies and prevent smaller scale corruption, allow for third party checks of financial spendings in order to encourage greater transparency which in turn will rebuild trust between the government and citizens, and embedding anti-corruption sentiment into the curriculum by including lessons on ethical, moral and practical challenges students may face in the future. While other policy recommendations were considered such as promoting more anti-corruption campaigns to raise awareness as well as educating public officials to reject bribery, these are more short-term solutions that do not solve the root of the problem. As revealed in some of the survey responses, people believe that the primary reason for corruption in Thailand is due to existing habits and customs surrounding corruption. A policy recommended in terms of limiting military control, was to draft measures to deal with unpredictable circumstances so the military can best approach future conflict in the country.

While this paper extends existing literature in two ways which include providing a qualitative analysis on the impact of military coups on perceived levels of corruption as well as providing qualitative and quantitative analysis on the impact of military control on perceived levels of corruption, a lot of future studies can be conducted on the topic. In particular, it is noted that previous research has acknowledged that the 2006 and 2014 coups affect the levels of perceived corruption in opposite directions. Therefore, one avenue of future research would be conducting qualitative analysis to understand the differences in sentiment regarding the two

coups. Other research could be conducted on the feasibility of the policy recommendations suggested in the paper whether this is through a pilot study or case studies with other countries.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A, Univariate Results

**Table 10, Univariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using CPI raw dataset**

Univariate CPI		
	Dependent variable:	
	CPI	
	(1)	(2)
`Is Military Coup`	0.266 (0.165)	
`Military Control`		0.241*** (0.082)
Constant	3.434*** (0.047)	3.359*** (0.052)
Observations	25	25
R <sup>2</sup>	0.101	0.271
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.062	0.239
Residual Std. Error (df = 23)	0.224	0.202
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

$$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military coup and the CPI raw data is 0.266. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the CPI increases by 0.266 data points, meaning there is decreased perceived corruption within the country. However, the results are not statistically significant.

$$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military control and the CPI raw data is 0.241. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the CPI increases by 0.241 data points,

meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. The results are significant with a p-value smaller than 0.01.

**Table 11, Univariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using WGI raw dataset**

<b>Univariate WGI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	WGI	
	(1)	(2)
`Is Military Coup`	-0.107 (0.082)	
`Military Control`		-0.157*** (0.034)
Constant	-0.308*** (0.023)	-0.254*** (0.021)
Observations	25	25
R <sup>2</sup>	0.068	0.482
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.028	0.460
Residual Std. Error (df = 23)	0.111	0.083

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

$$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military coup and the raw WGI values is -0.107. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the WGI decreases by 0.107 data points, meaning there is increased perceived corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant and contradicts our CPI raw univariate model that finds that military coup is positively correlated CPI.

$$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military control and the WGI raw data is -0.157. That is, in a year that there is a military control, on average, the WGI decreases by 0.157 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The results are significant with a p-value smaller than 0.01 but contradicts our CPI raw univariate model that finds that military control is positively correlated CPI.

**Table 12, Univariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using CPI rank dataset**

<b>Univariate CPI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	CPI_rank_adjusted	
	(1)	(2)
`Is Military Coup`	11.926 (7.587)	
`Military Control`		7.109 (4.166)
Constant	44.463*** (2.146)	42.573*** (2.635)
Observations	25	25
R <sup>2</sup>	0.097	0.112
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.058	0.074
Residual Std. Error (df = 23)	10.292	10.204
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

$$CPI_{rank\ adjusted} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is\ Military\ Coup' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military coup and the CPI percentile rank is 11.926. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the CPI percentile rank increases by 11.926 positions, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

$$CPI_{rank\ adjusted} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Control' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military control and the CPI percentile rank is 7.109. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, the CPI percentile rank increased by 7.109 positions, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

**Table 13, Univariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using WGI rank dataset**

<b>Univariate WGI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	WGI_rank	
	(1)	(2)
`Is Military Coup`	-6.221 (3.812)	
`Military Control`		-8.754*** (1.280)
Constant	45.936*** (1.078)	48.940*** (0.810)
Observations	25	25
R <sup>2</sup>	0.104	0.670
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.065	0.656
Residual Std. Error (df = 23)	5.170	3.136
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

$$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is\ Military\ Coup' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military coup and the WGI percentile rank is -6.221. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the WGI percentile rank decreases by 6.221 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country.

However, the results are not significant and contradicts our CPI rank univariate model that finds military coup is positively correlated CPI percentile rank.

$$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that the beta between military coup and the WGI percentile rank is -8.754. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, the WGI percentile rank decreases by 8.754 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The results are significant with a p-value smaller than 0.01 and contradicts our CPI rank univariate model that finds military control is positively correlated CPI percentile rank. While the results are significant, this is only a univariate regression, so the actual relationship may be weaker when considering other confounding variables. Similar to the raw univariate regression we find that there are contradictions between the impact of military coup and control on CPI and WGI's control for corruption. Thus, a multivariate regression will be run to better understand whether there is truly a correlation.

## Appendix B, Multivariate Results

**Table 14, Multivariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using CPI raw dataset**

<b>Multivariate CPI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	CPI	
	(1)	(2)
Previous Year CPI	0.406* (0.209)	0.468** (0.219)
Thailand_Mil_Expend	0.0001 (0.00003)	0.00003 (0.00004)
GDP_Growth	0.021** (0.010)	0.019* (0.010)
`Is Military Coup`	0.190 (0.134)	
`Military Control`		0.061 (0.098)
Constant	1.700** (0.602)	1.603** (0.673)
Observations	24	24
R <sup>2</sup>	0.588	0.554
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.501	0.460
Residual Std. Error (df = 19)	0.166	0.172

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

$$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Coup' + \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ CPI' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP\ Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year CPI, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military coup and the CPI is 0.190. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, CPI increases by 0.190 data points, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

$$CPI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \beta_2 'Previous Year CPI' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year CPI, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military control and the CPI is 0.061. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, CPI increases by 0.061 data points, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

**Table 15, Multivariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using WGI raw dataset**

<b>Multivariate WGI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	WGI	
	(1)	(2)
Previous Year WGI	0.311 (0.209)	0.164 (0.218)
Thailand_Mil_Expend	-0.00005*** (0.00002)	-0.00004* (0.00002)
GDP_Growth	-0.009** (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)
`Is Military Coup`	-0.143*** (0.048)	
`Military Control`		-0.089** (0.035)
Constant	0.074 (0.057)	-0.017 (0.064)
Observations	24	24
R <sup>2</sup>	0.746	0.724
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.693	0.666
Residual Std. Error (df = 19)	0.064	0.067

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

$$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year WGI, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military coup and the WGI is -0.143. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, WGI decreases by 0.143 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The results, although contradicting the multivariate CPI model, are significant with a p-value smaller than 0.01.

$$WGI_{raw} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year WGI, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military control and the WGI is -0.089. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, WGI decreases by 0.089 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The result is significant with a p-value smaller than 0.05 and contradicts our CPI multivariate model that finds military control is positively correlated with CPI percentile rank.

**Table 16, Multivariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using CPI rank dataset**

<b>Multivariate CPI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	CPI_rank_adjusted	
	(1)	(2)
Previous Year CPI Rank	0.291 (0.185)	0.325* (0.181)
Thailand_Mil_Expend	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)
GDP_Growth	0.723 (0.589)	0.592 (0.587)
`Is Military Coup`	9.041 (6.974)	
`Military Control`		5.816 (4.744)
Constant	28.720*** (8.392)	34.074*** (9.246)
Observations	24	24
R <sup>2</sup>	0.369	0.363
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.236	0.229
Residual Std. Error (df = 19)	9.108	9.147
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

$$CPI_{rank\ adjusted} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is\ Military\ Coup' + \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ CPI\ Rank' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP\ Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year CPI percentile rank, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military coup and the CPI percentile rank is 9.041. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the CPI percentile rank increases by 9.041 data points, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

$$CPI_{rank\ adjusted} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military\ Control' + \beta_2 'Previous\ Year\ CPI\ Rank' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand\ Military\ Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP\ Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year CPI percentile rank, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military control and the CPI percentile rank is 5.816. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, the CPI percentile rank increases by 5.816 data points, meaning there is decreased corruption within the country. However, the results are not significant.

**Table 17, Multivariate Regression, How does Military Coup and Control affect Perceived Levels of Corruption using WGI rank dataset**

<b>Multivariate WGI</b>		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	WGI_rank	
	(1)	(2)
Previous Year WGI Rank	0.385*	-0.067
	(0.220)	(0.201)
Thailand_Mil_Expend	-0.002**	-0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
GDP_Growth	-0.304*	-0.127
	(0.172)	(0.158)
`Is Military Coup`	-8.396***	
	(2.260)	
`Military Control`		-6.552***
		(1.436)
Constant	40.001***	60.892***
	(13.352)	(12.039)
Observations	24	24
R <sup>2</sup>	0.758	0.801
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.707	0.759
Residual Std. Error (df = 19)	2.956	2.683

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

$$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Is Military Coup' + \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI Rank' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year WGI rank, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military coup and the WGI percentile rank is -8.396. That is, in a year that there is a military coup, on average, the CPI percentile rank decreases by 8.396 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The results are significant with a p-value < 0.01 and contradicts our CPI multivariate model that finds military coup is positively correlated with CPI percentile rank.

$$WGI_{rank} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 'Military Control' + \beta_2 'Previous Year WGI Rank' + \dots$$

$$\dots + \beta_3 'Thailand Military Expenditure' + \beta_4 'GDP Growth' + \varepsilon_i$$

From the results we find that, holding previous year WGI rank, military expenditure and GDP growth constant, the beta for the correlation between military control and the WGI percentile rank is -6.552. That is, in a year that the military is in control, on average, the CPI percentile rank decreases by 6.522 data points, meaning there is increased corruption within the country. The results are significant with a p-value smaller than 0.01 and similar to the independent variable whether there is a military coup, contracts our CPI multivariate model that finds that military control is positively correlated with CPI percentile rank.

## Appendix C, *Survey Questions*

- General Demographic information:
  - Age
    - 18-24
    - 25-29
    - 30-39
    - 40-49
    - 50-59
    - 60+
  - Gender
    - Male
    - Female
    - Would not like to specify
  - Highest level of education
    - No education
    - Primary school
    - Secondary school
    - Technical training school
    - Bachelor's degree
    - Masters degree or higher
  - Education locations (Can tick multiple)
    - Thai School

- International School
  - Study abroad
- Occupation
  - Short answer text
- Political party affiliation
  - Palang Pracharath Party
  - Pheu Thai Party
  - Democrat Party/ Prachatipud
  - Future Forward Party / Move Forward Party/ Anarkod Mai / Kao Klai Party
  - Others
  - Prefer not to answer
- Corruption specific questions
  - Perceived levels of corruption
    - Rank the three-time periods from most corruption to least corruption
      - Pre-Military Control (Yingluck Regime)
      - Post-Military Control 2014 (Prayut Regime)
      - Post-Military Control 2019 onwards (Prayut Regime post-election)
    - If you wish to provide further information about your response above, please do so here
    - Reasons for corruption within Thailand
      - Low salaries of public administration employees

- Low overall levels of education
- Lack of professional ethics and deficient laws regulating corruption
- Habits, customs and tradition
- Economy
- Economic and Political Environment
- Others
- Do you think military coup/post control is essential to sustain peace and order in Thailand?
  - Yes, only coup
  - Yes, coup and control
  - No, the military should not get involved
  - Prefer not to answer
- Policy recommendation questions
  - What tactic should the government use to tackle corruption:
    - Educate the citizens about corruption
    - Implement policies that induce fair and transparent competition for businesses
    - Enforce strict laws for those who commit corruption laws in order to show serious enforcement
    - Support Thailand's Collective Action Coalition against Corruption (CAC) and other private sector initiatives to prevent corruption

- Allow for third-party checks of financial spendings of the government
  - Nothing, the government is the problem
  - Others
- Are you willing to participate in a 30-minute interview for my thesis? If yes, please leave your name and email below. If you do not fill this question out, your identity will remain completely anonymous, and your participation in my study ends here. Thank you!

**Appendix D, *In-Depth Interview Guiding Questions***

- For those that stated others, if you feel comfortable what is your political affiliation?
- How much knowledge do you have about Thai politics? How active have you been in politics (this could include voting, joining protests, voicing opinions, etc)
- What do you believe the trends from the survey will show in terms of how different generations view which regime is most corrupt?
- Given the trends show that younger generations are more likely than older generations to view the Prayut Regime after the election (2019 onwards) as most corrupt compared to older generations that tend to view Yingluck Regime (Pre Military Coup 2014) as most corrupt, do you have any opinions on why this might be the case. How does this compare/contrast to your initial beliefs?
- Could you elaborate further on your response regarding corruption across the different governments from the image below - why did you pick the choices you did?

- What variables did you consider when choosing the ranking regarding corruption across the different governments? Are there specific events that caused you to feel a regime is more corrupted compared to another?
- You chose answers that aligned with/not with the majority of the people in your age group. Could you explain why?
- Could you elaborate on the tactics you choose for the government to tackle corruption? For instance, for those that choose “Educate Citizens” responses could include adding more emphasis in the curriculum for primary and secondary school students to learn about the harms of corruption or having more programs or billboards to educate adults about the harm of corruption.