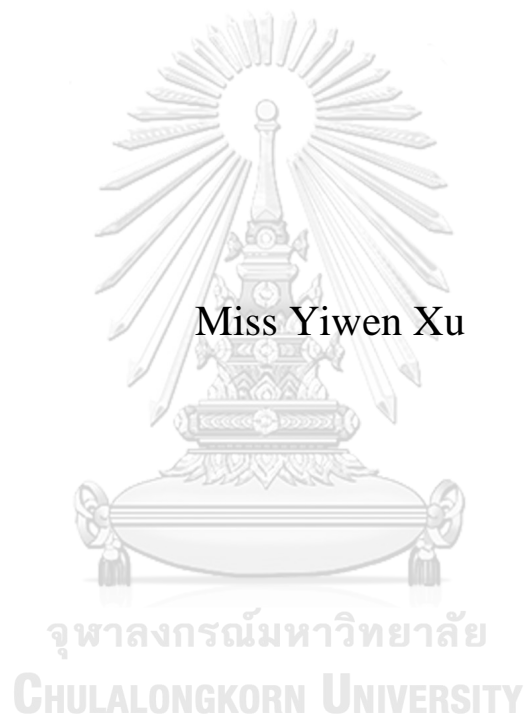


The National Identity Representation in Bangkok's Museums



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Communication Arts) in Strategic
Communication Management
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การแสดงออกทางอัตลักษณ์ของชาติผ่านพิธีภัณฑ์ในกรุงเทพฯ



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ยี่เหวิน ชื่อ : การแสดงออกทางอัตลักษณ์ของชาติผ่านพิพิธภัณฑ์ในกรุงเทพฯ. (The National Identity Representation in Bangkok's Museums) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ดร.เซอร์ ซอล ฮ่อง

วัตถุประสงค์หลักของการวิจัยในครั้งนี้ คือ เพื่อสำรวจว่ามีการแสดงออกทางอัตลักษณ์ของชาติผ่านพิพิธภัณฑ์ในกรุงเทพฯ อย่างไร ดังนั้นจึงมีการคัดเลือกพิพิธภัณฑ์สามแห่งในกรุงเทพฯ ซึ่งได้แก่ พิพิธภัณฑ์สถานแห่งชาติ พระนคร มิวเซียมสยาม และหอศิลป์วัฒนธรรมแห่งกรุงเทพมหานครเพื่อนำมาเป็นหัวข้อในการวิจัย ด้วยวิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้วิจัยได้ตรวจสอบวัตถุประสงค์ที่กล่าวถึงข้างต้นโดยมีส่วนร่วมกับผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักจากพิพิธภัณฑ์ และนักวิชาการต่าง ๆ จากสาขาการจัดการด้านการสื่อสารในพิพิธภัณฑ์ ใช้การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลัก 5 คน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า พิพิธภัณฑ์ที่ได้รับการคัดเลือกทั้ง 3 แห่งได้จัดเตรียมนิทรรศการอย่างเหมาะสมตามลักษณะของแต่ละพิพิธภัณฑ์โดยใช้แนวทางด้านการสื่อสารนิทรรศการที่แตกต่างกัน วิธีการเหล่านี้สอดคล้องกับภารกิจ และวิสัยทัศน์เฉพาะด้าน กล่าวได้โดยสรุปว่า พิพิธภัณฑ์เหล่านี้ประสบความสำเร็จอย่างมากในด้านการสื่อสารนิทรรศการ และอัตลักษณ์ของชาติในประเทศไทยให้กับผู้เข้าชมในมุมมองที่แตกต่างกัน ในขณะเดียวกัน การวิจัยนำเสนออัตลักษณ์ของชาติ และเอกลักษณ์ที่สามารถนำเสนอในรูปแบบนิทรรศการที่แตกต่างกัน และอัตลักษณ์ของชาติในประเทศไทยมีการตีความ และมีความสอดคล้องกันหลายชั้น นอกจากนี้ การวิจัยยังได้สำรวจว่าพิพิธภัณฑ์สามารถให้บริการผลประโยชน์ทางสังคมโดยการแสดงอัตลักษณ์ของชาติในประเทศไทยเพื่อดึงดูดผู้เข้าชมกลุ่มต่าง ๆ สุดท้าย การวิจัยพบว่าข้อดี และข้อเสียของแนวทางสื่อสารนิทรรศการของแต่ละพิพิธภัณฑ์ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่มาจากสภาพภายในที่ถูกกำหนดไว้ตายตัว อย่างไรก็ตาม แต่ละพิพิธภัณฑ์ยังจะต้องพิจารณาถึงปัจจัยภายนอกทางสังคม และวัฒนธรรมหากจัดนิทรรศการในอนาคต

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Advisor: Dr. SER SHAW HONG

The main objective of this research was to explore how national identity is represented in different museums in Bangkok. Therefore, three museums in Bangkok were selected as the research subjects: Bangkok National Museum, Museum Siam, and Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. Through a qualitative research approach, the researcher investigated the above-mentioned objective by engaging with key informants from museums and scholars from the field of museum communication management. Semi-structured interviews were utilized with five key informants. The research findings illustrated that the three selected museums had arranged the exhibitions appropriately according to their nature by utilizing different exhibition communication approaches. These approaches are in line with their specific missions and visions. In brief, these museums have succeeded to a significant extent in communicating the exhibition messages and Thailand's national identity to visitors from different perspectives. Meanwhile, the research presents national identity and uniqueness that can be showcased in different exhibition approaches, and Thailand's national identity has lots of layers of interpretation and relations. Moreover, the research explored that museums can serve social interests by showcasing Thailand's national identity to attract different groups of visitors. Finally, the research found that the advantages and disadvantages of each museum's exhibition communication approaches mainly originated from their internal fixed conditions. However, they also need to consider the external social and cultural factors when hosting exhibitions in the future.

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Field of Study:	Strategic Communication Management	Student's Signature
Academic Year:	2021	Advisor's Signature

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With the completion of this paper, my one-and-a-half-year postgraduate career at Chulalongkorn University will come to an end. I would like to thank Chulalongkorn University for the growth she has brought me. I would like to thank the professors for their hard work and teaching. Thank you to my dear friends for bringing me joy and help, I will miss living and studying with you.

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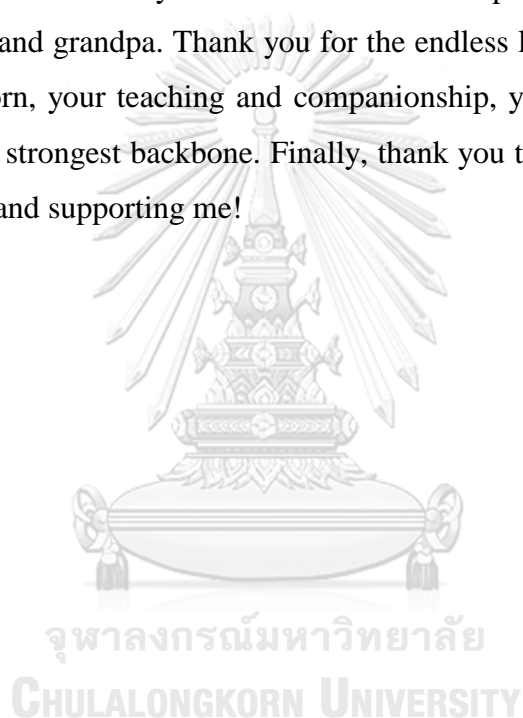


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significances of the Study

Generally, a museum is a building or institution that houses and collects cultural relics. The museum collects and conserves objects of scientific, artistic, or historical importance and exhibits them so that the public can view and understand these objects (Alexander & Alexander, 2007). Today, most museums, especially those funded by governmental bodies, are non-profit in nature. They are permanent institutions open to the public that collect, protect, investigate, convey, and show humanity's tangible and intangible heritage and its environment for education, study, and enjoyment (Catherine & Hauglustaine, 2016).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), museums worldwide have expanded from 22,000 in 1975 to over 95,000 presently (UNESCO, 2021; Statista, 2021). Museums as such have many roles and functions to be fulfilled. Subsequently, museums nowadays occupy a place in contemporary public life due to their exclusive political, cultural, and economic significance and display function. For instance, in 2019, the Louvre once again earned the title of most popular museum in the world with a total number of 9.6 million visitors, followed by the National Museum of China and the Vatican Museum with 7.4 million and 6.9 million visitors, respectively (Sharpe & Silva, 2020). These museums are all entities that make significant contributions to various aspects of the nation's development.

At present, the development of the museum industry has also received extensive support worldwide. The International Council of Museums (ICOM), established in 1946, has been committed to researching, protecting, and disseminating the world's natural and cultural heritage to society. ICOM is now operating 32 international committees, involving and carrying out a series of professional museum research, such as audio-visual and new technologies, social media, cities of museums, Etc. (ICOM, 2021)

Generally speaking, as a cultural institution and a tool of cultural dissemination, museums play a significant and positive role in society and cultural development. Among these roles, the view that museums as a whole play a highly educational role in society has been widely recognized by academia (Hein, 2010; Krommyda & Olga, 2013; Adela & Izabela, 2012). In addition, museums also have social benefits in areas such as improving public mental and social well-being (Kelly, 2006). Many museological studies have shown that museums can cultivate public awareness, reduce social isolation, and improve understanding of different lifestyles and cultures through a shared history and sense of belonging, thereby enhancing public awareness and understanding of community identity (Günay, 2012; Adela & Izabela, 2012)

In addition, many related studies have shown that museums have made essential contributions to the shaping and development of national identity (Mclean, 2007; Scorrano, 2012; Żychlińska & Fontana, 2015).

National identity means a set of cognitions and emotions that express the relationship between an individual and a nation (Barrett, 2005; Barrett & Davis, 2008). The most commonly studied national identity components include identification with the nation, attitudes toward the nation, and national stereotypes. National identity as a social construct will change due to changes in psychosocial circumstances. Some factors can affect the national identity, such as education, economics, parents, and peers. Moreover, social identity, group identity, and national identity are often closely related (Tartakovsky, 2010).

In summary, museums are able to exhibit the culture, history, and feelings of a nation and have a positive effect on the development of its society and culture. While the national identity of a nation is often determined by the nation's social environment, internal cultural exchanges, and historical inheritance. Therefore, the museum is undoubtedly able to show the national identity of a nation and play a positive role in its development.

Every city, country, and nation has its museums, and the reason behind that is that the museum is a platform for national and cultural communication and representation. As the capital of Thailand, Bangkok has 255 museums, showing the history and culture of Bangkok and Thailand as a whole (Incherdchai, 2016; Museums in Thailand, 2021).

Over the years, Bangkok museums have made outstanding contributions to promoting and constructing Thai culture (PELEGGI, 2013; SER, 2019).

Thai culture is unique globally, and the continuous absorption and integration of foreign and traditional Thai cultures together form today's Thai culture (Klinchan, 2017). In recent years, Thai officials have vigorously developed and promoted Thai culture. Related measures include encouraging the public to understand the value and meaning of culture, reviving public interest in art and culture, building Thai values, Thai awareness, and Thai local wisdom (Ministry of Culture, 2017).

The museums are significant, and museums have contributed to the development of politics and culture. There are many studies on museum communication regarding national identity in the West (Watson, 2006; Scorrano, 2012; Żychlińska & Fontana, 2015). In Thailand, some research on museums is more focused on tourism and cultural heritage (Thongprasert, 2020; Ayudhya, 2021; Duantrakoonsil et al., 2019).

However, the research on Bangkok's museum communication and Thailand's national identity is relatively less. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how different museums in Bangkok narrate Thai history and culture, how to display Thailand's national identity, and why they use these communication strategies.

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To understand how national identity is represented in museums in Bangkok.
 - a) To discover what types of exhibition communication are utilized by the selected museums in Bangkok to narrate the history and culture of Thailand that showcase the national identity.
 - b) To identify various exhibition communications employed by the Bangkok museums to showcase the national identity.
 - c) To discuss the advantages and disadvantages of those exhibition communications.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) How is national identity represented in museums in Bangkok?
 - a) What exhibition communication do the selected museums in Bangkok use to narrate the history and culture of Thailand that represent the nation's national identity?
 - b) Why do they use those exhibition communications for the narration of national identity?
 - c) What are the advantages and disadvantages of these exhibition communications?

1.4 Methodology of the Study

This study used qualitative approaches, with a Semi-structured Interview method with 3 directors of the governmental museums and 2 scholars engaged in museum studies.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study selected 3 governmental museums as the research subject, namely Bangkok National Museum, Museum Siam, and Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC). In addition, 2 scholars engaged in museum research were invited to conduct interviews.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

There are some limitations in this research. Because there were only four months of research time and the inconvenience of the Covid period, there were only three museums for the subject of this study. Of the three scholars originally planned, only two eventually accepted the invitation to interview.

1.7 Operational Definitions of the Key Concepts

Museum

ICOM (2007) defined the museum as “A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”

The evolution of Thai museums has roughly gone through two stages. They are traditional museums and new generation museums under the development of the cultural economy.

Museum communication and Exhibition communication

Communication can be defined as the transmission and exchange of information (Nielsen, 2017).

Museum communication is the articulation of understanding (Nielsen, 2017).

Exhibition regards a showing or display of materials to communicate with an audience (Alexander et al., 2017).

The exhibition is the instrument of communication that is unique to the museum (Ahmad et al., 2014).

National identity

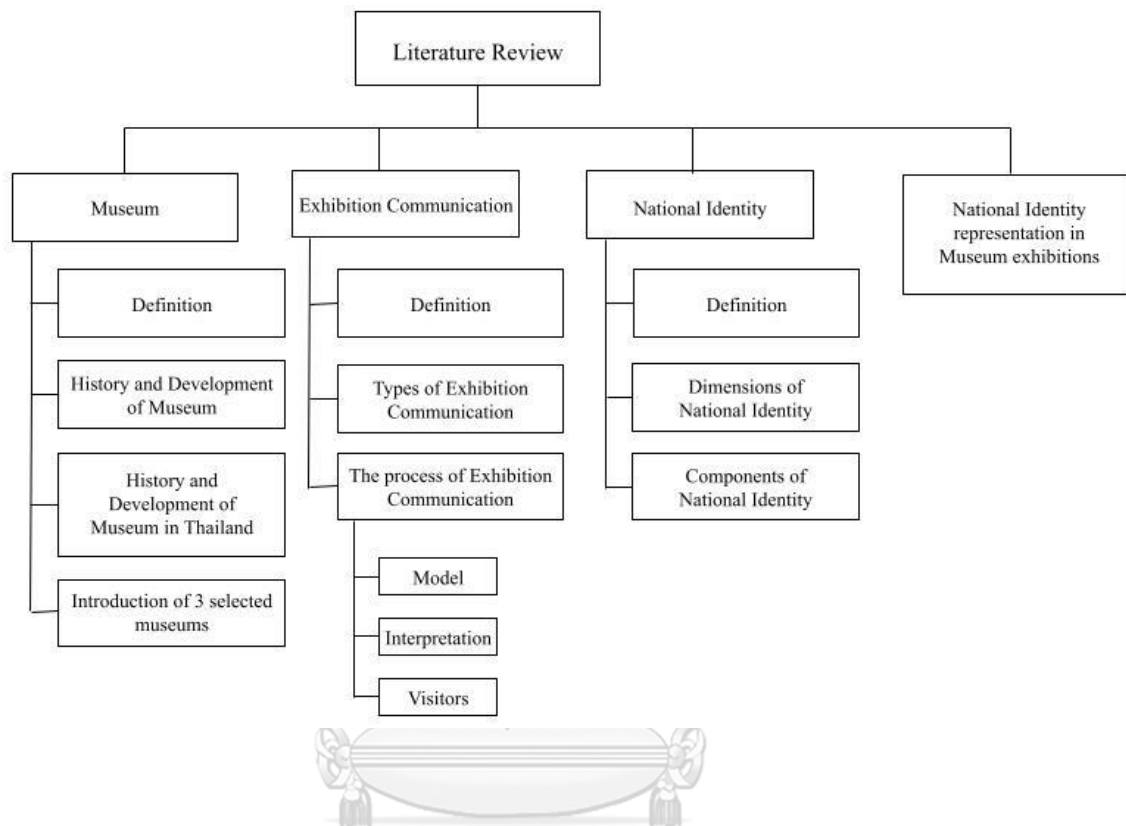
National identity regards the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions (Smith, 2001). Greenfeld and Eastwood (2009) defined the national identity as a secular perspective of the individual and its attachments, a picture of the world divided into distinct communities, and a concept of popular sovereignty. This research mainly focuses on the national identity of Thailand.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of relevant literature related to the museum, exhibition communication, and national identity. Begin with the museum's definition, history, and development from the world and Thailand, and the brief introduction of 3 selected museums. The exhibition communication part, including the definition of exhibition communication, explanations of various types of exhibition communication, and the process of exhibition communication. Literature in the process of exhibition communication covers the model of museum communication, museum interpretation, and types of museum visitors. Finally, the national identity part shows the definition, dimensions, and components of national identity.

Figure 1 Map of Literature Review



2.1 Museum

2.1.1 Definition

In the study of museology, the definition of the museum is not the only and constant. The British Museums Association defined museums in 1998 as “Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning, and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artifacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society (Baars, 2010).” According to the study by Alexander and Alexander (2007), a museum is a building or institution that houses and collects cultural relics. The museum collects and conserves objects of scientific, artistic, or

historical importance and exhibits them so that the public can view and understand these objects.

ICOM (2007) defined the museum as “A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”

Among them, “permanent institution” means a stable organization closely related to a stable public environment and social situation. In addition, some scholars have questioned some of the terms in the definition. For example, the term “society” is considered to be unclear as well as the commercial activities were carried out by many museums, confusing the use of the term “non-profit.” Despite this, museum academia once universally recognized this definition (Mairess, 2019).

For decades, academic research on the definition of “museum” has been continuously explored and improved. ICOM has continuously adjusted the definition of museums. In 1995 and 2003, ICOM respectively defined the museum as “A non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.”, and “Museums are permanent institutions that serve society by promoting knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of the natural world and the cultural and scientific heritage of humanity through collections, memories,

sites and processes they care for, research, and interpret for public benefit.” Compared with these two definitions, the 2007 definition summarizes the functions and categories of museums more accurately and comprehensively (Mairesse, 2019).

In the past ten years, the democratization of museums has continued to increase, and the boundaries between the concepts of “professional” and “public” have become blurred, which has brought fundamental changes to the values of museums (Brown & Mairesse, 2018). In addition, the social role of museums is gradually occupying a higher position. Therefore, in 2018, the academic community considered improving the definition of museums based on the following suggestions (Sandahl, 2019).

- on the value foundation from which museums will address their long-term, ethical, political, social, and cultural problems and obligations in the twenty-first century.
- the unique, defining, and essential unity in museums of the functions of collecting, preserving, documenting, researching, exhibiting, and in other ways communicating the collections or other evidence of cultural heritage.
- acknowledge and recognize with respect and consideration the vastly different world views, conditions, and traditions under which museums work globally.
- express museums’ commitment to becoming important gathering spaces and open and varied venues for learning and exchange.

2.1.2 Histories and Development of museums worldwide

The word “museum” is derived from the Greek word “mouseion,” and its original meaning refers to the temple of the Muses dedicated to art and science (Abt, 2006). Under Ptolemy I.’s rule, the basic functions of mouseion include collecting biological specimens, repairing and preserving documents and objects damaged in previous political riots, and researching to obtain new knowledge results. The mouseion at this time has begun to take the form and part of the functions of a museum for later generations (Simmon, 2016).

The earliest presentation form of the museum is “wonder rooms” or “cabinets of curiosities.” From the 15th to the 18th century, European nobles and wealthy people displayed their personal collections in a room or cabinet for visitors to visit. The common collections of “cabinets of curiosities” in History include books, armors, and specimens of animals and plants. For hundreds of years, some collectors made their private collections public for various reasons. For example, the collections of the Medici family were opened to the public at the Uffizi Palace in 1582 and finally bequeathed to Tuscany in 1743 (Simmon, 2010, 2016; Alexander et al., 2017).

The history of modern museums can be traced back to the period when collections were started to display objects to the public for specific purposes. When the Grimani family bequeathed their private collection to the Venetian government between 1523 and 1583, one of the first public museums in Europe was established. During this period, along with the awakening of the Renaissance, systematic and

scientific research methods were applied to understand human culture and nature (Simmon, 2010).

During the 17th and 18th centuries, many collections of royal families, nobles, and religious sites were allowed to be open to the “public” for viewing. Nevertheless, “public” has a limited meaning at this time, usually referring to the upper-class elites such as the privileged class and scholars. The democratic rights open to the public are as important as the educational function under the Enlightenment. Under the influence of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, many museums have gradually become a research place and have assumed part of the educational role (Bennett, 2013; Simmon, 2010, 2016).

During the Louis XIV period in the 18th century, the gardens of Versailles were open to the public. During the Louis XV period, intellectuals of the Enlightenment continued to encourage the opening of permanent galleries in the Louvre. During the Louis XVI period, although the French royal family had decided to use the Louvre as a gallery to display the royal collection to the public, the gallery was not open until the beginning of the French Revolution (Simmon, 2010; Bennett, 2013; Alexander et al., 2017).

During the French Revolution, the Louvre was turned into a museum and open to the public. In 1793, the Louvre was officially opened as the first national public art museum. Its original intention was to show the new government’s stability and the ability to protect national cultural relics in all sectors of society. However, then the

museum's exhibition method aroused controversy. At that time, the exhibition was not systematic enough, the classification of the exhibits was not precise, and few labels explained the exhibits in the museum. All this makes the Louvre a confusing palace for uneducated tourists. In 1801, the re-arranged Louvre was easier to understand and accept by the public and gave full play to its educational significance. More importantly, the Louvre, as a symbol of egalitarian purposes and permanent things of the nation, and the public nature of the museum have penetrated the hearts of French and even all modern people (Simmon, 2010; Bennett, 2013; Alexander et al., 2017).

In the early 19th century, Prussia carried out political reforms, one of the purposes of which was to strengthen social unity and awaken national sentiments. The establishment plan of the Prussian National Museum in Berlin, which is now the Altes Museum, believed that government-sponsored museums could unite the public by allowing citizens to share a sense of national reverence (Simmon, 2010, 2016).

In the early 19th century, the role of museums in promoting national consciousness first appeared in Europe. People also realize that the museum is a very suitable institution for preserving the historical heritage of a country. So in the second half of the 19th century, European museums flourished, and almost every Western European country opened a comprehensive public museum during this period. In the 19th century, social reforms to overcome the problems caused by industrialization promoted the development of municipal museums. Museums are also regarded as a tool to promote industrial and technological development. In addition, since the first

World Exposition in 1851, international exhibitions have made significant contributions to the formation of many museums (Simmon, 2010; Alexander et al., 2017).

There were two world wars in the first half of the 20th century. For European museums, this was a period of major reassessment. Governments, professional associations, and other organizations have reviewed the role of museums in a changing society and made recommendations to improve their services to the public.

The years after World War II were extraordinary achievements for museums, which stems from various countries' responses to a rapidly changing society with universal access to education. In the 20th century, the museum broke away from exclusively dedicated to cultural relics collection and scholars' research and indeed became an educational and entertainment institution with social influence.

In the late 20th century, museums' two major development trends were "the prevalence of a new market-orientated ideology that stressed the importance of revenue generation" and "the introduction of new technologies that transfixed not only the museum profession but also the world." The main impact of this development trend is to transform the museum into an entertainment experience place. Entertainment and education will work together to achieve the mission of the museum. Museums should accept entertainment as a learning tool to attract a broader and more diverse public.

2.1.3 History and development of Thai museums

SER's research in 2019 has a more comprehensive understanding and summary of the History and development of Thai museums. According to his research, the evolution of Thai museums has roughly gone through two stages. They are traditional museums and new generation museums under the development of the cultural economy.

The museum concept was introduced to Thailand at the end of the 19th century. Until now, Thailand has established many different forms of museums under the cooperation of the public and private sectors. The ownership of these museums can basically be divided into eight types, namely, (1) national museums, (2) state agency, (3) local administration, (4) foundation/nonprofit organization, (5) community, (6) school, (7) private, and (8) monastery.

As of 2019, nearly 600 of the 1,520 museums in Thailand are based on local traditional culture and wisdom. Since 1978, Thailand's national cultural development policy has actively promoted and protected the development of national cultural heritage. One of its core contents is to fully support the protection of Thailand's national culture and indigenous wisdom. Through education, research, and social development, culture made a major part of people's lives and used culture as a carrier to promote social, economic, and political progress and to strengthen the construction of national sovereignty.

Since the 1980s, museums, as cultural heritage resources, have received tremendous support along with the rapid development of Thailand's economy and tourism. In the 21st century, Thai museums have also played a new role as cultural landmarks and contact points for the cultural and creative industries.

Since the 21st century, the development of Thailand's cultural and creative industries has received unprecedented attention. The Thai Museums have therefore entered a whole new stage. Under the cooperation model of diversified development, many new museums appeared in Thailand in the 21st century, and most of them adopted interactive and participatory exhibition methods as innovative exhibition modes. In 2017, the Ministry of Culture launched the online 3-D "Smart Museum" project under the Thailand 4.0 development blueprint initiative. The 40,000 collections of 41 national museums in Thailand can be used and displayed in major museums' real and virtual exhibition halls through AR and VR interactive technologies. According to the world trend and the development trend of new generation museums, interactive and participatory exhibitions are bound to be used by more new generation museums.

2.1.4 Introduction of 3 selected museums

1) Bangkok National Museum

During the reign of King Rama IV, he established the first museum in Thailand, which is a private royal museum in the Grand Palace. During the reign of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, King Rama V, he ordered the establishment of a museum in the magnificent palace opened to the public for the first time to display the

royal collection of his father, King Mongkut, King Rama IV. This marked the birth of Thailand's first national museum, the Bangkok National Museum. The Bangkok National Museum was established in 1859 and mainly displays Thai History, art history, archeology, and ethnology. In 1887, during the reign of King Rama V, the museum was moved to the Front Palace and later developed into the current Bangkok National Museum. In 1926, it was renamed "Bangkok Museum." In 1934, it was gradually developed into the current Bangkok National Museum after being taken over by the Department of Fine Arts.

The Bangkok National Museum currently has three permanent exhibition galleries. 1) The Gallery of Thai history exhibits in front of the Siwamokhaphiman Hall, it shows the History of the Thai people, from the evolution of the primitive period to the establishment of the Sukhothai state, and important historical events from Ayutthaya and Thonburi to the reign of the Chakri dynasty in the era of Rattanakosin. 2) The Archaeological and Art History collections show objects from different periods. Behind the Siwamokhaphiman hall lies the Prehistoric Period Gallery. The Historical Period Gallery comprises two structures. Dvaravati, Srivijaya, and Lopburi exhibits are on display at the Mahasurasinghanat building. The exhibition is shown at the Prapatphiphitthaphan building in the sequence of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Rattanakosin. 3) The Decorative Arts and Ethnological collections are displayed in the old central palace buildings. The exhibitions contain various artistic, cultural, and ethnological objects, such as gold treasures and gems, mother-of-pearl inlays, clothing and textiles, ceramics, carved ivory, old royal vehicles, old weapons, and musical instruments, hole masks, puppets, Etc.

In addition, in the Bangkok National Museum, there are many excellent examples of Thai architecture in the early Rattanakosin era. For example, the Buddhaisawan Chapel enshrines the important Buddha image “Phra Buddha Sihing”; The Red House named Tam Nak Deang, decorated in the early Bangkok style.

2) Museum Siam

The Museum Siam is a Discovery Museum under the National Discovery Museum Institute (NDMI), established in 2007. It is the first discovery museum that focuses on allowing visitors to gain new experiences while visiting the museum. The Museum Siam is an example of a pleasant learning center and raises the standard of new learning methods for Thai citizens, especially children and young people. It can train visitors to know themselves, neighbors, and places in the world. In a learning society, Museum Siam creates a “new concept and image” of the museum through modern technology and creative activities. This is to make the process of learning history and stories more interesting. This new learning method consists of main exhibitions, special exhibitions, and creative learning activities.

The motto of Museum Siam is “Play + Learn,” which is “Plearn,” it is the Thai word that means an enjoyable moment. It is a key element of the museum exhibitions. Museum exhibitions of Museum Siam present a creative and entertaining style by combining knowledge and activities. Therefore, the objects on display in the museum are all tangible to convey meaning in storytelling and are fully connected with other elements.

The Museum Siam is located in ThanonSanam Chai, Grand Palace. The museum building of Museum Siam itself has high historical value. It was originally built as the office building of the Ministry of Commerce during the reign of King Vajiravudh, King Rama VI. The building is in the Classical Revival style and was designed by the Italian architect Mario Tamagno. It was awarded an outstanding art and architecture preservation award in 2006 by the Art and Architecture Preservation Committee of the Siam Architects Association under the Royal Patronage of His Majesty the King (ASA).

The Museum Siam currently has a permanent exhibition named “DECODING THAINESS.” The exhibition is divided into 14 rooms. The purpose of the exhibition is to lead visitors to find the true meaning of Thailand. Through telling the stories of Thai people from different dimensions, such as History, architecture, culture, tradition, food, clothing, Etc., and the development of Thai people that have changed with the social background from the beginning of Rattanakosin to the present.

3) Bangkok Art and Culture Center

Bangkok Art and Culture Center is the contemporary art center in Bangkok, Thailand. Art, music, theater, film, design, and cultural or educational activities are held here all year round. It is a place for everyone in society to relax and define and explore the culture. In addition, BACC welcomes people who wish to hold events related to art and culture to rent the space in BACC.

From the end of the last century to the beginning of this century, the importance of intellectual development and creativity in national development became more and more apparent. This solid cultural demand became the appeal of Thai art practitioners in building contemporary art centers, keeping up with international trends, and realizing national pride. Therefore, BACC was built at the historic moment. It was officially established in 2008 and was located in a commercial area where young people in Bangkok gather. It is to attract young people to frequent it. The art center has the potential to attract young people to participate in art and cultural activities, learn and express themselves.

Four major considerations were used in the development of the architecture's design concept: flexible use, Thai culture, high spaces to accommodate the art, and natural but controlled natural light.

Over the years, BACC has planned and hosted numerous exhibitions, some of which are very influential. Such as the “In Remembrance of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej” Photography Exhibition held in November 2016 to commemorate King Rama IX and “Always Roaming with a Hungry Heart” Photo Exhibition by H.R.H Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, which is the first exhibition of BACC.

2.2 Exhibition communication

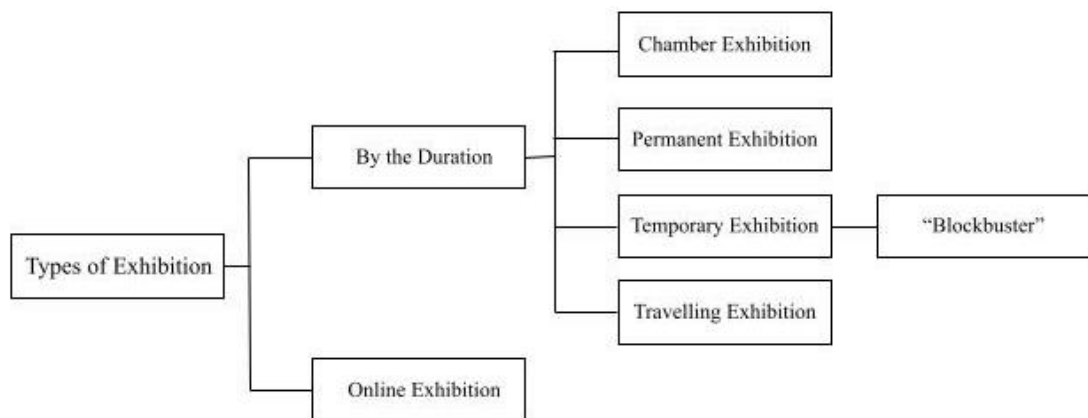
2.2.1 Definition of exhibition

An *exhibit* may be defined as a showing or display of materials for the purpose of communication with an audience (Alexander et al., 2017).

2.2.2 Types of Exhibition

The type of exhibition may be based on content, genre, duration, venue, or audience type to focus on. The exhibitions are divided according to the duration, mainly including Chamber, Temporary, Permanent, and Travelling exhibition (Vásárhelyi, 2013; Alexander et al., 2017).

Figure 2 Types of Exhibition



Chamber Exhibitions are small-scale displays with short opening hours—a couple of hours, a day, or a week. These exhibitions are typically held in conjunction with conferences, trade events, or festivals.

Temporary exhibitions, which might span many weeks or months, are often presented by museums with vast collections. The duration is determined by the availability of loan works, the number of potential visitors, the exhibition facilities' schedule, and other factors. Temporary exhibitions also allow the museum to modify and expand its narrative information. This kind of exhibition can attract returning visitors to the museum and visitors interested in this particular theme.

“Blockbuster” is a kind of temporary exhibition. It first appeared in the United States in the 1970s. This type of exhibition focuses more on crowds and desires than collections, spaces, and locations. Berryman (2012) believes that the precise definition of art blockbusters is still problematic and elusive. However, according to Santos (2001), a rough explanation is that Blockbuster commonly has received strong support from private enterprises and has been widely promoted in the media. As the communication between the producer and the audience has improved, it has received many audience responses.

Permanent exhibitions may stand for years and showcase masterpieces and iconic objects. This kind of exhibition usually lasts five to ten years. Once this period is exceeded, the exhibits and installations will be severely worn, and the exhibition's content will be outdated. However, sometimes, permanent exhibitions are kept for 20 to 30 years for economic reasons. Professionals visit this type of exhibition because of its “museology museum” appeal. In addition, permanent exhibitions also refer to exhibitions arranged in thematic or chronological order to show the narrative of the institution and its history.

Traveling exhibitions are a transition between temporary exhibitions and permanent exhibitions. Such exhibitions can be exhibited in one venue for many years or in multiple venues for one month each. Their exhibition content and format are more or less the same; however, pieces from museums that are temporarily storing them may be included in the show.

With the popularization of museums in urban life, the democratization of culture, the emergence of multiple ways of narrative content, the emergence of Web 2.0 technology, and the popularization of social media, an exhibition method that conforms to the new era appears.

Online exhibitions operate exclusively in virtual space and do not have a physical collection. They disseminate digital copies of works or works created in digital media. Many museum professionals regarded them as an enhancement to on-site exhibitions at the beginning. Such exhibitions can provide display space for additional content of on-site exhibitions and online assistance for exhibitions. In addition, online exhibitions provide an opportunity to bring together collections that may not be gathered in a single location.

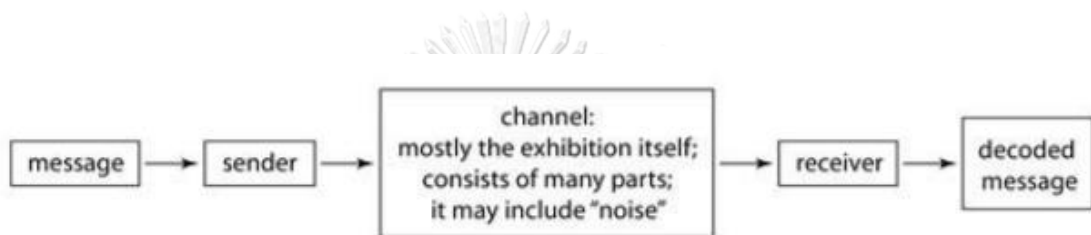
2.2.3 The process of exhibition communication

2.2.3.1 Model

In the final analysis, exhibition communication is an act of communication. The Shannon–Weaver model of communication called “the mother of all

communication models” is believed to basically describe all communication processes. Based on this model, Vásárhelyi (2013) made a model “Generalised and simplified model of exhibition communication” that is more suitable for describing exhibition communication.

Figure 3 Generalised and simplified model of exhibition communication (Vásárhelyi, 2013)



Message: It is the message that is planned to be conveyed through the exhibition and the original intention of designing the exhibition. For example, in this study, **Message** generally refers to the expression of “national identity.”

Sender: Refer to the exhibition designer and developer, also the person who formulates the message. In this study, **Sender** refers to those who participated in the design of the exhibition, which can be individuals, teams, or a sponsoring company.

Translation/ Interpretation: It means the design process of the exhibition, that is, the process of the **Sender** choosing appropriate **Communication channels** and tools to clearly express the **Message**. Through a deep study of this process, we can understand how the **Sender** chooses the **Communication channels** of an exhibition and the reasons for this choice.

Communication channel: In the case of exhibition communication, the **Communication channel** mostly means the exhibition itself, consisting of many parts. These channels could be the venue and buildings, mood, colors, furniture, contents and objects, images and sounds, labels, prints, advertisement, website, interactive methods (such as multimedia), Etc.

Receiver: For museum exhibitions, the receivers of messages are the visitors. According to Falk (2009), he accorded roles that characterize visitor expectations identified five key types of museum visitors. When coming to different series with different moods and mentalities, even a visitor may show different characteristics.

Decoded message: This refers to visitors' understanding of the exhibition or the impression left by the exhibition to visitors. Vásárhelyi thought that the reason for the distortion of the message is not only lousy exhibition design or interpretation but also the social environment and the mentality of bystanders.

Noise: Noise may occur at any stage of the exhibition communication. For example, a visitor personally hates the design style of a certain venue, or the font of the label is too small to read, Etc.

2.2.3.2 Interpretation

Museum interpretation refers to how museums communicate their messages to the public. For decades, many scholars (Tilden, 1957; Alexander, 1977) and

institutions in museology have studied and provided the basic or standard elements of reasonable interpretation. Based on Tilden's research, Alexander's interpretation of good interpretation focuses more on thinking that interpretation is a means of informal education. The specific five principles are shown below.

- 1) It aims to convey certain truths, disclose meanings, and give comprehension. As a result, it serves a vital educational purpose.
- 2) It is based on whether they are alive or inanimate, natural or manufactured, artistic, historical, or scientific.
- 3) It is backed up by solid scientific or historical research that studies each museum piece, underpins every program, assesses the museum's audience, and reviews its presenting techniques in order to ensure more successful communication.
- 4) It uses sensory perception—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and the kinetic muscle sense—wherever possible. With its emotional undertones, the sensory method should augment, rather than replace, the traditional intellectual gateway to the knowledge offered by words and verbalization; together, they form an intense learning process.
- 5) It is informal education without the trappings of the classroom, is voluntary, and is solely based on the viewer's interest. It may provide a significant drive to continue reading, explore other locations, and seek various methods to fulfill one's newly stimulated interests.

Interpretive planning means the integration of scientific and communication aspects. Spencer (2001) explored the steps of an interpretive exhibition design, shown as below:

- Interpretation of the scientific message of the exhibition and formulation of messages;
- Definition of visitor groups;
- Interpretation plan;
- Communication plan (information transmission devices, programs, publications, media exposure, Etc.)
- Visitor routes: planning and modeling
- Multimedia elements: selection and planning
- Marketing plan
- Evaluation plan with suggestions for adaptation/modification phases
- Sustainability plan

2.2.3.3 Visitors

According to Falk (2009), he accorded roles that characterize visitor expectations identified five key types of museum visitors: Explorers, Facilitators, Experience Seekers, Professionals/Hobbyists, and Rechargers.

Explorers: They visit the museum because of interest and curiosity. They are very knowledgeable but not experts. They are very interested in the new exhibits. They are used to walking around independently, but they are also very sensitive to labels and information.

Facilitators: The primary purpose of their coming to the museum is to have social activities or provide children with informal learning opportunities. So they hardly watch exhibitions.

Experience Seekers: They are the sort of folks that have “been there - done that” and do not want to be left out. They will be happy to see new things, but they will not know the exhibition deeply. Such people are not regular visitors to the museum.

Professionals/Hobbyists: They are a tiny but influential group, including teachers, museum staff, artists, collectors, policymakers, and science communicators. Their visit is quite professional: they know exactly what they are seeking and will inspect the exhibition portions that will be relevant for their new project. These people are usually frequent visitors to the museum.

Rechargers: These people look forward to finding a quiet place in the museum full of interesting ideas and do not care about exhibitions.

2.3 National identity

2.3.1 Definition

National identity means a set of cognitions and emotions that express the relationship between an individual and a nation (Barrett, 2005; Barrett & Davis, 2008). Greenfeld and Eastwood (2009) defined the national identity as a secular

understanding of the self and its attachments, the vision of the world as partitioned into separate communities, and a notion of popular sovereignty. Herskovits (1948) succinctly defines the national identity as the identified extent of recognizing its “cultural focus” by a particular culture. He defined “cultural focus” as “the tendency of every culture to exhibit greater variations in the institutions of some of its aspects than others so that these focal aspects can be used to characterize the whole culture.” Smith (2001) defined “national identity” as the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions. Therefore, the national identity is a set of meanings possessed by a particular culture that distinguishes it from other cultures (Keillor, 1996).

The most commonly studied national identity components include identification with the nation, attitudes toward the nation, and national stereotypes. National identity as a social construct will change due to changes in psychosocial circumstances. Some factors can affect the national identity, such as education, economics, parents, and peers. Moreover, social identity, group identity, and national identity are closely related (Tartakovsky, 2010).

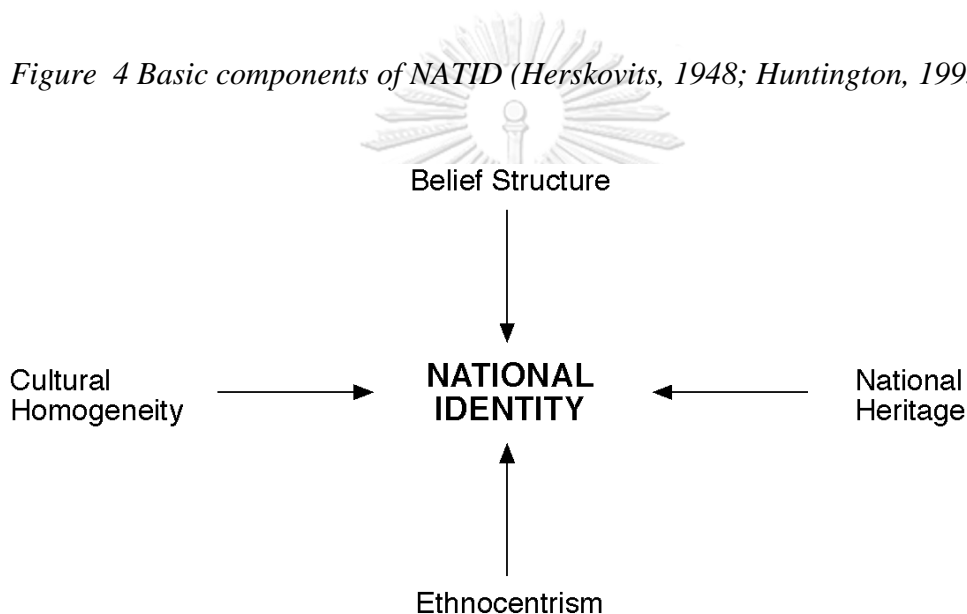
2.3.2 Dimension of national identity

According to Keillor et al.’s study (1996), the National Identity (NATID) scale is designed to empirically measure how strongly individuals in a given nation identify with their national identity’s religious, historical, cultural, and social aspects. The goal

of this method is to investigate the degree of cultural and national uniqueness and the qualities that underpin this distinctive identity.

According to the studies of Herskovits (1948) and Huntington (1993), the basic components of NATID are Belief structure, national heritage, cultural homogeneity, and ethnocentrism.

Figure 4 Basic components of NATID (Herskovits, 1948; Huntington, 1993)



Belief structure, defined as the role of religion or supranational beliefs in promoting cultural participation and unity, should impact the extent to which cultures actively identify with unique national identities.

National heritage is defined according to the importance of historical figures and historical events, and the national heritage partly reflects a particular culture's knowledge of its own unique history (Huntington, 1997).

The *cultural homogeneity* part involves the cultural uniqueness of the national identity of a particular society. Taylor (1982) found that the number of subcultures in a country is inversely proportional to the “strength” of national identity.

Ethnocentrism is generally regarded as the tendency of individuals or societies to use their own cultural views as a benchmark for cultural evaluation and attribution.

2.3.3 Components of national identities

The importance of this part of the research is that decomposing and concretizing the concept of national identity can give a clearer understanding of the form of expression of national identity.

Nationalism has an unmistakable attribute: the “ideal of independence.” The concept of nationalism has always influenced the study of national identity. Modernists and historical culturalists dispute theoretical influence. Modernists believe that the state played an important role in the creation of a nation. And historical culturalists focus on cultural handicrafts, rituals, and memories (myths, symbols, and legends) that satisfy peoples’ ethnocentrism (Smith, 1991). The conflictive interplay between emotional attachments shapes national identity to traditionalism and the rational forces of modernism.

The components of national identity will be continuously reconstructed and revised. Internally, all groups in the country’s population have participated in the

process of selection, reconstruction, and re-identification, especially intellectuals and professionals. Some external events, such as wars, immigration, economic transformation, and religious movements, will also gradually trigger changes in the components and construction of national identity. The concept of “national” must pertain to all community members to meet the minimum requirements of the ideology of nationalism.

Dieckhoff and Gutiérrez (2001) concluded four components of national identities:

- 1) The components of national identities are derived from the major ethnic communities or ethnies inside the state, and countries and their identities are constructed based on one or more (or maybe an amalgamation) of these ethno-histories and ethno-heritages.
- 2) Many of these ethno-histories and heritages are re-modern, and some of them are ancient. As a result, the radical break in cultural and social continuity with pre-modern agrarian eras postulated by modernist and post-modernist theories of nationalism is often exaggerated.
- 3) On the other hand, the ethnic heritage has often, and continues to be, transformed in the modern epoch by the processes of rediscovery, selection, reconstruction, and re-identification of ‘authentic’ ethnic components, so that none of these elements should be regarded as perennial, let alone primordial.
- 4) Symbols are the medium and means, through which whole peoples may be mobilized, and their identifications reattached, on the basis of pre-existing

vernacular histories and cultures, and this is why symbolic issues are so important today and for ethno-nationalist struggles.

The uniqueness of national identity is constructed by homogeneity and common culture. The formation of a unified lifestyle, meaning of life, and the use of the same language are part of the construction of homogeneity. Therefore, homogeneity creates its cultural constraints to determine differences from others and recognize these differences (Smith, 1991).

In previous studies, researchers explored various ways of using and selecting symbols to represent the identity of the nation. In consolidating national identity, historiography has played a vital role. It has connected generations and rooted the nation in ancient times. Cultiaux revealed the close connection between national historiography and national identity in his research. He believes that the “symbols” that make up a country can be diverse, such as history teaching, statues, traditional festivals, commemorative events, and history museums (Cultiaux, 2017).

Nature elements can also be a way to symbolize national identity. In the 18th century, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and other scholars systematically clarified the connection between specific natural environments and so-called national identity. They believed that the natural environment and natural landscape are important sources of social guidance and collective identity. Zimmer’s research believes that the specific socio-political background, clear ideology, effective communication methods, and the country’s geographic structure and historical development constitute the

fundamental role of natural landscape imagery in constructing national identity (Zimmer, 2017).

Thiesse (2017) emphasized the important position of popular culture or folk culture as a national heritage in constructing national identity. He found that the process of shaping national cultural identity on the basis of folk culture is divided into three main periods.

- 1) the identification, collation, and standardization of popular culture;
- 2) its dissemination through new means of communication (lithography, photography, and recordings) and news sites (ethnographic museums, international exhibitions, Etc.);
- 3) its transmission to the people as part of the process of nationalization.

2.4 The National Identity Representation in Museum Exhibitions

Museum exhibitions can be regarded as a kind of media used to display objects and spread ideas about a nation and its national identity. The exhibition provides a platform for the mutual creation of the national identity, driven by the organizers on the one hand, and constructed by the visitors on the other. The reason for this understanding is that museum exhibitions are not only a reflection of national identity but also a representation of national identity (McLean, 1998; Rembold, 1999; Ravelli, 2007).

National crafts, architecture, and design represent and convey national identity, and the way these cultures are presented and arranged also reveals the

designer's potential cultural awareness. Furthermore, a country's national identity will change in different eras due to its social, political, and economic background. Therefore, art and architecture represent the mainstream ideas of a particular period, and the change of style reflects the replacement of one political ideology by another (Rembold, 1999).

In Scorrano's research (2012), it is mentioned that as the nature of Australian national identity has changed, the museum's rendering of it has also changed. The Sydney Museum narrates the reconstructed Australian national identity through cultural relics exhibitions, photography exhibitions, film broadcasts, and special space decorations. In addition, the research also demonstrated the important role of historical architecture in constructing and expressing a nation's national identity.

2.5 In Summary

By the end, the literature review discusses the important role of museums in society, history, education, and cultural communication. In addition, this chapter also shows how the exhibition is used as a communication and propaganda medium. Moreover, the national identity representation in museum exhibitions was briefly introduced in this chapter. Finally, this chapter reviews manifestation and display methods of national identity.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methods

The qualitative research method was employed to study the national identity representation in Bangkok's museums to achieve the research objectives. Data collection was gathered through both primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources included information provided by key informants via zoom meeting. For primary data collection, semi-structured interviews were utilized. Secondary data had been summarized in Chapter 2, mainly covering academic journals, official governmental documents, and newspaper articles related to Thailand's museum and national identity development.

3.2 Qualitative Research

According to Fossey et al. (2002), qualitative research aims to solve problems related to developing an understanding of the meaning and empirical dimensions of human life and the social world. The study of Hennink et al. (2020) showed that qualitative research is an approach that allows researchers to investigate people's experiences in-depth via the use of a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, Etc. In the process of qualitative research, the researcher also needs to study people in their natural setting, so Qualitative research also aims to acknowledge and comprehend the contextual influences on the research issues. The core of good qualitative research is whether the subjective meaning,

behavior, and social background of the research participants are classified as they understand it (Fossey et al., 2002).

Qualitative research may be utilized for a variety of purposes. For example, qualitative research is useful for exploring new topics or understanding complex issues; for explaining people's beliefs and behavior; for providing depth, detail, nuance, and context to the research issues; also for identifying the social or cultural norms of a group or society (Hennink et al., 2020).

For decades, qualitative methodologists have developed and organized various genres in this field. The study by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) described 10 qualitative traditions: ethnography, performance ethnography, participant observation, case study, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, grounded theory, life history, and *testimonio*, historical method, action and applied research, and clinical research. More recently, Creswell (2013) recognized narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Ethnography is the hallmark and the earliest distinct tradition of qualitative inquiry; ethnography studies human groups, trying to understand how they form and maintain a culture collectively. On the other hand, phenomenological approaches strive to investigate, describe, and evaluate the significance of individual lived experiences. (Marshall, 2016).

In the context of research, a “paradigm” is a collection of assumptions, research methodologies, and stringent criteria shared or even assumed by a certain group. Three principal research paradigms are the empiricoanalytical, interpretive,

and critical research paradigms. They reflect many perspectives on the world, including various methods for seeing and measuring the phenomena under investigation (Neuman, 2014). The interpretive approaches emphasize the meaning inherent in human experience and actions, regardless of their individual or collective origin. In contrast, the critical approaches emphasize the meaning's social and historical origin and background, regardless of the individual or collective form of expression and expression they may take (Fossey et al., 2002).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

According to Tucker (2014), interviews with people involved in research, design, and creation of exhibits can give a sense of how the exhibits fit the museum's overall mission and the institution's long-term goals. Therefore, semi-structured interviews via Zoom were utilized in this study.

Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) defined the interview as “a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons.” Today, qualitative interviews are widely used in the humanities, social sciences, and many other scientific domains ranging from education to health sciences. Some people even believe that interviews have become a core resource for issues related to social science and social participation (Rapley, 2001; Brinkmann, 2014). According to the structure type, qualitative interviewing can be divided into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Brinkmann, 2014).

The semi-structured interview is the most commonly used data collection format in qualitative research (Jamshed, 2014), the most common form of an interview in the humanities and social sciences, and sometimes the only form of concern in qualitative research textbooks (Brinkmann, 2014).

The Semi-structured Interview serves as a type of framework in which the practices and standards are recorded, achieved, challenged, and reinforced (Jamshed, 2014). Compared with unstructured interviews, the interviewer in a semi-structured interview has a greater chance to become a knowledge production participant in the process itself. Instead of hiding behind the preset interview guide, the interviewer can control the interview topics more efficiently during the data collection process (Brinkmann, 2014).

3.4 Research Subjects

From 15th to 31st Oct., qualitative interviews were organized to collect primary data from realizing the research objectives. The key informants are 3 managerial individuals from the selected museums, namely from Bangkok National Museum, Museum Siam, and Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, and 2 scholars engaged in the museum studies in Thailand.

The selection of the 5 key informants was based on the following criteria.

Scholars in the field of museum studies and cultural studies are:

- Dr. Nixon Chen Ka Tat (Professor of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand),
- Dr. Suppakorn Disatapunahu (Professor of Cultural Management Program, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand).

These 2 scholars have significant publication and research in the field of museum study.

Professional practitioners in the museum industry are:

- Ms. Nitaya Kanogmonkol (Director General of Bangkok Museum Group, Ministry of Culture),
- Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand (Former Director of Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok Thailand),
- Ms. Songtip Sermsawatsri (General Manager of Museum Siam, Bangkok Thailand).



They are top managerial and professional practitioners who hold important positions in their respective museums.

3.5 Semi-structured Interview Questions

The researcher developed the following series of basic semi-structured interview questions based on previous research. For the validity of this research, based on the informants' different academic backgrounds and perspectives, the researcher developed two sets of different questions with the same research meaning.

Specifically, the interview questions of the 3 individual managers were only for the museum where they work, while the interview questions of the 2 scholars included all 3 museums. Due to the flexibility of the semi-structured interview itself, during the interview, the researcher conducted further exploratory questions based on the information provided by the informants.

The Semi-structured Interview Questions for 3 individual managers are :

- 1) What is the main content of your museum?
- 2) How has content been highlighted in your museum exhibition(s)?
- 3) Why did your museum utilize exhibition(s) in this manner?
- 4) How did your museum exhibitions showcase Thai national identity?
- 5) What are the advantages and disadvantages of such exhibitions?

The Semi-structured Interview Questions for 2 scholars are :

- 1) What do you think of the content of these 3 museums?
- 2) How do these three museums highlight their content in their exhibitions?
- 3) In your opinion, why did these museums utilize exhibition(s) in such manners?
- 4) How do these museum exhibitions showcase the Thai national identity?
- 5) What are the advantages and disadvantages of such exhibitions?

3.6 Interview Execution

First, the researcher invited the interviewees to accept the interview invitation and showed them the intention and general content of the interview. Then, the

researcher coordinated the time arrangement, and the reserved time for each interviewer's single interview was set as 1.5 hours to 2 hours.

Next, for each interview, the researcher set up a Zoom meeting 3 to 7 days in advance and sent the meeting invitation code to the interviewee, along with an outline of the question for their preparation. The day before the interview, the researcher sent another message to the interviewee as a reminder.

During the interview, the researcher asked the interviewees according to the questions mentioned in **3.5 Semi-structured Interview Questions** and in-depth questions based on their answers as appropriate.

After the interview, the researcher summarized the interview content and used them for the next steps of the research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings from the data collection, the data collected from 5 key informants selected for this research. This chapter includes documentaries of the main exhibition content and the exhibition communication of 3 selected museums, and the analysis of the relationship between these museum contents and interpretation to Thailand's national identity.

4.1 The Exhibition Content of 3 Selected Museums

The following exhibition content will be presented from the Bangkok National Museum, the Museum Siam, and the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, respectively.

4.1.1 The Exhibition Content of Bangkok National Museum

The Bangkok National Museum is located near the Grand Palace, one of Bangkok's most famous landmarks. It was formerly known as residential parts of Wang Na Palace. The Wang Na Palace, also called the Front Palace, officially named Phra Ratchawang Bowon Satan Mongkhon, which was the residence of the "vice king" during the period Rama I to Rama V (1785-1885) of the current reigning dynasty of the Kingdom of Thailand, the Chakri Dynasty.

The Bangkok National Museum exhibition space consists of 13 buildings covering different collections. After entering from the main entrance, the first

building on the left is the Hall 1, Siwamokhaphiman Hall, located on the east side of the entire museum area. This gallery houses the exhibition “Special Exhibition of Thai History and Art” throughout the centuries. The visitors can learn about the origin of the history of Thai art, which evolved through the eras by the various masterpieces from the prehistoric period, Dvaravati, Srivijaya, Lopburi, Sukhothai, Lanna, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin period. Most of the exhibits here are masterpieces of great significant artifacts of Thai civilization. Such as the symbol of the Dvaravati period, “The Wheel of the Law and a Crouching Deer,” the Pali inscriptions on the fifteen columnar spokes of this wheel are carved in the round and record the first teachings of the Buddha, this masterpiece reflects the Theravada Buddhist faith and practice of people. Moreover, there are also many other magnificent statues and sculptures related to Thai Buddhism, such as the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara; the Standing Buddha; Vishnu Reclining on The Serpent Ananta Lintel Or Vishnu’s Cosmic Dream Lintel; Shiva, The Destroyer; Buddha’s footprint; and Buddha Dispelling Fear, Etc. The First Stone Inscription is also exhibited in this gallery, a stone tablet with an inscription, traditionally considered the earliest evidence of the Thai language. The country’s historical story and glorious civilization are told through the concept of artifacts with a chronological approach. The exhibition’s focus is on the finest quality of antiques and artworks.

Hall 2 is the Buddhisawan Chapel, located in front of the main hall (Hall 6), opposite the Siwamokhaphiman Hall. The central image enshrined in the chapel is Phra Buddha Sihing, one of the most sacred Buddha images in the country. Inside the

chapel, scenes of Buddha's life are depicted through paintings on the interior spaces (walls, windows, and doors).

The third hall is the Red House, located behind the Siwamokhaphiman Hall. As the former residence of Queen Sri Suriyendra, it displays some of the Queen's belongings during her lifetime. It depicts the daily lifestyle of the royal family in the past.

Hall 4, 5, and 6 are the museum's main galleries. Hall 6 is located in the center of the entire museum area and behind the Buddhisawan Chapel, and it is the largest building in the museum area. Hall 4 and 5 are on the north and south wings of Hall 6, respectively.

Hall 4, called the Maha Surasinghanat Building, is themed on the history of Thailand before the 18th Buddhist century. Hall 5 is Praphat Phitphitthaphan Building, theming on the history of Thailand after the 18th Buddhist century. Both halls exhibit a large number of archaeological finds during that period. Hall 4 contains six galleries from 401 to 406, themed on Asian Art, Period of Prehistory, Period of Davaravati, Java Art, Period of Srivijaya, and Period of Lopburi. Room 401 exhibits Buddhist antiques from Thailand, India, Japan, China, Myanmar, and other Asian countries, mainly various types of Buddha sculptures, such as Buddha in Granting Pardons from India, Standing Buddha in Granting Pardons from Sri Lankan art, Bejewelled Buddha Touching Earth from Burmese art, Buddha Touching Earth from China, Etc. In Room 402, Period of Prehistory, the exhibition shows the traces of

human ancestors living and evolving in the territory of Thailand about 37,000 years ago. The exhibits include symbols and paintings left by early humans on cave rocks, human skeletons, stone tools, pottery, and ornaments made of animal bones, Etc. In Room 403, 404, 405, and 406, the sculptures related to Buddhism are shown separately. Hall 5 contains five galleries from 501 to 505, which are Period of Lanna, Period of Sukhothai, Period of Ayutthaya, Period of Thonburi-Early Rattanakosin, and Period of Rattanakosin (Bangkok).

Hall 6 is the main building of the museum containing 14 galleries, called Pra Wiman - the Viceroy Residential Complex, which features the Thai Traditional Arts. The exhibits in this hall come from various royal palaces and temples, and the handover has been going on for almost a century. The 14 exhibition halls are divided according to the categories of exhibited items, exhibiting traditional weapons, metal crafts, traditional costumes, studded jewelry, entertainment items, cups and tableware, furniture, elephant carriage items, wood carvings, Buddhist items, and the royal carriage.

Hall 7, 8, 9, and 10 are on the north side of the museum area. Hall 7 is the Issaret Rachanuson Building, which shows the history of the Front Palace, and it is divided into two galleries. Room 701, named History of King Pinklao, displays the life of King Pinklao and related antique items. Room 702 is the Residence of King Pinklao, exhibiting King Pinklao's former living environment and relics. Hall 8 is Nukit Ratchaborihan Chinese Shrine. The interior features murals and Chinese furniture from the Chinese novel "The Investiture of the Gods." Hall 9 is ChaoPhraya

Yommarat Memorial Hall, the gallery of Sino-Thai Fine Arts. Hall 10 is the Building of Royal Funeral Chariots, showcasing items during royal funerals, such as the Royal chariot, Throne of the White Umbrella (a royal throne once occupied by Prince Pinklao), and Funeral pyre and urn of Princess Bejaratana Rajasuda.

Hall 11, 12, and 13 are 3 Pavilions in the museum area. They are Mangkhalaphisek Pavilion, Samranmukkhamat Pavilion, and Long Song Pavilion.

Overall, the exhibition content of the Bangkok National Museum is focused on original artifacts and masterpieces. This museum seeks to show visitors the Buddhist identity of Thailand and the rich traditional history and culture of Thailand that is related to the Thai royal. The historical span of its contents can be extended from the prehistoric era to the Rattanakosin period of Thailand. In particular, the history and development of several of the more glorious central regimes in Thai history are presented coherently, such as the Sukhothai Kingdom, Ayutthaya period, Thonburi period, and Rattanakosin period. The Bangkok National Museum also displays a large number of exhibits on royal culture and life. Not only that, but the museum also shows the development of Thai arts, paintings, sculptures, which Theravada Buddhism highly influences. It is worth mentioning that Thailand has a long history of Buddhism, with over 90 percent of the population currently practicing Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, Thailand is widely considered to be a Buddhist country. In addition, the Bangkok National Museum, as a central national museum, also serves the function of cultural communication and exchange with other countries. In addition

to exhibits representing Thai culture, the Bangkok National Museum also features a number of exhibits from other countries and regions.

In brief, exhibitions' content in the Bangkok National Museum has been structured strategically to communicate national identity and Thainess through important archeological findings and cultural artifacts collected over the centuries. In terms of exhibition and objects arrangement, the museum exhibition style is considered a tradition and more academic in nature. Exhibition's technique mostly comes from the window display approach with theatrical lighting. As said by Dr. Nixon Chen Ka Tat (Professor of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand) in his interview, he highlighted that such an exhibition approach is straightforward and simple in nature with conventional museological manners. Meanwhile, Ms. Nitaya Kanogmonkol (Director General of Bangkok Museum Group, Ministry of Culture) also mentioned that, as a national museum with a long history and mission in preserving and promoting Thainess, exhibitions under the Bangkok National Museum unavoidably need to be "proper" and "solid" in its showcase. Moreover, Dr. Suppakorn Disatapunahu (Professor of Cultural Management Program, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand) also believed that objects arranged in a chronological format in the Bangkok National Museum's exhibitions are able to let visitors understand the movement and development of Thai civilization and Thailand's national identity clearly and directly. In addition, according to Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand (Former Director of Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok Thailand) in his interview, he thought that the shown objects were highly influenced

by the official religion of Thailand, Theravada Buddhism, reflect the national interests, as well mirror the position of Thailand as a land of Buddhism culture.

4.1.2 The Exhibition Content of The Museum Siam

The Museum Siam is a discovery museum that opened in 2007. The building itself is a historic building, formerly the Ministry of Commerce.

“The Decoding Thainess” is the new theme featured in a permanent exhibition presented in the Museum Siam. “The Decoding Thainess” exhibit has displayed over 14 exhibition zones that lead to an exploration of all components of Thainess and its continual progression from the past to the present.

The theme of the first exhibition hall is “Is this Thai?”, and this room showcases challenges and critical reviews related to Thainess, with a cloth doll in traditional Thai dress on a stage in the middle of the room. In an ever-changing world, this gallery can provoke visitors to question and think about the Thainess and identity in the present context.

The second room is “Defining Thainess.” This room has windows display and display drawers with exhibits that symbolize the Thainess of each historical period. For example, visitors can see a small-scale replica of the Emerald Buddha through the display and then pull open the drawer next to it to learn the information about the Emerald Buddha and the connection between the Emerald Buddha and Thainess. Here

visitors can discover and learn about Thai culture through these exhibits that reflect today's Thai identity.

The third room is "Birth of Thainess." It illustrates the evolution of Thailand through historical scenes and exhibits that symbolize nine eras of Thailand. It is the first time in Thailand that interactive media such as hydraulic modules, audio descriptions, and graphic presentations have been used in an exhibition.

The fourth room is "Thailand's Three Pillars." It presents the core concepts of three deeply rooted Thai institutions: the state, religion, and the king, together reflecting the core values of being Thais. Visitors may assemble cube components on a table in the center of the room using AR specially designed to seem like a puzzle and view visuals connected to the nation, religion, and royal on the screen.

Room 5 is named "Magnificently Thai." This room recreates the ambiance of staterooms and royal halls, conveying the aesthetics and valuable aesthetic of Thai architecture and fine arts. The exhibitions also convey the meaning, faith, and belief of the Thai people in the light of royalty, which is deeply important to their hearts.

Room 6 is called "Degrees of Thainess." Thai costumes are used in this space to represent Thainess. Cloth dolls dressed in Thai clothing in a range of styles are displayed on a spiral-shaped platform, beginning with Khon costumes to demonstrate the status and degrees of Thainess. Such as Thai traditional formal wear, civil service uniforms, daily casual wear, school uniforms, Etc.

The seventh room is “Only in Thailand.” This zone covers a selection of everyday housewares and gadgets that immediately convey Thainess. These exhibit Thais’ creative personalities since they are quite skilled at changing and refining items for everyday usage, convenience, and situational compatibility.

The eighth room is “International Thai.” This section comprises points of view on various Thai topics that may differ in the viewpoint of Thais and foreigners. It expresses the perspectives about Thainess by the following question: “What do we want others to see us as opposed to what others think of us?”

The ninth room is “Lesson in Thainess.” This exhibition recreates classroom environments from four different eras, demonstrating how we inculcate Thainess in the classroom, each era including various economic, political, and social settings that are interwoven into the educational system classroom instruction, and music of that period.

The tenth room is “Taste of Thai.” This gallery features live demonstrations of Thai kitchens, where visitors can learn more about the origins of famous Thai recipes such as Tom Yum Kung, Som Tum, and Pad Thai. QR scanning technology is utilized in conjunction with vibrantly colored motion visuals and dish-shaped booklets that include information on these recipes.

Room 11 is “Thainess, Borrowed.” This section depicts the evolution of Thainess as impacted by different civilizations. Examples include the architectural marvel of Wat Arun’s pagoda (Temple of the Dawn), Thai alphabets, and Tuk Tuk. These are depicted in visuals (3D laser cut, Zoetrope, and flipbooks) to support visitors’ engagement.

Room 12 is “Thai Beliefs.” This room’s collection of over 108 objects depicts sets of beliefs in Thailand that span varied beliefs in Buddhism, Hinduism, and other traditional and widely encountered beliefs that impact how Thais live their lives. There are workshops where visitors may experience these ideas in various ways, such as fortune-telling and future prediction.

Room 13 is “Thai Traditions.” This exhibition is created in a warehouse and tells stories about Thai customs, holidays, and manners that clearly define Thainess. Visitors may touch and play with them because they are contained in boxes with extensive explanations and graphic illustrations. There are also fun activities available to help with comprehension.

The last room is “Thai Studio.” This photo studio emphasizes the significance of photographs that provide clear evidence of Thainess. Visitors may dress up in a choice of costumes, sceneries, and ornamental things and snap as many shots as they like.

Overall, the exhibition covers various aspects of history, architecture, tradition, cooking, and costume and encourages visitors to further explore the meaning and significance of Thainess.

In addition to the permanent exhibition about “Thainess,” the museum Siam also held temporary exhibitions about contemporary issues or matters concerning Thai society that people should understand. For example, the “Gender illumination” exhibition was exhibited in 2018 because of the Gender Diversity Culture of contemporary Thai society; the “Myanmar Up-Close” exhibition hosted in 2016 stems from more and more Burmese people coming to live in Thailand.

Overall exhibition approach of the Museum Siam is centered around the keyword of “interaction.” An interactive approach of exhibition language was employed throughout all exhibitions in this museum. Ms. Songtip Sermsawatsri (General Manager of Museum Siam, Bangkok Thailand) said that the Museum Siam is a “Plearn museum.” Therefore, it is understandable why an interactive exhibition approach was utilized to showcase the uniqueness of the Museum Siam. Apart from an interactive exhibition, museum siam’s exhibition also heavily focuses on audiences’ participation. It is almost a consensus to figure this out through interviews. According to Ms. Songtip Sermsawatsri, Dr. Nixon Chen Ka Tat, Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand, Dr. Suppakorn Disatapunahu, and Ms. Nitaya Kanogmonkol, the Museum Siam strives to explore visitors’ understanding of the exhibitions’ content and Thainess through their engagement and participation. Meanwhile, the subjects of each room of the Museum Siam are set by the different categories of Thainess. The

objects there are shown in various popular and attractive methods with technology. In the interview, Dr. Nixon Chen Ka Tat said that such manners could show the Thainess and Thai society from different perspectives by opening different windows to visitors. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the Museum Siam also organized temporary exhibitions that reflect its understanding and exploration of Thainess. Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand mentioned that hosting temporary exhibitions is a positive approach to show a museum's value perspective and reflects the Museum Siam's ongoing exploration of Thainess and its concern and dissemination of contemporary issues in Thai society today.

4.1.3 The Exhibition Content of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

BACC, as the name suggests, is the center of contemporary culture and art in Bangkok and Thailand. Various art events related to art, design, music, education, Etc. are held here every year. In general, BACC focuses on exhibitions of contemporary Thai art, and there are no permanent exhibitions on display, only temporary ones. BACC exhibits artwork from artists with different experiences from all over Thailand, so visitors to BACC can appreciate different styles of artwork, such as paintings, photographs, and sculptures. Although there is no permanent exhibition, BACC hosts at least one main exhibition each year. This main exhibition will often be an art exhibition of a master or prominent artist from Thailand. For example, the main exhibition in 2021 is "Damrong WONG-UPARAJ: A Retrospective of Versatility and Discipline," this exhibition offers a comprehensive visual and biographical assessment of Assistant Professor Damrong WONG-UPARAJ's works (1936-2002).

His series of very exquisite paintings and prints reflect Damrong's artistic philosophy toward life.

BACC has also organized several far-reaching and influential exhibitions in the past years. For example, the photography exhibition of King Rama IX was held on the first anniversary of King Rama IX's death in 2017, and the art exhibition of people commemorating King Rama IX.

Apart from the exhibitions mentioned above, there are also some small and interesting exhibitions held by BACC.

By and large, BACC is an open exhibition space with multi-functional venues. Exhibitions are mostly installed for a period of time to showcase certain topics or related themes to contemporary Thainess. Unlike the Bangkok National Museum and the Museum Siam, which are object-oriented, BACC is more space-oriented and focuses on experiencing contemporary Thainess rather than celebrating the past. As said by Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand in his interview, he believed that such an experience approach was born out of the desire of the founders and organizers of the BACC for anyone in the society to be able to experience the arts in such an atmosphere and to inspire creativity. He also thought that the open and creative area designed in BACC is a reflection of BACC's inclusive and integrative philosophy and attitude as a place to promote contemporary art and culture. Additionally, the contents and subjects of exhibitions, the types of art activities, and the artists that BACC selected are flexible and extensive. According to the view of Dr. Pawit Mahasarinand and Dr. Suppakorn

Disatapunah, this kind of communication approach highlights the BACC's reputation as a center for contemporary art and culture in Thailand and also success in demonstrating and promoting Thailand's new concept of national identity in modern society.

4.1.4 The Relationship among the Main Exhibition of 3 Selected Museums

As reviewed, the content of exhibitions varies from museum to museum, depending on the purpose of the exhibitions, the positioning of the museums, and the nature and tangible conditions of the museums themselves.

Both Bangkok National Museum and the Museum Siam are set up for the purpose of showcasing national identity. They explain to the general public what Thailand is about. In comparison, the messages of the Bangkok National Museum are more complex and informative than that of the Museum Siam. The message conveyed from the Bangkok National Museum is more like a strong statement, which uses critical, scholarly written language to explain historical artifacts and archaeological findings, thereby conveying to visitors the history, culture, and uniqueness, and character of Thailand. The message of the Museum Siam is more simple and accessible. It covers a wide range of contents and is closer to the life of the general public. Its explanation of Thai national identity elements is more dynamic and subject-oriented. However, it is relatively easier to be engaged by visitors, and its exploratory feature is more likely to provoke people to consider about Thai national identity. Even though the 2 museums showcase a similar subject, they present the content very differently through their exhibition. The Bangkok National Museum is

present by telling the history and culture to visitors directly, yet, the Museum Siam made an attempt to inspire visitors to explore the meaning of being Thai and embrace Thainess.

In addition, the Bangkok National Museum itself has the function of storing artifacts, so its exhibits are all authentic artifacts with historical value. The Museum Siam, on the other hand, has no historical artifacts in its exhibits, which are all replicas to serve for learning and communication purposes.

BACC has a more distinct difference from the other two museums. The Bangkok National Museum and the Museum Siam focus more on Thailand's history, culture, and social development, while the BACC's exhibition focuses on promoting contemporary Thai art. The BACC, in terms of content, is closer to the Museum Siam than the Bangkok National Museum. The BACC and the Museum Siam both host a variety of temporary exhibitions and other cultural events, both of which are closer to a creative learning space.

In Sum, the contents of the three museums showcase the national identity of Thailand from different dimensions and perspectives. The Bangkok National Museum tells the story of Thai history and culture in a more formal way, using cultural artifacts and archaeological findings. The Museum Siam divides "Thainess" into several dimensions such as religion, food, costume, Etc. It encourages visitors to explore Thai national identity through short comments and thought-provoking questions. BACC

has been holding art exhibitions and events throughout the year to give Thai national identity a new era element: Thai contemporary art.

4.2 Exhibition Communication of 3 Selected Museum

Apart from the exhibition content, the exhibition communications of each museum are shown below.

4.2.1 Exhibition Communication of the Bangkok National Museum

The exhibition style of the Bangkok National Museum is in line with the public's consistent perception of a national museum. Its exhibition method is a traditional museum exhibition approach. Because it has a series of "traditional museum configurations," such as regularly separated exhibition halls, glass showcases, and labels for explanation purposes beside each artifact, and so on. These traditional communication channels of exhibitions are able to output messages to visitors directly, and the official status as the national museum also makes this information convincing.

In addition, the objects in the exhibition communication of the Bangkok National Museum are an extensive collection of valuable historical artifacts that it presents. The attraction and value of the historical artifacts themselves are used to convey the Thai national identity to the public. For example, the large number of sculptures of Buddha images in many of its exhibition halls can establish the connection between "Buddhism" and "Thailand" even stronger in the minds of

visitors. Thus, the national identity of "Thailand is a prominent Buddhist country" is conveyed to the public.

Due to the sophistication of the concept and technology of the virtual museum and the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 on residents' going out, the Bangkok National Museum has also developed and operated the virtual museum. The virtual museum is flexible, easy to operate, with clear and comprehensive images, highlighting key exhibits, and equipped with Thai explanations.

4.2.2 Exhibition Communication of the Museum Siam

The Museum Siam's approach to exhibitions can be broadly summarized as "high-tech" and "highly interactive." Since the Siam Museum has no historical artifacts, it employed digital technology as a means. The Museum Siam's motto is "Play + Learn = 'Plearn' (เพลิน)," which aims to allow visitors to explore and acquire knowledge on their own; hence the museum's communication is "highly interactive."

For example, the hydraulic modules, audio descriptions, and graphic presentations used in rooms 3 and 4 and the AR and projection equipment. These are all "high-tech." "Highly interactive" is even more vividly reflected in this museum. For example, the pull-out drawer in Room 2, the audio-visual interactive exhibition experience in Room 3, the AR-based interactive game in Room 4, the all-around reproduction of the Thai primary and secondary school environment in Room 9, and the photo studio in Room 14, Etc.

In addition, this museum offers multilingual interpretation by allowing visitors to wear Bluetooth headset interpreters. Language attributes are Thai, English, Chinese, Japanese, Etc.

The Museum Siam's unconventional and interactive nature is also evident in its social media and online presence. One can find detailed information about the relevant exhibitions on their official website, such as museum guidebooks, Etc. They also post information about the exhibition on social media such as Facebook to interact with the public.

In brief, the Museum Siam meets the exhibition-going needs of today's people and their media-use needs by using advanced technology and unconventional storytelling methods. The exhibition focuses on more active interaction with visitors to enjoy and immerse themselves in the entire exhibition design from the beginning to the end. This allows visitors to learn about Thailand in a more informal way. And through interactive activities gives a deeper impression of what they have seen and heard at the museum while encouraging further reflection.

4.2.3 Exhibition Communication of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

Unlike the other two museums, which were converted from historical buildings, the building of BACC was built based on the design concept and position of BACC. So its interior structure is also arranged to show the BACC's exhibition

better and hold art events. Therefore, the architecture can be considered part of the exhibition of BACC.

The mission of BACC is to provide Thai art practitioners, enthusiasts, and even all Thai people with an innovative environment and leisure place based on Thai contemporary art, and here to promote local and international contemporary art, to disseminate artistic concepts to the public, and to develop the public's innovative thinking, thereby creating a well-balanced society in Bangkok. Hence, BACC is more like an open art gallery with a lot of commercials, leisure, and study areas that are free for everyone to visit. The interior space of BACC can be flexibly arranged, and there are many mixed functional areas with no clear demarcation between exhibitions in general. The overall architectural design of BACC allows visitors to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of contemporary art for art and cultural communication.

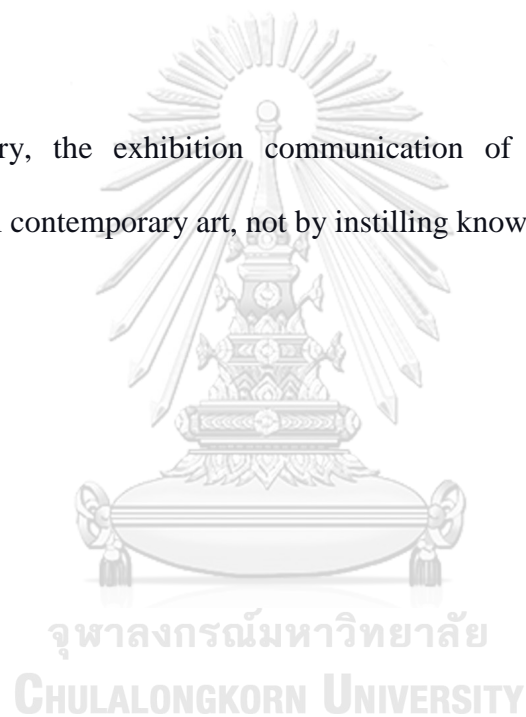
Its overall style of exhibitions also resembles an art gallery. The lower floors usually host general exhibitions, while the upper floors host one or two main exhibitions.

Generally, the artworks are always hung on the gallery wall, and visitors are usually able to be close to the artworks. Most of the works have only a small label with the author's name and the work. There are more comprehensive and detailed interpretations for the main exhibitions for the contents of the exhibitions. In addition, the interior decoration of the exhibition area could be changed according to the style of the exhibition. For example, for the exhibition "Damrong WONG-UPARAJ: A

Retrospective of Versatility and Discipline," the original white walls were repainted into yellow, blue, and green in line with the mood of the exhibition.

Moreover, the gallery has a sophisticated grasp of light. It makes optimum use of natural but controlled light, which keeps the lighting function and does not allow artworks to be damaged by light, and the lighting atmosphere can fit the mood of the exhibition.

In summary, the exhibition communication of BACC is an immersive experience of Thai contemporary art, not by instilling knowledge.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Exhibition Communication of 3 Selected Museums

According to the previous discussion of this research in chapter 4, it can be figured out that each museum has a corresponding mission and positioning. The purpose of their exhibitions is also serves different objectives. Therefore, when analyzing each museum's exhibition communication, basic factors such as their background and objectives should be taken into account.

It can be seen that these three museums have different purposes in communicating to the public, and each of the museums presents Thailand's national identity from a different perspective. Most of the key informants believed that Thailand is closely related to "mix-culture" and "multicultural society." Different civilizations and cultures have shaped the national identity of Thailand. Therefore, it is hard to come out with a standard definition of Thailand's national identity; it includes the ideological part, such as the nation, Buddhism, and royal; it also includes the popular and life-oriented aspect, such as food and costume. It can be the image of traditional Thailand, such as Songkran; it can also include youthful, innovative elements such as contemporary Thai art; also the opening and inclusive social culture, and so on. One can use any of these elements to express Thailand's national identity, or combine all of them to form an ongoing exploration of Thainess.

Overall, the museums are undoubtedly successful if their objectives of communicating Thailand's national identity are used as a criterion for evaluation.

The Bangkok National Museum exhibits a large collection of historical artifacts in a traditional museum exhibition way which is able to create an immediate cultural and visual shock to visitors. As in many traditional museums, the labels beside the exhibits provide visitors with direct access to the history and information about the exhibits, and people tend to be convinced by the information on the labels. During the interview, Dr. Nixon Chen Ka Tat also pointed out that one of the advantages of the Bangkok National Museum is that it outputs exhibits and information in a conventional and simple way. Moreover, the Bangkok National Museum is located in a historic building with a distinctly royal character, which creates an ambiance of royal culture. In general, the exhibition communication employed by Bangkok National Museum is consistent with its position as a national museum. It is effective for its purpose of communicating Thailand's official national identity.

Nevertheless, consequentially, such a traditional exhibition method tends to be accompanied by low interest and low innovation. Moreover, allowing labels as the main channel for conveying textual information will make it more difficult for visitors to access information. Visitors who do not have some sort of basic knowledge of Thailand might be confused and ignore the messages. Therefore, some scholars believed that despite a large number of daily visitors to the Bangkok National

Museum, the interest of general visitors to revisit the Bangkok National Museum will not be so much.

Many primary and secondary schools in Thailand organize visits to local museums for their students. Therefore, many Thai people have a rejection of museums and consider visiting museums to be a boring, scholarly and irrelevant thing to do in their daily lives. So to a certain extent many traditional museums will face the dilemma of not being able to attract visitors.

According to the interview with Ms. Songtip Sermsawatsri, one of the objectives of the Museum Siam is to attract people to visit the museum, and the main purpose of the exhibition is to make the museum more accessible to Thai people. The Museum Siam strives to make museum visits more entertaining, fun, and engaging for everyone, using a variety of means to do so. Thus, one of the recognized advantages of the Museum Siam is that it is interesting enough to change people's perceptions of museums to a significant extent, and to use this as a brand to attract more visitors. And the more accessible content and more varied interpretation methods of the Museum Siam will make the message easier to accept. On the other hand, it has been argued that the real reach and impacts of such high-tech and highly-interactive approaches to communication need to be taken into account. As well as whether interactive activities need to be changed regularly to keep them fresh to visitors, it also needs to be considered. In addition, in today's dangerous situation of COVID-19, it is a challenge to keep items that need to be touched in order to be interactive and still attractive.

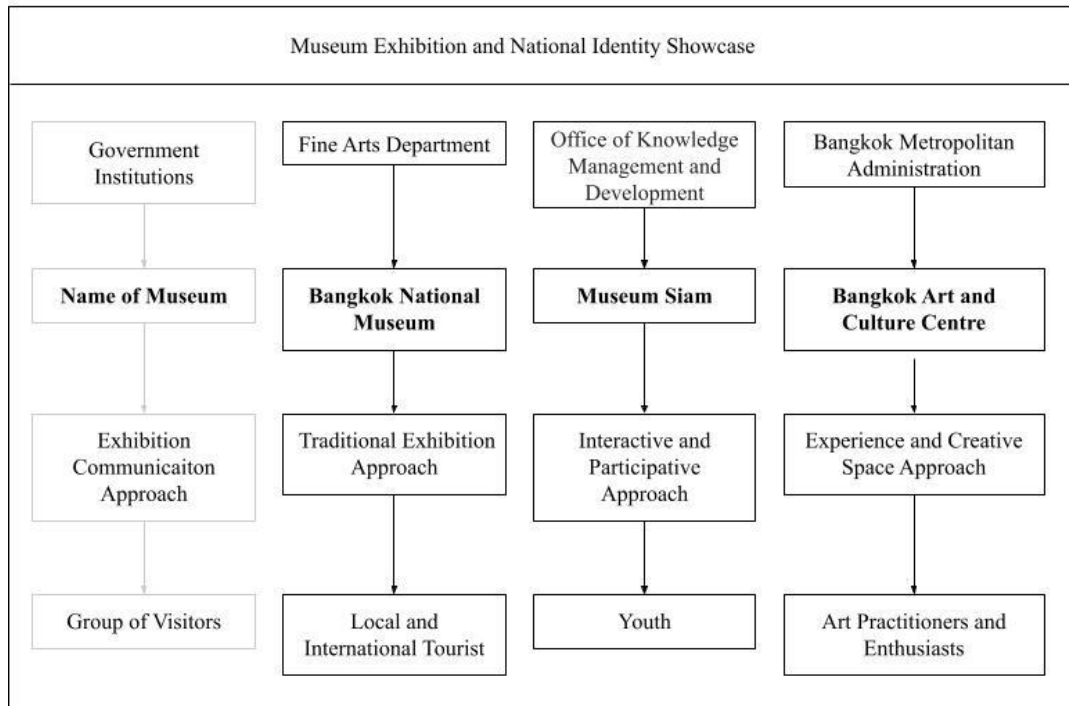
We can find that there are always two sides to a coin, and the advantages and disadvantages of a characteristic often go hand in hand. The Bangkok National Museum is more attractive to general tourists and history and heritage enthusiasts. The Museum Siam is more suitable for foreign tourists, children, and youth, who need guidance to understand Thailand and Thainess, and are more receptive to innovative exhibition communication.

BACC is also recognized by more young people. The BACC provides a space for creativity and relaxation and, according to interviews, has the longest daily opening hours of the three museums. With this subtle influence of contemporary art, people will be more receptive to the new elements that make Thai contemporary art a part of Thailand's national identity. The content, environment, and communication approach of BACC's exhibitions consistently reflect the youthful, innovative, and liberal aspects of Thailand's national identity. Thus, BACC's exhibition communication is an immersive experience rather than a simple, direct expression. So it is not easy to get precise information and statements about Thailand's national identity by visiting BACC.

In addition, temporary exhibitions keep the museum fresh in the minds of visitors and are one of the best ways for museums to express themselves on a continuous basis. Others are virtual museums, social media, and official websites, which are web-based technologies that can span time and space and are more efficient and convenient.

5.2 Discussion

Figure 5 Museum Exhibition and National Identity Showcase of 3 Selected Museums



In discussion, according to previous research, 3 selected museums are under the supervision of different government institutions; besides, they all have the specific initial purpose of the foundation. Therefore, they have their own position and have taken on the mission, objects, and baggage accordingly.

Consequently, it can be found that the 3 selected museums have arranged the exhibitions appropriately according to their positioning and nature conditions by utilizing different exhibition communication approaches which are in line with their specific missions and visions and have succeeded to a significant extent in communicating the exhibition messages and Thailand's national identity to visitors

from all perspectives. By communicating the messages and Thailand's national identity, the Bangkok National Museum, the Museum Siam, and the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre utilize traditional exhibition approaches, interactive and participative approaches, and experience and creative space approaches, respectively.

Talking about the communication of Thailand's national identity, this concept can be explained in different aspects and perspectives within the context of Thailand's great civilization and positive social development. It can be believed that Thailand's national identity has lots of layers of interpretation and relations. Through these 3 selected museums, the research presents national identity and its uniqueness can be showcased in different exhibition approaches.

Moreover, the research explored that all 3 museums serve social interests by showcasing Thailand's national identity to attract different groups of people. To summarize, the Bangkok National Museum, Museum Siam, and Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, in that order, primarily attract local and international tourists, youth, and art practitioners and enthusiasts.

5.3 Summary

In summary, this research is to understand how national identity is represented in museums in Bangkok by figuring out and analyzing the exhibition contents and communication of the museums in Bangkok. To this end, 3 museums were selected as subjects: Bangkok National Museum, Museum Siam, and Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC). For data collecting, this research conducted semi-structured

interviews with 5 key informants, respectively, who are 3 managerial individuals from the selected museums and 2 scholars engaged in the museum studies in Thailand. According to the previous literature review and research objectives of this study, 5 basic interview questions were developed.

According to the interview content, this research clearly showed the exhibition contents and exhibition communication methods of these 3 museums. It also clarified how the museums represent Thailand's national identity through the above exhibition contents and exhibition communication methods. Finally, this research also analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of these contents and manners.

5.4 Limitations and Directions for Further Study

There are some limitations to this research. Because there were only four months of research time and the inconvenience of the Covid period, there were only three museums for the subject of this study. Of the three scholars planned initially, only two eventually accepted the invitation to interview.

For further study, methodologically, it is possible to extend the research time duration, increase the number of research subjects (museums) and the number of key informants. It allows for more comprehensive and in-depth research results.

From the process and results of this research, the researcher found some related extended topics that deserve further research and some practical problems to be solved. For example, how to make the Thai national identity and Thainess better

promoted through the branding of museum exhibitions. Thailand's tourism industry is well developed, so can the tourism industry and the museum industry jointly promote Thailand's national identity so that Thailand's cultural image in the international market is more conducive to the transformation and development of the Thai economy? Does Thailand's national identity and Thainess have a more precise meaning and representation in line with contemporary social expectations? How other private and local museums in Thailand represent Thailand's national identity, Etc.

5.5 Practical Implications

The findings of this research study provide valuable insights into the Thailand national identity represented in exhibition contents and exhibition communication methods of museums in Bangkok. The researcher can derive various practical implications.

First, a holistic approach is needed to increase the attention and interest of the general Thai public and foreign visitors to the museum. In particular, the Museum Siam and the BACC should be made more attractive to foreign tourists. The Bangkok National Museum, on the other hand, will go some way to improving its image of seriousness in the minds of the Thai general public while making it easier to communicate the exhibition's message.

Additionally, all museums have to be aware of the negative impact of COVID-19, especially the Museum Siam, which has the advantage of being "highly-interactive".

Furthermore, holding interesting, meaningful, and ornamental temporary exhibitions is advantageous, feasible, and worthwhile. Finally, the Bangkok National Museum's virtual museum and the three museums' promotion and interaction on the internet and social media are effective and sustainable.



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