A content analysis of two English-language newspapers in Thailand: 1988-1989

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A content analysis of two English-language newspapers in Thailand: 1988-1989

by

Wareemon Sawetawan

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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1990
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a small nation in Southeast Asia with a population of about 50 million. The majority of the people are Thai and Chinese. The languages are also Thai and Chinese, but English is understood among well-educated people.

Thailand is categorized as a Third World country. Like many other nations in this group, Thailand is striving for modernization. In this regard, the country has considered mass media as one of the most important tools in helping develop the nation. Thailand has abundant mass communication resources, and the types of media found in the Western world also exist in Thailand.

Newspapers in Thailand have a longer history than other media. There is evidence that the first printing in Thailand was introduced by foreign missionaries. In 1662, a French mission began printing religious tracts, a grammar, and a dictionary using Roman characters. Printing using Thai characters started in 1850.

The printing press came to Thailand with the American Protestant missionaries in the 1830. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, a medical missionary, was very active in publishing activities. He published Thailand's first newspaper, which
was a fortnightly publication entitled *The Bangkok Recorder* in 1844. In the latter part of the 19th century, Western publishers played an active role in establishing several foreign-language newspapers, such as *The Bangkok Times*, *The Siam Free Press* and *The Siam Observer*. Most of the papers, however, did not survive World War II.

The Thai monarch in the latter 19th century also took much interest in journalistic activities. Vernacular newspapers were published to disseminate official news. The Royal Printing Office was established during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910). This office published *The Government Gazette* and *Court News*.

The reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) was called "The Golden Age of Thai Journalism." King Vajiravudh was interested and active in journalistic writing. He wrote articles for some newspapers both in Thai and English.

Many newspapers were published in Thai, Chinese, and English before World War II. Many, too, were short-lived. It is difficult to determine the exact number of newspapers in Thailand because of the sporadic birth and death of the publications.

Being a journalist is not prestigious in Thailand. Thai journalists usually earn low salaries and their work is considered to be below Western standards. Blanchard says,
"Writers, especially in the Thai-language newspapers, are more interested in attracting and entertaining the readers than in providing accurate facts or mobilizing public opinion" (Blanchard, 1958, p. 18).

Unlike radio and television which are operated and controlled by the government, newspapers in Thailand are privately-owned and are independent financially. Only a few publications receive government subsidies. The government Public Relations Department serves as the main source of official news and information about government affairs.

Newspapers are highly concentrated in Bangkok, the capital. The papers are published in three languages: Thai, Chinese, and English. The Thai-language newspapers have the greatest circulation and the most influence. The country's largest newspaper is the daily Thai Rath, which is known for its sensational news.

John A. Lent (1979) gives the basic data about newspapers in Thailand as follows:

Number of Dailies: 116
  Aggregate Circulation: 1.5-2 million
  Circulation per 1,000: 34

Number of Nondailies: 108
  Aggregate Circulation: 1 million
  Circulation per 1,000: 23

Number of periodicals: 150
Total Annual Newsprint Consumption: 54,000 metric tons
Per Capita Newsprint Consumption: 1.2 Kg. (2.6 lb.)
Total Newspaper Ad Receipts: Bht 279.5 million
(US $13.7 million) (Lent, 1979, p. 870).

The Local News Division of the Public Relations Department updated the number of newspapers in Thailand in 1989. In Bangkok, there are thirteen Thai-language dailies, three English-language dailies, seven Chinese-language dailies and eight weekly business newspapers. In the up-country, there are altogether 253 daily and non-daily newspapers (Thailand, Government Public Relations Department, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

Normative theory is applied for this study. According to McQuail (1987), normative theory deals with ideas of how media ought to or are expected to operate. There are six normative theories of which two are selected for this research. One is a social responsibility theory. In this theory, media ownership and control are to be viewed as a kind of public stewardship, not a private franchise. Society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance. The principles of this theory are: mass media have obligations to society; mass media must avoid crime, violence, and civil disorder; Society and the public have the right to expect a high standard of performance of
the mass media. The other is the development media theory. In this theory, the positive role of the mass media is to stimulate development, national development, autonomy, and cultural identity. Mass media should carry out positive development, and give priority to the national culture and language. Moreover, mass media should exchange news and information with other developing countries.

Researchers always mention that reliable data about the Thai press are difficult to obtain because the country's journalistic enterprise is not systematized. Lent (1979) says, "Two words most frequently come to mind when thinking about Thai mass media: uncertainty and color."

By using the word "uncertainty," Lent meant that the accurate number of newspapers in Thailand cannot be estimated because newspaper operators always purchase newspaper licenses but do not publish the publications. The purchase is done as a prevention of future government closure of newspapers. The term "color" explains the characteristics of the format and content of the Thai press. Lent writes:

...The newspapers, for example, can be identified by trademark colors used in their logotypes and/or banners, and for years, in the wrappers that enveloped them. The content of the large newspapers has been as sensationalized as their large front-page banners and collages; it has concluded serialized versions of the sexual exploits of
former prime ministers, cartoon panels vividly portraying sex themes and crime and other meant-to-be-tantalizing fare (Lent, 1979, p. 870).

John C. Merrill, in giving a picture of the confused characteristics of the Thai press, says:

...newspapers are tiny, poorly printed, and in most cases give the readers very little real news and interpretation. The press of the country has fluctuated between extreme gaudiness and sensationalism and a kind of controlled drabness (Merrill et al., 1970, p. 270).

Although recent reports say that Thailand's newspapers are improving their printing qualities and physical appearance, leading Thai-language newspapers (in terms of circulation and distribution) like Thai Rath and The Daily News, still devote space to sensational topics such as sex, violence, and crime.

However, not all newspapers in Thailand are publishing sensationalized news. Some of the Thai newspapers are labeled as "quality newspapers." Included in this type are the Thai-language newspapers Siam Rath, Matichon, Ban Muang, and the English-language newspapers The Nation and The Bangkok Post.

Two Thai mass communication professors described the characteristics of the Thai quality newspapers as follows:

The newspapers whose content carries useful information for the readers. The purpose is to inform rather than to entertain. These newspapers carry news about politics, government
administration, business, and economy (Kupatarat and Unginun, 1982, p. 246).

In recent years, the government and media practitioners have begun to discuss the role of mass media in contributing to the development of the nation. The discussions emerged from the new press philosophy called "development journalism," which means the press could be the supportive tool of the government in promoting national social and economic interests and strengthening national stability and cultural integrity.

Some newspaper editors admitted that the Thai press has not played a significant role in economic, social, educational, and cultural development. Even the newspapers with above-average standards, such as Siam Rath, are more opinion-oriented than news-oriented.

The English-language newspapers, currently published in Thailand, have high journalistic standards. English, however, is not the dominant language in Thailand. It is not used in the daily lives of ordinary Thai people. The English-language newspapers, therefore, are read only by the urban elites and well-educated people.

The Bangkok Post is said to be the most important English-language newspaper in Thailand. The paper was founded in 1946 by Alexander MacDonald, an American working
in Thailand during World War II. The Bangkok Post is the oldest surviving English-language newspaper. Its circulation is also the largest among all English-language newspapers. The editor of The Bangkok Post is Bandhit Rajavatanadhanin; the paper belongs to The Post Group.

Another important and widely-read English-language newspaper in Thailand is The Nation. The newspaper was started in 1971 as the first Thai-owned English-language daily. The Nation Publishing Group is the owner of The Nation. Suthichai Yoon is the editor of The Nation. The purpose of the paper is to practice objective reporting (World Press Encyclopedia, 1979).

The Bangkok Post and The Nation are different from some Thai-language newspapers in terms of their news content, format, and the type of readers. What they have in common are Western-style journalistic practices and well-educated readers. These factors may affect news content. News may relate mainly to urban topics rather than rural issues owing to the characteristics of the two newspapers.

The problem is whether The Bangkok Post and The Nation are different in their news coverage, whether their greatest attention is paid to different types of news, or whether they are interested in reporting development news.
Purposes of the Study

One objective of this study is to examine and compare the amount of news coverage in each given category for two of Thailand's English-language newspapers: The Bangkok Post and The Nation. A second objective of this study is to determine the type of news categories to which these two newspapers devote much of their space.

A third objective of this study is to examine and compare the amount of development news coverage for The Bangkok Post and The Nation, to determine if they have any interest in practicing development journalism and to find out which one displays the greatest interest in development news coverage.

Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer these questions:

1. Which news category receives the greatest coverage in The Bangkok Post?
2. Which news category receives the greatest coverage in The Nation?
3. To what extent do the two newspapers report development news?
4. Which development topic receives the greatest coverage in The Bangkok Post?
5. Which development topic receives the greatest coverage in *The Nation*?

**Limitations of the Study**

There may be some limitations on the conclusions drawn from this study because the samples are taken from a specific period of time. The external factors, which vary from time to time, may have different effects on the content of news coverage. It is believed, however, that the differences are not obvious enough to affect or change the conclusions drawn.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It may not be too exaggerated when a Western researcher mentioned that newspapers in Third World countries today are where the press system in the United States and European countries were a century ago. In Thailand, where the printing quality has increasingly improved, the content of the newspapers, especially in some Thai-language newspapers, is still the weakness of the Thai press. Researchers always point this out as a reflection of the irresponsibility of the Thai journalists of the community and the country at large.

Alexander MacDonald (1949) writes in his book, Bangkok Editor, that journalism in Thailand is not a profession. According to him, it is "a happy-go-lucky, unprincipled, catch-as-catch-can game, played by ink-stained saints and sinners. The saints were few, the sinners legion" (p. 54).

Regarding the news gathering style of Thai journalists, MacDonald says:

...To get the hard straight facts of a news story, you had to go out and ask detailed questions and receive specific answers. This was not the Siamese style. To be straightforward was to be discourteous (MacDonald, 1949, p. 56).

However, Albert G. Pickerell, who reviewed the history, background, and press control in Thailand, saw a trend
toward better performance of the Thai press. Pointing out the changing trend, Pickerell says:

In this respect there has been a sharp change and no longer can one say that Thai newsmen insist on approaching the most obvious situations by indirection. This was demonstrated in June 1955, when the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Pibulsonggram, returned from a world tour (Pickerell, 1960, p. 83).

According to Pickerell, Thai journalists were more aggressive in covering the press conference held by the prime minister. He writes:

...but Thai reporters showed little tendency to adhere to the Siamese trait of kreng chai (a cultural value involving the desire to avoid troubling or embarrassing anyone, to be self-effecting and respectful, reluctant to show aggressiveness, etc.)(Pickerell, 1960, p. 84).

Pickerell says this change was caused by the increasing contacts between Thai newsmen and reporters from Western countries.

Most researchers, however, still agree that sensationalism is the main theme of news coverage of most Thai-language newspapers. On the other hand, the English-language newspapers in Thailand are always mentioned as having high journalistic standards.

The English-language daily, The Bangkok Post, was established on August 1, 1946, by Alexander MacDonald. He was a newspaperman who had come to Bangkok in 1945 with the
U.S. Office of Strategic Service. The Bangkok Post is the morning newspaper with a circulation of about 21,000 (Schramm and Atwood, 1981).

In his study, Blanchard said The Bangkok Post "has set an example for the Thai press of what the social function and technical presentation of a newspaper should be." He explains:

> It seeks to be an accurate reporter of facts, a critical observer of local and international affairs on a variety of activities in the local community and elsewhere (Blanchard, 1958, p. 218).

The Nation is the only Thai-owned English-language newspaper. It was established in 1971. A study has characterized the paper as having been "something of a catalyst for both its direct competition and for Thai-language papers as well with its youthful zest, push, and willingness to stand up for press freedom" (Yoon, 1979, p. 38).

It is still debatable whether the English-language newspapers have as much influence as their Thai counterparts. Overall, they generally have more depth and breadth (especially in foreign news coverage) than the Thai papers (Yoon, 1979, p. 38).

As far as development journalism is concerned, there were some discussions of whether the press in Thailand has participated actively in reporting news in line with this
press concept. Some newspaper editors, however, argue that the role of the Thai press in contributing to the national development is not obvious because of the lack of a guided policy and cooperation between the government and the newspapers. John A. Lent, among other researchers, has encouraged the press in developing countries to be more actively involved in development journalism. Lent says that mass media in developing countries have not yet fulfilled their obligations toward national development. The content of the messages does not serve the need of the majority, who are rural people.

Lent writes:

...Already-existing media must be restructured to speak languages of the mass and to relate to their everyday needs and problems or new alternate media must be created. Government ministers must supplement their platitudes of being for the people with action news (Lent, 1979, p. 13).

He further points out that the press in developing countries does not really concern itself with the concept of development journalism. In his opinion, the content of mass media in third world countries:

...do not reflect the aspirations or problems of a growing society--problems of the metropolis, pollution, growth for growth's sake, consumerism or education. Presentations are in traditional fashion; for example, if education is to be promoted, pictures and story of a minister opening school buildings are displayed, rather than serious, in-depth analysis of equalization of
learning, life-long learning or learning for a good life; if development is the story, one can expect to read or hear the words of a minister extolling the virtues of economic progress, never anything about the hazards of rapid, unplanned modernization, e.g., pollution of air, sound, water and land (Lent, 1979, p. 15).

With this limited readership and Western journalistic style, it is expected that the English-language newspapers in Thailand do not cover much development news. This question will be investigated in this study to determine how far the English-language newspapers in Thailand have gone in covering development news.

The Bangkok Post: Its History and Performances

The Bangkok Post is Thailand's oldest surviving English-language newspaper. Its first issue appeared August 1, 1946. Alexander MacDonald, an American journalist, was its founder, first editor, and publisher. Besides MacDonald, there were seven other co-founders, Mr. Prasit Lulitanond, Dr. Thavi Tavedikul, Luang Sukhumnaipradit, Major Vilas Osathanon, Mr. Ajint Unhanantana, Luang Damrong Duritrek and Mr. Chawala Sukumalanandana (Lullitanond, 1982). They formally registered the Post Publishing Company, Ltd. with capital shares of one million baht. MacDonald was the largest shareholder, with 35 percent interest.
The business of running an English-language newspaper in the Thai-speaking country is not an easy task. The Bangkok Post, however, sold a few thousand copies daily. Its readers, besides the American community in Bangkok, included Thai officials, Chinese tradesmen, English, Dutch, Swiss, German, French, and others (MacDonald, 1982).

The first issue of The Bangkok Post stated that its objectives were to fill "the need in Bangkok for a good newspaper," and to be "a voice for the people and for the country" (Bangkok Post, 1946).

MacDonald also emphasized the policy of the The Bangkok Post: "The Post is going to be no one's paper. It's going to be as impartial as we can make it. We won't be in there pitching for any man, for any party, or any country even" (MacDonald, 1982).

MacDonald resigned in 1953 due to political pressure. He sold his shares to Robert Keibel. Harry Frederick, a colleague of MacDonald, took charge of running the newspaper. During his time, The Bangkok Post performed very well, as mentioned by Frederick:

The Post's reputation continued to be good. Circulation and profits steadily increased. Diversity of readers is shown by one early nationality/race tabulation which showed Thai subscribers well in first place, ahead of combined European and American, followed by Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino,
Indonesian, Malayan, Khmer, Laotian--about 81% in Bangkok and suburbs, 17% in the provinces, and a goodly number of mailings abroad--about a dozen each for the US, Russia and Europe and 33 to Asian countries. Many foreign governments, of various ideologies, subscribed, indicating we had become widely valued as an accurate reporter of Thailand's affairs (Frederick, 1982, p. 21).

Despite its prosperity, The Bangkok Post suffered pressure from its new owner, Robert Keibel, who had bought 50 percent of all space in the paper to place advertisements (Chongkhadikij, 1982). The conflicts rose up because Keibel had never spent the profits for the expansion of the newspaper. A decision then was made within the management to find a new owner. In 1963, therefore, a large portion of the shares of The Bangkok Post was sold to Lord Thompson of Fleet (Roy Thompson) who owned newspapers throughout the world and had never interfered in the editorial operations of the papers (Chongkhadikij, 1982).

General Pao Sriyanon, a powerful figure and a close associate of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram, considered that the monopoly of English readership by only one person would not be good for either the government or the country. He, therefore, established the English language daily The Bangkok World as a morning paper to compete with The Bangkok Post. The Bangkok Post, in its strategy to fight back, changed from an afternoon paper to a morning paper.
After the death of Berrigan, *The Bangkok World*'s editor, the newspaper faced several problems. In 1971, Michael J. Gorman, managing director and publisher of *The Bangkok Post*, negotiated a deal to merge *The Bangkok World* with *The Post*. The deal was finalized. The two newspapers are currently operating under the same management, *The Post* serving as the morning paper and *The World* as the afternoon paper. The government did not have any role in the merging except that foreign ownership of the newspapers must not exceed 50 percent according to business legislation (Lent, 1979).

Like other newspapers in Thailand, *The Bangkok Post* experiences some type of censorship. However, *The Post* has managed to survive the pressures throughout its history. From the beginning, the paper made it clear that it would fight corruption and stand primarily for the welfare of the people in Thailand. Theh Chongkhadikij says:

> Despite the feeling that the threat of censorship hung like the sword of Damocles over the press, we felt somewhat free, though there was a lot of exercising of self-control and much had to be written in such a way as to enable the public to read between the lines (Chongkhadikij, 1982, p. 38).

*The Post*, along with all other newspapers in Thailand, was ordered closed when the military staged a bloody coup on October 6, 1976. *The Bangkok Post* was the first newspaper
granted new permits due to what Chongkhadikij claims as "our record of professionalism."

The ownership of The Bangkok Post, amounting to 51 percent, was transferred from Lord Thompson to Thai investors. Over 80 percent of the shares are owned now by the Thai private sector.

Theh, a talented reporter, who used to be the editor of The Bangkok Post, promised that the paper will "try to keep pace with the changing times and themes, and trying to serve the public with the highest professional standards" (Chongkhadikij, 1982).

The Nation: Its History and Performances

The Nation is the first Thai-owned English-language newspaper. It was first published July 1, 1971, under the name of The Voice of the Nation. The paper was founded by a Thai journalist, Thamnoon Mahapaurya, and staffed by a new group of young Thai journalists. The Voice of The Nation came into being in order to "break the monopoly of English-language journalism in Thailand" (Yoon, 1979, p. 38).

The newspaper, from its beginning, brought with it a new phase of journalistic practices. The paper is honest in its task and professional in its reporting and comments. It came to be accepted as "the opinion indicator of Thailand by
the people at home and worldwide" (Punyaratabandhu, 1979).

At its conception, the newspaper promised that:

The Nation will be a responsible newspaper that follows an independent and impartial editorial policy. The Nation will strive to be a medium for the mutual exchange of views between the government and the people, interpreting the actions of the government to be public while also reflecting popular sentiments. It will not be shy from voicing criticism if that criticism is of a thoughtful and constructive nature, and will voice it without prejudice or antagonism. And because it aims to be part of the Thai press, The Nation will strive to serve as a link for mutual understanding between Thais and foreigners (Yoon, 1979, p. 38).

Boonrak Boonyaketmala also comments that establishment of The Voice of the Nation was an interesting change in the Thai press. According to him:

...The Nation as the first only English daily owned by Thai, was indeed the initial step towards a creative mode of journalism among the new generation of journalists. In terms of quality, The Nation was a landmark in Thailand journalism because it professed to practice objective journalism comparable to foreign-owned newspapers in Bangkok. This mode of journalism was known later as the 'New Journalism.' Steadily rising to fame among the English reading public concentrated in Bangkok, The Nation served not only as a spearhead of responsible journalism for local journalists, but also as a storage bin for the works of a new generation of newsmen (Boonyaketmala, 1982, p. 344).

The Nation is not quite as lucky as The Bangkok Post. The newspaper ran into troubles such as a financial crisis, inadequate staff, government censorship, and closure by
government order.

The Voice of the Nation was very prosperous during the period after the students' riot on October 14, 1973. When Thailand enjoyed her freedom of the press under the prime minister of Sanya Thammasak, M. R. Seni Pramoj, The Voice of the Nation played a constructive role in promoting and securing democracy in Thailand.

The Nation Co. Ltd., which operated the publication, decided to extend the roles of professional journalism by venturing into more publications, namely Prachachat Daily, Prachachat Weekly, a monthly business magazine, Business Review, and a Thai business monthly, The Industry. All these publications, except the Business Review, were suspended by the military-backed government following the coup of October 6, 1976. The Nation Co. Ltd. stopped its operations. The Voice of the Nation was ordered to remain closed permanently.

The staff of The Voice of the Nation tried hard to get back into the newspaper business "with the original aims and goals well entrenched in their minds" (Yoon, 1979).

The Voice of the Nation was born again under the new name The Nation Review. However, the newspaper operated under a lot of pressure from stringent government press control. A staff member of the paper says "It was a year of
terrible frustration for the staff. Neither in our editorials nor in the columns could we express our true feelings about what is going on in the country" (Punyaratabandhu, 1979, p. 1).

The paper was able to report facts and voice its opinion again when General Kriangsak Chamanan took over power from the military-backed civilian government of Thanin Kraivichien in 1977. The newspaper, since its inception, has been loyal to its promises to print objective news reports and responsible commentaries (Boonyaketmala, 1982).

Suthichai Yoon, publisher of The Nation Review, says the growth of the newspaper should be attributed to the readers whose support was given "because of the newspaper's steadfast refusal to compromise the responsibility to report to the public truthfully the domestic and international matters that concern the readers." This practice, he says, "has commanded a level of trust among our readers that is perhaps unique in Thai journalism" (Facts and Figures, 1989).

The Nation's most read section is the local news which give professional reports on Thai political and domestic affairs. The newspaper later added the Business and the Business II sections to cover current business news. Another section recently added is World News, featuring news
about international affairs (Koo Khaeng, 1989, p. 168).

In a content analysis of newspapers in Thailand conducted by G.B. Scandlen and K. Winkler (1982), The Bangkok Post was seen as "offering great quantities of soft news and advertisements." However, a 1973 survey by the university instructors "showed that of all newspapers in Thailand, The Bangkok Post was considered the most credible and dependable for national and international news" (Scandlen and Winkler, 1982, p. 310).

The Bangkok Post, realizing that it would lose more and more of its readers and advertising revenue to The Nation because of the latter's increasing growth, decided to fight back by adding two new sections; "Business Post," and "Outlook." Regarding the management, The Bangkok Post recently hired two new executives, the associated news editor, and the marketing director, with the hope of recovering the situation (Poo Jad Karn, 1989, p. 91).
CHAPTER III. HISTORY OF THE PRESS IN THAILAND

When studying the history of Thailand, one cannot deny the important roles of the foreign missionaries in stimulating the idea of modernization. Missionaries have opened hospitals, introduced Western medical knowledge, and sponsored some excellent private elementary and secondary schools. Through their schools, the missions have been able to reach many of the Thai urban elites who plan to have their children complete their studies abroad in English or American universities (Kaplan, 1981). The missionaries' main purpose of the behind these activities, however, was to win converts of the Thai people, predominantly Buddhists, to Christianity.

With this purpose in mind, the American Board of Foreign Missions in 1835 brought the first printing press into Thailand to publish the messages of Protestant Christianity to people in the Pacific area. The printing activities have been expanded since then. In 1836, the Baptist Mission produced a tract in Siamese characters on a press brought from Bengal; and three years later it printed 9,000 copies of the king's edict outlawing opium (Thompson, 1941).

It was nine years after the introduction of Thailand's
printing press that the country's first newspaper began, *The Bangkok Recorder*. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an American medical missionary who founded the newspaper in 1844, was credited as the most ambitious and prolific Bangkok publisher of his time (Mitchell, 1971). Mitchell says Dr. Bradley recorded in his journal that:

> The thought has recently occurred to me that it might be well for us who are engaged with the Siamese language to publish a kind of newspaper once a month for the reading of the Siamese part of this community (Mitchell, 1971, p. 211).

The first copy of *The Bangkok Recorder* was issued on July 4, 1844. The newspaper was in English despite the intention of Dr. Bradley to make it the newspaper for the general Thai readers. Dr. Bradley had to abandon the paper in 1845.

Dr. Bradley renewed the paper in 1865 as the two-edition publication-- *The Bangkok Recorder* published in English every two weeks and *The Siamese Recorder* in Thai every lunar month. In the reappearance of these papers, Dr. Bradley served as a combination printer-contributor. John D. Mitchell said Dr. Bradley was the missionary most committed to the value of the press for propagandizing (Mitchell, 1971). He tried to use his paper to influence King Mongkut (1851-1868) and through the king, the kingdom.

The two Recorders lasted for two years before they were
closed down as a result of the country's first libel suit brought by the French Consul against Dr. Bradley. Dr. Bradley reported that the French Consul insulted the king through insulting actions toward an official of the king. The Consul filed an action against Dr. Bradley in the U.S. Consular Court and the verdict was in favor of the French Consul. This event resulted in an end of Thailand's first and third newspaper.

Although The Bangkok Recorder was short-lived, its introduction and operations were the milestones for the establishment of the English-language press system in Thailand. The prosperity of some English-language newspapers published after the death of The Bangkok Recorder proved that English voices can influence public opinion in a country where the English language has never been powerful.

The English-Language Newspapers

The English-language newspapers and English-speaking journalists have long played prominent roles in Thai journalism. Many English-language papers founded in the latter part of the 19th century were the efforts of foreign publishers and editors.

The second English-language newspaper in Thailand was The Siam Times. The paper came into existence in 1864, 19
years after the first, *The Bangkok Recorder*. It was founded by an American publisher, J. H. Chandler. The paper, however, did not last long.

After ending his career at *The Bangkok Recorder*, Dr. Bradley was involved in the publishing of *The Siam Weekly Monitors*. The publication was owned and edited by S. d'Encourt. It was first issued May 22, 1867. Dr. Bradley was a contributor and the printer but became more and more involved as the writer and the editor of the newspaper since S. d'Encourt had some personal problems which made it impossible for him to run the paper. *The Siam Weekly Monitors*, however, could not survive under Dr. Bradley. It ceased publishing in September 1868.

Other English-language newspapers established before World War II included *The Mercantile Gazette*, *The Siam Free Press*, *The Siam Observer*, and *The Bangkok Times*. These English-language papers had reached fairly high journalistic standards, but none of the papers survived the war (Blanchard, 1958).

At least 18 English-language newspapers were published before the 1932 revolution. During that time, the English-language papers appeared to have much influence. Papers such as *The Bangkok Times*, *The Siam Free Press*, and *The Siam Chronicle* were considered to be politically significant.
The Siam Free Press was founded in 1891 by an Irish journalist, J. J. Lillie. In 1898, Lillie was expelled from the country for having insulted the sovereign, the government, and the people of Siam, and for having sent false and alarming communications to foreign countries (Thompson, 1941).

Francis McCullough continued the operations of The Siam Free Press for a few years but finally had to sell it to an American, P. A. Hoffman. Later, King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) bought it and the name of the paper was changed to The Daily Mail and later The Bangkok Daily Mail.

King Vajiravudh sold The Bangkok Daily Mail to Prince Svasti in 1927. The prince hired American journalist A. A. Freeman as the paper's editor. Freeman employed tabloid methods, using photographs and sensational coverage of issues such as corruption, to bring up the circulation. Later, Freeman was replaced by two American journalists Don Garden and St. Clair McKelway. Under their supervision, Thompson (1941) explained that "though The Daily Mail continued to score corruption in public service and to utter mildly liberal political sentiments, it was ultra-conservative in regard to economic theories."

The Bangkok Daily Mail earned some credits as one of the greatest popular and influential English-language
newspapers. However, it did not survive the coup of 1932.

Another paper of the same period was The Bangkok Times. Founded as a small, weekly journal by T. Lloyd Williams in 1887, it turned daily in 1896, and became the longest-lived paper among the pre-war English-language newspapers. The paper received support from a Thai prince in the form of machinery, type, and money.

Mitchell says:

...Despite a circulation of only 1,200, its (The Bangkok Times) influence and reputation were such that the Japanese maintained it as a propaganda vehicle for a time after their arrival, although it did not survive the war (Mitchell, 1971, p. 228).

Several English-language publications were founded in the post-war period. Among them were The Bangkok Post, Liberty, The Bangkok Tribune, Siam Rath Weekly Review, and The Standard.

Liberty was established in 1946 under the same management as the Thai-language paper Sri Krung. In 1957, a key government figure, General Pao Sriyanon, purchased Sri Krung for the purpose of having a newspaper voice to support his political party. In purchasing Sri Krung, General Pao also obtained Liberty. He asked Darrell Berrigan to be the editor of Liberty. Berrigan was offered contractual assurances of editorial independence and 35 percent of the
stock of the publishing company.

*Liberty* became *The Bangkok World* in February 1957. In September of the same year, General Pao was out of power and had to leave the country. Berrigan traded his stock for full rights to the name and goodwill. He then organized his own company (Mitchell, 1971). *The Bangkok Tribune* was a pro-government publication. It was subsidized by Prime Minister Pibulsongkram.

Blanchard describes the roles and characteristics of *The Bangkok Tribune*:

... *The Bangkok Tribune* has given some significance to an occasional editorial ax ground in this paper, the news content is meager and the writing so quaint that the paper is read generally more for amusement than for information (Blanchard, 1958, p. 216).

*Siam Rath Weekly Review* and *The Standard* were two well-established English-language weeklies. *Siam Rath Weekly Review* was founded by M. R. Kukrit Pramoj, one of the most respected, talented, and influential newsmen of Thailand. The contents of *Siam Rath Weekly Review* were mainly the translations of feature materials and editorials from the Thai-language newspapers, especially the daily *Siam Rath*, also owned by M. R. Kukrit.

*The Standard* was owned and edited by Prince Prem Burachatra. It was published in the format of a tabloid
magazine. It emphasized news of society and the royal family, and carried considerable publicity issued by the numerous foreign information agencies in Bangkok (Pickerell, 1960).

*The Bangkok Tribune, Siam Rath Weekly Review, and The Standard* do not exist today. Currently, the leading English-language newspapers in Thailand are *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*.

**Press Freedom in Thailand**

Press freedom in Thailand has fluctuated between principles and practice. The permanent constitution, adopted December 10, 1932, guarantees "full liberty of person, abode property, speech, writing, publication, education, public meeting, association, or vocation" (Mitchell, 1971). However, what really happened is:

...Thai press controls have fluctuated widely between complete freedom and virtually complete repression, depending on the particular views of the individuals in power at any given time. But the overall trend clearly has been toward controls (Mitchell, 1971, p. 216).

Paradoxically, the Thai press enjoyed its freest practice of freedom of the press under the absolute monarchy. In the reigns of King Mongkut (1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) when the press had just emerged, its numbers were small and most of the papers were
under the guidance of the kings. Therefore, there was no need for the monarchs to be concerned about legalistic controls.

The press in the reign of King Chulalongkorn was largely free to criticize. King Vajiravudh, whose reign represented the prosperous time of the newspapers, welcomed fair criticism of the government.

Thailand's first censorship law, the Newspaper Act of 1919, was enacted during the time of King Vajiravudh. The king changed his liberal attitude toward the press, largely as a result of World War I.

The Newspaper Act of 1919 imposed a mild censorship. It required that every newspaper submit two proofs of all articles concerning the military to the Chief of Staff, Prince Bispulok. The law also forbade all criticism of the bureaucracy.

The Press Law of 1927, promulgated in the reign of King Prajadipok, was a law that both directly instituted stringent controls and indirectly tried to promote increased press responsibility. Mitchell says:

...The direct controls included refusing publishing licenses to persons who had not been permanent residents of Thailand and provided for revocation of licenses at any time for reasons of public security or for publication of articles tending to undermine relations between Thailand and nations with which it had treaties. The
effort to promote responsibility came in the forms of a provision that all editors must have been educated through Matayom 6, meaning nine years of education (Mitchell, 1971, p. 216).

The Press Law of 1927 was more stringent than the Newspaper Act of 1919. The first paper closed down under this law was Sri Krung. Afterwards, the government suppressed two other papers.

Thailand's absolute monarchy came to an end on June 24, 1932, when a group of Western-educated people instituted a coup to change the country's political system into democracy. The coup group, called the People's Party, saw the need for Thailand to be modernized. The censorship law was officially abolished as part of the modernization. But, what really happened was a widening gap between the principles of freedom of the press and the practice. After the abolition of the press censorship law, the press was not as free as expected. Thompson describes the situation:

> The most striking aspect of the new government's relations with the press is the discrepancy between theory and practice. Freedom of the press is cardinal principle of democracy, and as such it has consistently received tributes from the new leaders. But in reality, censorship has been enforced with an increasing severity (Thompson, 1941, p. 795).

In September 1932, four Thai-language newspapers were shut down temporarily. Newspapermen were not allowed to attend the meetings of the Senate. Reporting news about the
army or navy was not permitted. When the newspapers argued that this prohibition was against their civil liberties, the government responded by enacting a new press law, censoring all political and military news.

Since the political situations were unstable during the period between 1932 and 1958, the press in Thailand had to confront the fluctuations concerning press controls and freedom of the press.

Newspapers in Thailand entered into the so-called "Dark Age of Journalism" in 1958, when Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat staged a coup and took power. Sarit launched heavy crackdowns on the press. Several newspapers were closed down, accused of violating the anti-Communist laws. Some journalists were put in jail, based on the same accusation.

The situation of the press under the Prime Minister Sarit may have been the worst of all after the 1932 coup. With his authoritarian views about the press, Sarit instituted Announcement No. 17 to tighten drastic restrictions on the press. The announcement says:

> During the enforcement of the present Constitution, whenever the Prime Minister deems it appropriate for the purpose of repressing or suppressing actions whether of internal or external origin which jeopardize the national security or the Throne or subvert or threaten law and order, the Prime Minister, by resolution of the Council of Ministers, is empowered to issue orders or take steps accordingly. Such orders or steps shall be
considered legal (Mitchell, 1971, p. 219).

In the era of Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn, the successor to Sarit, the control of the press lessened. The situation of the press was even better after the 1973 student revolution, which brought down the Thanom government. During 1973-1976, the press was definitely the freest under the interim government led by Professor Sanya Thammasak. Lent explains that:

...The interim government appointed by the king, and led by Professor Sanya Thammasak, was very popular with Thai journalists, for it lifted the ban on new newspapers and promulgated a constitution that guaranteed press freedom, abolished censorship and restricted ownership of newspapers to Thai's (Lent, 1979, p. 870).

However, Sanya did not abolish Announcement No. 17, issued by Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat.

The government, after the era of Sanya, still maintained the high level of freedom of the press until the bloody coup in October 1976, when the military again took power. For the first time, all newspapers in Thailand had to stop publishing.

Censorship and other controls of the press were relaxed again during the time of General Kriangsak Chamanan, who was voted prime minister in 1977. In the 1980s, when Thailand was ruled by General Prem Tinsulanonda, the country entered a new stage of political development. As the political
situation changed, the country's press developed to be a freer press as the government loosened controls. Newspapers were freer to voice their opinion. Thus, the future of the press in Thailand presents a bright prospect.

Factors that Shape the Characteristics of the Thai Press

Some factors that shape the Thai press are the characteristics of the Thai people, the lack of the press's responsibility, government control of the press and the misuse of freedom by the press. The next sections further discuss them.

The characteristics of the Thai people

Historically, Thailand is a very distinctive country. The country "is not confronted with extreme problems in which the impact of the modern world has not caused revolutionary or pathological reactions" (Mosel, 1963).

The country's unique characteristics are explained as coming from:

...fortuitous Indian and Chinese influence (harmoniously blended by Thai eclecticism), rich ethnic diversity, abundant natural and human resources, over 700 years of cherished independence, and a traditional culture delicately attuned to the time-honoring Buddhist ideals of charity, tolerance and loving kindness (Thailand, Government Public Relations Department, 1989, p. 9).

The non-colonial experience has some impact on the
characteristics of the Thai people. It distinguishes Thai people from those in neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. The Thai people are described as: friendly, fun-loving, easy-going, attractive, polite, and hospitable. Pickerell (1960) said these traits stem from several factors including "the tranquillity of the Buddhist religion, the mildness of the climate, the fertility of the soil."

The advantages of the country's geographical area make people in Thailand enjoy living standards higher than those in any other Southeast Asian country. The average Thai always has enough to eat. Blanchard (1958) says Thai people "generally are unaggressive and fond of fun and leisure."

James N. Mosel (1963) conducted a study on students' perceptions of Thai present self and desired self in Thailand. He found that when asked to characterize the Thai people, the three most frequent response categories were "carefree," "generous," and "gentle." He describes these characteristics as traits that reflect the concept of Buddhism and are salient in the Thai's traditional personality. Interestingly enough, Mosel also found that "'ambitious,' 'self-confident,' and 'nationally-minded,' are not perceived at all as part of the present Thai self; they are new and must be added." The absence of the mentioned traits, especially the "nationally-minded," can be part of
the reason why the content of the Thai newspapers rarely arouses the feeling of nationalism, independence, sovereignty, and integrity.

Moreover, the Thai people have traditionally shown a strong tendency to accept authority. Pickerell (1960) says "paternalistic rule by an elite has always been the accepted natural order of society." This explanation of Pickerell can be supported by the study of Blanchard which says:

The Thai people have an ingrained respect for the holder of office, and the society lacks all tradition of popular revolt against authority. Politics in Thailand always has been the province of the few, and officials are expected to enjoy the fruits of power. The Thai citizen therefore views the political scene---when he attends to it at all---with mixed feelings of deference, skepticism, and impotence. The greatest change currently discernible in Thai politics is the weakening of the last-named sentiment---Thai citizens, rural and urban, are slowly coming to the realization that public opinion should and can influence policy (Blanchard, 1958, p. 14).

Almost throughout history, the Thai people were ruled under an absolute monarchy. Although the old system was abolished in 1932, the Thai people never enjoyed their full rights as given in other democratic societies. The military dictators have taken turns ruling the country. However, the majority of the Thai people seems to accept authoritative governments without feelings of bitterness. This characteristic stems from the roles in Thai society
defined by Mosel (1963) as superior and subordinate.

When the roles of the Thai people in the society are limited to those of superior and subordinate, the result, as explained by Mosel, is this:

...Historically planned change has been conceived at the political top of the hierarchy and communicated downward through an all-encompassing bureaucracy, with acceptance becoming a matter of accedence of rank (Mosel, 1963, p. 189).

The characteristics of the Thai people certainty affect the way they relate to the media. Mosel found that media exposure among the people is high, and does not compare unfavorably with media habits in many Western countries (Mosel, 1963). However, those characteristics tend to prevent the Thai people from actively participating in the issues which need public opinion support. The Thai people are able to get satisfaction from the media to which they are exposed, but it does not matter that they hold the reactions toward the content presented by the media.

Mosel (1963) also says that "information is organized in anticipation of how the communicator will look to his audience and the effect that the relayed information will have upon his audience's perception of him." As an application to the Thai press, the newspapers may look at their readers as being indifferent in public affairs, slow to voice their opinions, submissive to higher authority, and
fond of fun and entertainment. Therefore, to answer the question of why the Thai press exists as it does, the newspapers may defend themselves by saying they want to gratify their readers by giving them what they want to read.

Mosel (1963) found a relationship exists between the spectator role of Thai people and their acceptance of violent and passionate behaviors. Mosel explains that "in spectatorship, empathy is employed primarily to obtain vicarious gratification and catharsis for feelings of hostility, passion and aggression which have few approved outlets in Thai cultures" (Mosel, 1963, p. 226).

According to Mosel, this assumption appears to be truthful when related to the newspaper content.

...This is especially true for newspapers and motion pictures, where even the most casual observation confirms that the Thai love to witness the mediated display of violence, passion, and malevolence toward others (Mosel, 1963, p. 226).

In the book Four Theories of the Press, Siebert et al. (1963) theorize that the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. The press in Thailand reflects what the people and the social and cultural environment are like. The conclusion by Pickerell is probably the best explanation of why newspapers in Thailand take unusual formats. Pickerell says that:
The average Thai has never been cold, never been hungry. He has long been accustomed to an authoritarian government, one highly paternalistic, rarely harsh. For him the newspaper press simply does not serve the need—other than entertainment and escapism—that it does in many other countries (Pickerell, 1960, p. 96).

The lack of the press's responsibility

The characteristics of the Thai people do not encourage the formation of a good quality and highly responsible press system in Thailand. Unfortunately, the Thai press always makes the situation worse.

Journalists perform an important function to the society at large. If they are not responsible enough, they can cause disorder in the society within which they operate. Like other countries, Thailand has its own code of ethics as a moral guideline for the press. The code of ethics was drafted by members of the Reporter's Association of Thailand and was put into use on December 5, 1977. Sathien Pantharungsri (1981) briefs the code of ethics of Thai newsmen as follows:

1. **Responsibility**—The responsibility to the legal benefits of individuals, the institutions, the nation, the religions, and the Throne.
2. **Freedom**—Freedom of expression with the sense of responsibility.
3. **Independence**—Being independent, neutral and honest. Journalists must not work against anyone for renumeration.
4. **Sincerity**—Journalists must be truthful in
the news coverage.

5. **Impartiality**--Journalists must be impartial. They must not work for influential people.

6. **Fair Play**--Journalists must not intrude upon individual's rights.

7. **Decency**--Journalists must not use obscene language and sensational photographs (Pantharangsri, pp. 118-119).

However, it seems that Thai journalists do not take the code of ethics too seriously. The irresponsible journalists still report inaccurate stories and color them for an increase in circulation sales.

Pickerell quotes a Thai columnist who depicted the Thai reporters in his column published in the English-language newspaper, The Bangkok Tribune, as saying that: Much of the reporting is rather far from accurate.

...But what they (Thai newsmen) lack in journalistic formalities they make up for in color. One of the favorite pranks they play on one another is that of making up stories. One of the reporters may come across a juicy story which he purposely distorts when telling his co-workers. The unfortunate receiver of false news dashes to his paper and a few hours later when the story appears in printed form the reporter is in search of a new occupation (Pickerell, 1960, p. 84).

Reporting inaccurate stories is not the only trait of the Thai journalists. MacDonald also mentions another type of news reporting which is the worst of all. It is the combination of rumor, conjecture, and sheer fantasy called "opium pipe" reporting. MacDonald explains that:

...The manner in which they did this was to seize
upon a stray morsel of gossip, let their mind wanders over its probable connotations, and then launch out in all directions, like an opium smoker reveling in the dream sequences of his pipe. From the various illusions thus summoned up they would choose the one which would command the biggest headline, and write it out for publication. The fact that the story often would immediately be exposed as groundless was no great cause for concern. Everyone knew that about half of the published news is inaccurate, and maybe they might get by with this one (MacDonald, 1949, p. 57).

Besides practicing unprofessional journalism, journalists in Thailand are reportedly blackmailers. Some of them are backed by politicians.

Although there are some improvements in the areas of the journalists' responsibility and credibility, especially in the 1970s, corruption, blackmail, and bribery are still widely reported to be practiced by Thai journalists. G. B. Scandlen and K. Winkler say:

The problem of the ethics remains, however, and questionable practices are reported frequently in the newspapers. It is not unusual for public figures to be approached even by one of Thailand's most prestigious newspapers with offers to withhold a story in exchange for a fee (Scandlen and Winkler, 1982, p. 306).

The irresponsibility of journalists in this regard makes them fail to play the role of journalists who should take the benefits of the people as their first priority.

When the journalists are not well self-disciplined and responsible, readers cannot expect that journalists will
present truthful and objective news stories. Newspapers often fail to report what the government is doing, and their news stories do not provide essential facts to form public opinion.

**Government control of the press**

The fact that Thai newsmen are unethical and irresponsible is not the only factor that hinders the development of the free and responsible press. Newsmen argue that the practices of press control and censorship by the government cause tremendous effects on the content of the newspapers.

Thailand's Thammasat University researcher Somkuan Kaviya did an analysis on the content of newspapers in Thailand in 1978. His study found that:

More serious papers emphasize opinion articles (more than 50%), social-problem news, economic and political events, while less serious papers, much more in number, stress sensationalism in the form of pompous front pages, gossip and personalized news (more than 25%) (Kaviya, 1978, p. 148).

Most newspapers are similar in that they have a small quantity of hard news or public and professional interest news, especially foreign coverages. Only 4-5% of the space is given to foreign news (Kaviya, 1978, p. 149).

He then concludes that:

This brief demonstration of the figure is aimed only to point out the insufficient quantity of hard news, a factor that considerably reduces the function and the responsibility of the press.
in the society of which it is a predominant part (Kaviya, 1978, p. 150).

Freedom of the press is a concept that contradicts the authoritarian cultural heritage of the Thai people. Whereas the newspapers see themselves as tools to inform society and to form public opinion, the government always looks at the press as playing the adversary role against the stability of the administration. Thus, freedom of the press in Thailand is guaranteed by the constitution, but is not put into real practice.

Pongsak Phayakavichien, a dedicated Thai newsman, argues that the content of the Thai press varies with the political situation and social conditions. When the government strictly controls the press, the press has no alternative except to publish news about crimes, human interest and other sensational news.

An obvious example to illustrate the relationship between newspaper content and the degree of press control by the government happened during the prime ministership of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1954-1963). Under his dictatorial rule, the press operated with the fear of being eliminated or punished. Sarit issued Announcement No. 17 which was a real threat to the newspaper profession. Under this law, eight categories of stories were not permitted.
They were: Reports against the royal house; slander or insult to the Thai nation; 'any writing which accuses, slanders or insults Thai governmental departments without stating precisely on which points of law they are wrong'; ambiguous writing accusing the government of infamy or blunders without stating exactly where it is wrong; false reports designed to weaken the nation's security; Communist or subversive writing designed to weaken the nation's security; false reports that may unnecessarily excite public opinion, panic, worry, or fright; and official secrets.

The enforcement of Announcement No. 17 resulted in content that "served little need, other than entertainment and escapism" (Pickerell, 1960). Furthermore, an extreme degree of inaccuracy and irresponsibility that did not merit the privilege of freedom was apparent.

The Sarit administration is said to be the most authoritarian regime of all the Thai governments formed after the 1932 revolution. His dictatorship forced the press "to dwell on the least sensitive matters to avoid possible 'problems,' and a tradition of 'journalism a' la siamoise,' embedded in the history of journalism" (Boonyaketmala, 1982).

According to Boonrak Boonyaketmala, many commentators noted Sarit was primarily responsible for the state of decay
of Thai newspaper freedom after his dictatorial administration in the late 1950s.

Sarit's authoritarian rule ended in 1963. His military heir, Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn, was less strict than Sarit in controlling the press. However, Thanom staged the coup d'etat in 1971 and this event "was a reminder for Thai newpeople that the military dictatorship had not withered away from Thai political life. This fact certainly imprinted several negative effects upon the press circle" (Boonyaketmala, 1982, p. 341).

The period under Thanom government was also the time that the newspapers developed more into an industrial enterprise. With severe legal restrictions, the press had to play the role of a follower, not a leader. Boonrak explained the performance of the newspapers in the early 1970s:

...The pursuits of the Thai press in the early 1970s were labeled by a critic as 'journalism of conformity,' which inclined to lead the public towards political passivity. The decay of political morality resulted in unimaginative journalism which timely conformed to the political whims of the military men in power (Boonyaketmala, 1982, p. 344).

Under this circumstance, it happened that the press emphasized its commercial role rather than operating professionally. Increasing the circulation became the
primary goal of Thailand's newspapers. It is noted that the press under the Thanom administration

...used excessively exploited sex and sensationalism while unable to deal with political issues.... Because of the prevalence of severe press laws, Thai newspapers for the most part seemed reluctant to develop themselves into an effective watchdog of the military dictatorship (Boonyakettala, 1982, p. 342).

On October 14, 1973, Thai university students, with the support of people nationwide, rallied against the Thanom military regime and were able to turn Thai political events upside down. Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn, Field Marshall Prapas Charusathien, and Colonel Narong Kittikachorn, the three most powerful figures in Thailand at that time, were toppled and forced to leave the country. This political event returned an atmosphere of democracy to the nation. The interim government, led by Professor Sanya Thammasak, was appointed by King Bhumipol Adulyadej to control the situation.

The Sanya government guaranteed full freedom of the press. Freedom of the press was written and promulgated in the new constitution. Publishers did not have to submit their articles for prior censorship. Newspaper licenses boomed during this period. The Thai press came into a lot of changes.

When free from government control, the Thai press
assumed more responsibility. A new style of Thai journalists emerged during this period. They practiced objective reporting, published responsible comments, and took a new approach to national affairs.

Boonrak Boonyaketchal, in view of the change in Thai newspapers says that:

The most remarkable new styles of journalism have been perhaps reflected in Prachachart, Prachathippatai, Siangmai, Athipat and The Nation. Printed in black and white, these five newspapers were distinctly different from their counterparts which were fancifully published in many eye-striking colors (Boonyaketchal, 1982, p. 360).

Distinguished among these newspapers are the English-language newspaper The Nation and the Thai-language paper Prachachart, which operated under the same group of associates. These two newspapers, besides being committed to libertarian journalistic concepts, also "emphasized the principles of political democracy, national sovereignty, and economic independence" (Boonyaketchal, 1982).

Hence, government control and censorship have placed a great amount of influence in shaping the newspaper's content.

The misuse of freedom by the press

The students' revolution, on October 14, 1973, brought a sudden change to the press circle. A new type of journalistic practice emerged and was very active in its
operations. The Sanya government was liberal and reportedly "against press control." Sanya's cabinet, however, "did urge the press not to publish 'Fanciful, groundless, and factless stories and rumors,' which might affect government stability" (IRI Report, 1977, p. 10).

It is undeniable that the change in political atmosphere did not bring old style Thai journalism to an end. The availability of press freedom, therefore, seemed to encourage journalists to be more unprofessional and irresponsible on a wider scale.

The IRI Report says that:

By mid 1974 pressmen were accused of indulging in sensationalism and personal muckraking, spreading rumors, doctoring photographs, carrying inaccurate reports and unsubstantiated charges. Additionally, papers such as Dao Siam, Raiwan Banterng, Siam, Thai Rath and Daily News published regular obscene columns: gossip columnists accepted bribes to withhold stories; other journalists were on dual payrolls, and small papers (called hired guns) threatened businessmen with blackmail (IRI Report, 1977, pp. 8,9).

The freedom of the press, provided during the period of Sanya, did not increase the awareness of responsibility among some Thai journalists. It is noted that:

...Although political changes since mid-October 1973 have had a direct and positive impact upon the profession of journalism in this nation, Thai newspapers seem to be the slowest to make necessary and progressive adjustments for good...One of the leaders of the new journalists in Thailand bitterly criticized the dominating
group of irresponsible newspapermen as being unable to cope with the atmosphere of democracy available since the deposition of the 'Terrible Trio,' meaning Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Field Marshal Prapas Charusathien and Colonel Narong Kittikachorn, the most powerful figures in Thai politics prior to the October students' revolt (Boonyakhetmala, 1982, p. 335).

After the end of the Sanya interim government in 1975, the coalition governments of M. R. Seni Pramoj and M. R. Kukrit Pramoj still allowed the press to enjoy the same degree of freedom as it did during Sanya's regime. While the new highly professional journalists were active in creating the responsible press on the one hand, on the other hand, unethical journalists still exploited sex, sensation, violence, and extortion for their own benefit.

As newspapers misused their freedom, they became too free. The press lacked self-regulation, was corrupt, and ignored the libel laws. Boonrak Boonyakhetmala notes that:

...In general, most of the old line journalists did not think of themselves as instruments of change among the masses; in fact, they were willing to print anything that sold, or brought occasional rewards to them (Boonyakhetmala, 1982, p. 355).

When M. R. Kukrit Pramoj was approved by the Parliament to be the Thai prime minister in 1975, he stated that irresponsible press would not be tolerated. However, during his administration, sensationalistic journalism "was still practiced on a large scale; reporters and photographers
continued to be injured or murdered for their critical writing, and new papers glutted the market" (IRI Report, 1977, p. 11).

Thailand's high literacy rate, increased nationwide newspaper readership, and the availability of freedom of the press during the period between 1973 and 1976 should have made the newspaper ripe for responsible journalistic practices. However, journalists were unable to properly use freedom of the press which was suddenly available to them. Therefore, most of the newspapers failed to be self-regulated and self-censored. They did not provide accurate information, serve the needs of the people, nor protect the benefits of the public. The atmosphere of freedom did not help eliminate the existence of various stagnant elements hindering the development of a responsible press.

There is no time in Thai history except during 1973 and 1976 that the concepts of old and new journalism so obviously worked against each other. Boonrak says:

...The new generation of journalists, with a new level of political consciousness has stepped onto the scene and made itself heard by the old guard, calling the writing of the latter, 'dinosaur journalism,' meaning a journalism style that lags behind the age (Boonyaketmala, 1982, p. 361).

At the same time, some of the newly-emerged new style newspapers were accused of being ultra-leftist. The clash
between the two groups did not lead to more professional journalistic standards of the old ones. The bloody coup of October 6, 1976 ended the battle between the two concepts, and, moreover, terminated the freedom the press enjoyed by the newspapers for a short period of time.

Somkuan Kaviya, a Thai scholar, views this situation:

...That brief experience has given more or less understandable lessons to the Government now in power, to the Press, to the students and to the readers as well. Extremism in exercising power, whether it be politics, economy or communication, would end up in chaos (Kaviya, 1978, p. 149).

It was about a decade ago that the concept of "development journalism" was suggested to be the most appropriate journalistic practice in a developing country like Thailand. Somkuan proposed that the development of the nation could be achieved if the government and people from all walks of life would take the first step to think of:

...Moderate actions with a more conciliatory tone and cooperative spirit toward the nation, the religion and the king. But the most acceptable way is probably found in the 'middle path' in which every sector could progress slowly with respect to each other and which could help conserve national heritages (Kaviya, 1978, p. 149).

Somkhun also says that the purpose of news presentation and information should fall in line with four key themes, namely: freedom, social responsibility, education and development. However, he noted that in Thailand, it must be
realized that:

...not all newspapers publish news for news' sake or for public and social interest, that only some are beginning to offer certain columns with a view to supporting national development, and that most of them present news in order to serve political or commercial interests of their own or of certain pressure groups (Kaviya, 1978, p. 149).

Kaviya (1978) also noted that the press in Thailand has so far not played a significant role in supporting the development of the nation in the areas of the economy, society, education, culture, and national security. However, he argues that if the government has concrete policies to promote the press to be more development-supported, it would be easier for the press to follow.

As a Third World country, Thailand still struggles with its own economic disadvantages. The press in Thailand, therefore, must dedicate a greater amount of effort than its counterpart in the Western world toward helping to upgrade the standards of living of the people.

Alan Chakley says apart from their tasks to inform and to interpret the facts to the public, the press in developing countries has a third task, to "promote."

Chakley reminds the press in developing countries that:

...It is your job not only to give the facts of economic life, and to interpret those facts, but to promote them, to bring them home to your readers. You must get your readers to realize how serious the development problem is, to think about
the problem, to open their eyes to the possible solutions--to punch that hole in the vicious circle (Chakley, 1968, p. 3).

G. B. Scandlen and K. Winkler surveyed the attitudes of journalists in the Bangkok and provincial areas. They found that among 100 percent of the respondents, twenty of them felt that the role of newspapers in Thai society was to inform and "benefit" society, but did not believe the role of newspapers was to entertain.

To practice development journalism, journalists have to:

...critically examine and evaluate the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between the planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is (Aggarivala, 1979, p. 181).

Coverage of development news in Thailand is said to still be insufficient, since the Thai press devotes much more space to advertising, crime and disaster news, and Thai government affairs than to topics such as economic activity, labor, or agriculture. The insufficiency in development news coverage in Thailand may be explained by the reasons given by Schramm and Atwood that neither the pace of news itself nor the training of the typical journalists has been especially well-suited to development news. A journalist is typically trained to report events rather than to analyze
situations. The reporting of development news also requires the kind of investigation and analytical treatment for which most reporters are not prepared (Schramm and Atwood, 1981).

No one knows when the time will come for Thai journalists to accept their role as the promoters of national development. However, the public sector in Thailand and some international mass media organizations have been working together to draw more attention and participation of newspapers in Thailand to rural development. It is hoped that with more professional training, journalists will be inspired to practice development journalism as part of their operation.
CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY

A content analysis of The Bangkok Post and The Nation was conducted. These two newspapers were selected for this research because they have the largest circulation and readership among the English-language newspapers in Thailand. The study was based upon 18 copies of The Nation issued on the twenty-first of each month during the year of 1988 and the first six months during 1989. The twenty-first day is a purpose random number which had been selected. Eighteen copies of The Bangkok Post issued on the same days and years were also examined. Three of the twenty-first days of issues were on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Two of the twenty-first days of issues were on Monday, Friday and Saturday.

The newspapers were analyzed by content analysis. Kerlinger (1964) describes content analysis as a method of observation in which produced communications are analyzed by a researcher who asks questions about the communications under study and attempts to make inferences from these communications. He also defines content analysis as a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

There are three main objectives of this study: 1) to
compare the amount of news coverage in each given category for The Bangkok Post and The Nation; 2) to determine to what news categories these two newspapers devote much of their space; and 3) to examine and compare the amount and types of development news coverage of the two newspapers.

This study analyzed the content of all items appearing as news, features, editorials, columns, and photographs. Excluded from the study were classified ads and announcements. News content was divided into 16 categories. Most of the category classifications were refined from the study of Schramm and Atwood (1981).

Content Categories

The content categories used in this study were:

1. Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, Political Violence
2. Foreign Relations
3. Domestic government
4. Economic, Business, Labor and Agriculture
5. Science and Technology
6. Medicine and Health
7. Education
8. Accidents and Disasters
9. Judicial and Crime
10. Energy, Environment and Conservation
11. Human Right
12. Sports
13. Mass Media, Art, Culture and Entertainment
14. Social and Human Interest
15. Religion
16. Development News
17. Other

The Development News category was divided into 11 sub-categories as follows:

1. Economics and Business
2. Social Services
3. Rural Development
4. Agriculture Technology
5. Industrial Technology
6. Medicine and Health
7. Transportation and Communication
8. Employment
9. Education
10. Others
11. Not Applicable
Definition of Development News

The term "Development News" used in this study followed the definition given by Schramm and Atwood:

...All stories relating to social and economic growth or improvement where human planning and effort are involved. A key concept is 'intentional': News of economic and social development involves a government, private organization, group or individual trying to improve conditions. For example, the daily grain market reports are not ordinarily codable as development news, but a story of a new way to increase grain production would be. A story about establishment of new literacy training centers would be. A story of a new discovery would be if it is shown to contribute potentially to human and social betterment. Stories about the failure of economic and social plans and activities are also development stories (Schramm and Atwood, 1981, p. 339).

The Measurement

Column inches

The measuring of column inches involved the following procedure. To determine the column inches of a story, the space of the headline and the space of the subheads, by lines, texts, and the pictorial items (either illustrations or cartoons under the same headline) were measured and converted into column inches.

Computing the data

Data were evaluated by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version X (SPSS X).
Frequencies were developed to show the overall number of stories and the column inches of these stories corresponding to the variables studied.

For each newspaper, the data are presented in tabular form. Each table consists of news categories and a percentage of the sample data. The percentage was calculated by dividing the frequency of coverage by the total number of news items. The percentage allowed comparisons among the frequency distribution. The study also ranked the position of each news category in each newspaper according to its most frequent coverage.

Reliability test

In order to ascertain possible bias of coding, an intercoder reliability test was employed in which three Thai graduate students were given three news stories to code. One is a student in Food Technology and the other two are students in Journalism and Mass Communication. The students coded the news stories at separate times without seeing the results of the others or of the researcher.

The reliability test was done before the researcher began to code all news in the two newspapers. The Holsti reliability formula was used:

\[
\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{(N_1+N_2)}
\]
M refers to the number of category assignments upon which two coders agree, and N1+N2 refers to the total of the category assignments made by the two coders.

Reliability test results

Researcher and coder #1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>30/30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>28/28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>26/26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researcher and Coder #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>30/30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>28/28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>26/26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researcher and coder #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>30/30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>28/28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>24/26</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This check resulted in a 99 percent agreement among the coders and the researcher.
CHAPTER V. FINDINGS

This study examines the news content of the English-language newspapers: The Bangkok Post and The Nation. The units of study are news, feature, photographs, and editorials. The study attempts to answer these questions:

1. What is the news category which receives the greatest coverage in The Bangkok Post and The Nation?

2. To what extent do the two newspapers report development news?

3. What is the development topic which receives the greatest coverage in The Bangkok Post and The Nation?

To carry out this study, this writer selected 18 copies each of newspapers from The Bangkok Post and The Nation as samples. All 36 copies were issued on the twenty-first day of every month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989. There were 3 issues of the following days: Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday and Tuesday and 2 issues of these days: Monday, Friday and Saturday. The news content was classified into 17 categories as described in Chapter IV. From 18 copy samples, a total of 2,036 news items and 1,719 news items from The Bangkok Post and The Nation, respectively were coded into the 17 categories.
Table 1. The percentage of news types in 17 categories of *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Category</th>
<th>The Bangkok Post</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, Political Violence</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Government</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents and Disasters</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial and Crime</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Environment, Conservation</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media, Art, Culture, Entertainment</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Human Interest</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development News</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 2,036  N= 1,719
Table 1 shows the percentage of news stories reported by The Bangkok Post and The Nation by percentage and in each of the 17 classified news categories. Table 1 also shows that The Bangkok Post gives more coverage than The Nation of news about Domestic Government, Medicine and Health as well as Education. The Nation covers more of these news categories than The Bangkok Post: Foreign Relations, Science and Technology, and Social and Human Interest.

This content analysis finds that the news category which receives the greatest coverage by The Bangkok Post is Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture news. The Sports category ranks second, followed by the Domestic Government category (see Table 2).

Table 3 shows The Nation pays the greatest attention to the coverage of Economic, Business, Labor, and Agriculture news. The category ranks first among the 17 news categories. Sports ranks second, followed by Social and Human interest.

Table 4 shows the amount of Development News reported by The Bangkok Post and The Nation by percentage and in each of 10 Development news categories. Out of 2,036 news articles, there are 96 Development news items reported by The Bangkok Post. There are 44 Development news items out of 1,719 news items reported by The Nation.
Table 2. Ranking of news categories in The Bangkok Post (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989) by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Government</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, Political Violence</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development News</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Human Interest</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media, Art, Culture, Entertainment</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents and Disasters</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial and Crime</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Environment, Conservation</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 2036
Table 3. Ranking of news categories in *The Nation* (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989) by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Human Interest</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, Political Violence</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Government</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media, Art, Culture, Entertainment</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development News</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents and Disaster</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial and Crime</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Environment, Conservation</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 1,719
Table 4. The percentage of Development news in 10 categories of The Bangkok Post and The Nation (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development News Category</th>
<th>The Bangkok Post</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Business</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Technology</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Technology</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Communication</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the amount of Development news items reported by these two newspapers (see Table 4), the study shows that The Bangkok Post gives more coverage in the Development news in the area of Economic and Business while The Nation devotes attention to the Rural Development news. The Bangkok Post reports a small amount of Development news amounting to 4.7 percent. News about Economic and Business received the greatest coverage among
the Development News category (see Table 5).

Table 5. Ranking of Development news topics in The Bangkok Post (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989) by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development News Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Business</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Communication</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Technology</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Technology</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 96

The Nation's Development news topic receiving the greatest coverage was Rural Development news, followed by Economic and Business. Transportation and Communication news category ranked third. (see Table 6).
Table 6. Ranking of Development news topics in The Nation (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six months of 1989) by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development News Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Business</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Communication</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Technology</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Technology</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 44

Column Inches Measurement

The 2,036 news items of The Bangkok Post occupied 32,090 column inches. There were 31,595 column inches occupied by 1,719 news items of The Nation. The Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture news category had 6,185 column inches. Most of them are less than 12 inches in length. Like The Bangkok Post, the column inches of Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture news category of The Nation
were the largest category. It had 7,074 out of 31,595 column inches, and most of the stories were less than 15 inches in length. The Bangkok Post devoted 1,417 column inches to the development news category, and most of the stories were less than 10 inches in length. The Nation devoted 592 column inches for the development news category, and most of the stories were less than 9 inches in length (see Table 7).

From Table 7, the average length of the Foreign Relations news items of The Bangkok Post was 9.2 inches while The Nation's was 16.2. The average length of the Science and Technology news items of The Bangkok Post was 5.8 inches, and The Nation's was 13.0. The average length of the Education news items for The Bangkok Post was 13.93 inches and for The Nation was 64.4. The average length of the Social and Human Interest news items for The Bangkok Post was 30.88 inches and for The Nation was 25.6. The average length of Mass Media, Art, Entertainment news items of The Bangkok Post was 46.7 inches, and The Nation was 40.1. The average length for Science and Technology news items of The Bangkok Post was 0.45, and The Nation was 13.0. The average length for news items of the remaining categories between these two newspapers was not significantly different (see Table 7).
Table 7. The amount of column inches of the news items of *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (twenty-first day issues of each month during 1988 and the first six month of 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Category</th>
<th>The Bangkok Post</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column Frequency</td>
<td>Column Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inches</td>
<td>inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military, Defense, War</td>
<td>3462</td>
<td>3262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Operations, Political Violence</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>2645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Government</td>
<td>4128</td>
<td>3252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture</td>
<td>6185</td>
<td>7074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>513</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents and Disasters</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial and Crime</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Environment, Conservation</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>5087</td>
<td>4308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>329</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media, Art, Entertainment</td>
<td>3975</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Human Interest</td>
<td>2656</td>
<td>4974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Category</th>
<th>The Bangkok Post</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column Frequency</td>
<td>Column Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inches</td>
<td>inches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development News</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>32090</td>
<td>2036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there are some characteristics which The Bangkok Post and The Nation have in common. First is the prominence of the news items. The news items reported by both newspapers are mostly on inside pages and above the fold. Secondly, most of the news items are neither accompanied by a photograph nor informative graphics. Most of the news items are not a part of a series. Fourth, if the news items are foreign news, they are provided by the foreign wire service such as the American wire services (AP, UPI) and the British wire service (REUTER). News from freelance writers is rarely found in both newspapers. The type of news, the fifth, almost entirely falls into the spot news category. More than half of the news items are foreign news is sixth, and last, among the foreign news, the news from the United States was most often reported, followed by the news from the United Kingdom, Japan and the U.S.S.R.
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS

The data from the study show that:
1. Economic, Business, Labor, and Agriculture is the news category which received the greatest coverage in the Bangkok Post and the Nation.
2. Both newspapers reported a small amount of development news when compared with the total amount of news reported.
3. Economic and Business was the development news topic which received the greatest coverage in the Bangkok Post.
4. Rural development was the development news topic which received the greatest coverage in the Nation.

The Nation appears more interested in covering soft news such as Social and Human Interest than the Bangkok Post, since this news category was in third place in terms of the amount of news reported in The Nation. The Bangkok Post, claiming to be nationally inclined, reported more news about Domestic government affairs than The Nation. The Domestic Government category ranked third among 17 news categories in The Bangkok Post in terms of the amount of news coverage.

The data from the column inches measurement showed that the Economic, Business, Labor, Agriculture news items have the greatest space in both newspapers. The two newspapers
devoted a small amount of space to the development news items. It can be concluded that both The Bangkok Post and The Nation did not pay much attention to development news.

It appears The Bangkok Post devoted its space to hard news such as Foreign Relations news, Science and Technology, Education news less than The Nation, when looking at the average length of these types of news items. When looking at the data from the percentage measurement, the news about Social and Human Interest ranks third in The Nation with a percentage of 11.3. At the same time, when looking at the data from column inches measurement, the average length of the Social and Human Interest news items are 30.8 inches while The Nation is 25.6. Therefore, soft news reporting could be one unique aspect of The Nation and The Bangkok Post.

There are not many differences between The Bangkok Post and The Nation in their reporting of news in other categories. Both The Bangkok Post and The Nation covered almost the same amount of news in the categories of Sports, Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, and Political Violence, Medicine and Health, Energy, Environment and Conservation, Mass Media, Art, Culture and Entertainment, Accidents and disasters, Judicial and Crime, Education, and Religion. The rankings of these news
categories in both newspapers were almost the same.

The economy and the business sectors of Thailand during these past years have flourished. Many foreign companies from Japan and South Korea became interested in running their businesses in Thailand. It is not surprising that the Economic, Business, Labor and Agriculture news category ranked first among the 17 categories.

The fact that these two newspapers devoted more than half of their space to report foreign news proves that Thailand's English-language newspapers have to rely very heavily on news sources from abroad. However, considering the limited number of readers and the specialized pattern of a readership who see the importance of knowing about worldwide events, the English language newspapers may feel that it is their main duty to provide their readers with world news.

E. Lloyd Sommerlad mentions that:

...To an outside observer, it often appears that English language papers depend too much on the foreign wire service, with disproportionate space devoted to international news and features. This may reflect readers' interest, but it is more likely to be a carry-over from the past, or may simply be a result of the fact that it is easier to print news agency stories than to originate local copy (Sommerlad, 1966, p. 4).

Regarding development news, the findings of the study
showed that the two newspapers are not doing enough work in helping develop Thailand. Although there are some news reports about Rural Development, Economic and Business, Social Service, the amount of coverage is very small. Furthermore, there was no news coverage on the topic of Employment in either newspaper; also no news coverage topics of Agricultural Technology and Education in The Nation were included in the sample selected for the study.

However, this is not a surprising result. The English-language newspapers in Thailand were established at the inspiration of American and British journalists from the beginning. It is inevitable that the Western background is a major influence in shaping the news content of the newspapers, especially The Bangkok Post. The Nation, although a Thai-owned paper, shares the same groups of readers as The Bangkok Post. Thus, it is difficult for The Nation not to follow The Bangkok Post's pattern because it may lose readers.

From the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that the normative theory is not applicable for these two English-language newspapers because they did not report much of the development news; moreover, they devote more of their space to soft news such as Sport news and Social and Human Interest. As a result, Thailand cannot place high
expectations on the English-language newspapers to play a
greater role in national development. The reports of
domestic affairs are also less than the reports of foreign
news. The English language newspapers, at this time, can be
the opinion indicators of only the highly-educated and
affluent people, but they do not represent the majority of
the country.

With the rapid growth of The Nation during the past few
years, there is some hope that the Thai people will be more
interested in reading the English-language newspapers for
some information which they may not be able to receive from
the Thai language press. The Bangkok Post and The Nation
also need to improve their news content by covering more
local and development news. Whenever the papers present
news concerning the welfare and prosperity of the people,
they will become the real representatives of the mass media
in a developing country such as Thailand.

Thai language newspapers have greater influence upon
the readers nationwide than their English-language
counterparts. Although there are some improvements needed
in their professional performances, the Thai press places a
heavy emphasis on sensationalism, sex, and violence. What
Thailand must do to improve and develop her press system is
to provide more training to journalists and make them
realize that they can help develop the nation by providing news and information that can be used to upgrade the standards of living of the Thai people, especially in the poverty-stricken areas. The idea can be successful only if there is cooperation among the government sector, the newspapers, and the readers.

Implications

This content analysis was conducted to determine the quantity of news rather than the quality of news. An extensive study and comparison of the quality of news content in both newspapers should be conducted so that results of the study can be used to better the performances of the papers.

The competition between the two newspapers in terms of attracting more advertisers may have some effect upon the content of the news. This is another area that would be interesting to study.

The press system in Thailand is unique. The system is also young as compared to the press in the Western world. More and more studies are needed to help better the performances of the newspapers and the journalists, and to make the government realize that newspapers, indeed all media, can have a greater influence in national development.
If the information system of the country develops, if the newspapers provide more accurate and truthful information, if the journalists are more responsible and professional and respect the code of ethics, the results can be the improvement in the welfare and standards of living of the Thai people.
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Finally, I dedicate my thesis to my beloved parents and my brother as a remembrance in return for their never-ending love, support, and encouragement in all my endeavors.
APPENDIX
CODING SHEETS

1. Newspaper ID number  column 1-2
2. Item number 3-5
3. Size of item (in column inches, incl. headline) 6-8
4. Prominence of item 9
   1= very high (generally front page, above fold)
   2= high (generally front page, below fold)
   3= medium (inside page, above fold)
   4= low (inside page, below fold)
   Blank 10
5. Accompanied by photograph or illustration 11
   1= yes 2= no
6. Accompanied by informative graphics 12
   1= yes 2= no
7. Part of series 13
   1= yes 2= no
8. Provider of item 14
   1= newspaper's own staff
   2= American wire service
   3= other European wire service
   4= freelance writer
   5= none given or can't tell
9. Type of item 15
   1= spot news
   2= feature
   3= editorial/opinion
   4= column
   5= cartoon
   6= photograph
10. Story type 16
1 = Domestic news
2 = Foreign news
3 = other or uncertain

11. Country/countries referred to (code up to three)
   17-19
   20-22
   23-25
   Blank 26

12. News categories (code up to three)
   27-28
   29-30
   31-32
   01 = Military, Defense, War, Intelligence Operations, Political Violence
   02 = Foreign Relations
   03 = Domestic Government
   04 = Economic, Business, Labor and Agriculture
   05 = Science and Technology
   06 = Medicine and Health
   07 = Education
   08 = Accidents and Disasters
   09 = Judicial, Crime
   10 = Energy, Environment and conservation
   11 = Human Right
   12 = Sports
   13 = Mass Media, Art, Culture and Entertainment
   14 = Social and Human Interest
   15 = Religion
   16 = Development News
   17 = Other

13. Development news category (code up to three)
   34-35
   36-37
   38-39
   01 = Economics and Business
   02 = Social Service
   03 = Rural Development
   04 = Agricultural Technology
   05 = Industrial Technology
   06 = Medicine and Health
   07 = Transportation and Communication
   08 = Employment
   09 = Education
   10 = Other
   11 = Not applicable