

MASS VS QUALITY NEWSPAPERS IN THAILAND,
1976 AND 1989: A COMPARATIVE
CONTENT ANALYSIS

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PREFACE

This study is a comparative content analysis of Thailand's mass and quality newspapers in 1976 and in 1989. The primary objectives are to find out if the change in the system of government between these two years affected the distribution of content between the two newspapers and within each newspaper between the two periods. Western theories of the press like Hachten's five concepts of the press, representing a static model, and Schillinger's dynamic motive of the world press, representing a dynamic model, are used in this study to test if they are applicable to explain, describe, and predict Thai press obligations and performances.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

Thailand is moving from the pattern of a traditional society toward that of a modern industrial society. This process of national maturation, together with political upheaval, has caused many changes in Thailand's press over the past few years. As drastic change takes place, previous studies of the Thai press may no longer be valid. Thus, a current analysis is needed to update previous studies and to examine if the press is growing and changing in concert with the structure and development of society.

Background

Western scholars tend to view the press in developing countries as producing small and poorly printed papers that are struggling economically and willing to print anything that sells, or that brings them occasional rewards (Luter and Richstad, 1983; Lent, 1982). These scholars comment that third world societies have no understanding of the needs and demands of a free press. The national press in these countries never offends the government; the editors and reporters help carry out the government agenda rather

than stand on the sidelines and snipe at government policies (Meisler, 1978). At the 1965 Assembly of the International Press Institute, Western scholars commented,

Some of the journalists in developing countries do not have a sufficient background of knowledge, experience and judgment to enable them to restrain from destructive or inflammatory criticism which, exposed to populations which have not yet learned the art of political stability, could lead to serious unrest and even revolutionary activity (Sommerlad, 1966, p. 143).

For Asia, at a meeting of experts on the Development of News Agencies in Asia, one scholar stated:

In Asia, a gate which frequently regulates the flow of news can be named "What Sells," and in Asia, too, that name carries both its two meanings: which news will interest most readers, and also which news will make the newspaper or other media most attractive to the advertiser (Chopra, 1977, p. 4).

According to Western scholars' opinion like Merrill, at that time, except for China, Japan, and India, there were no quality newspapers in Asia, including Thailand (1968). The Thai press was viewed as nonprofessional. Alexander McDonald, founder of the English language newspaper in Thailand, The Bangkok Post, wrote,

Journalism in Siam was of a kind to make men like Pulitzer and Greeley whirl like dervishes in their graves. It was not a profession but a happy-go-lucky, unprincipled, catch-as-catch-can game, played by ink-stained saints and sinners (1949, p. 54).

Western scholars noted that Thai newspapers rose and fell very quickly and the press-government relations changed suddenly. The newspapers gave readers very little real news and interpretation. The press fluctuated between

extreme gaudiness and sensationalism and a kind of controlled drabness. They contained little criticism of the government, few controversial issues and almost no editorials; newspapers mainly present straight news, human-interest stories, or just literary ramblings (Merrill, Bryan, and Alisky, 1970).

Concerning developmental news, Western scholars have said that the Thai writers, especially in Thai-language newspapers, are more interested in attracting and entertaining the readers than in providing accurate facts or mobilizing public opinion (Blanchard, 1958).

However, during the past 13 years, political, economic, social, and cultural changes have made considerable impact on newspapers in Thailand regarding their content, performance and economic framework. One cannot state categorically that the news reporting in the Thai press is sensational and inaccurate (Olarikkachat, 1987). Thus, the Western scholars' comments about the Thai press may no longer be valid.

Many Thai journalists view themselves as being responsible, and serving the function of informing, entertaining, educating, and developing the society (Pluwangkarn, 1987). They argue that these Western scholars' views toward the Thai press are exaggerated; not all newspapers in Thailand are publishing sensationalized news, and some of them can be labeled quality newspapers (Olarikkachat, 1987). In addition, being excluded from

Merrill's 50 best dailies does not make Third World newspapers unworthy of study. They may, to some degree, have some elite traits, called "elite-appeal journalism" (Cooper, 1984, p. 107) and merit some attention.

Thai journalists divide newspapers in their country into two types: popular newspapers, led by Thai Rath, and quality newspapers, led by Siam Rath (Hiranrak, 1986; SangUrai, 1982). The more serious dailies (for example, Siam Rath) emphasize opinion articles, social problems, and economic and political events, while most papers (the popular ones like Thai Rath) stress sensationalism in the form of "pompous [sic] front pages, gossip and personalized news" (Lent, 1982). In contrast to the Western scholars' standards of traits of elite or quality newspapers (to be discussed in Chapter II), Koekoon Kupatarat and Anantana Unginun, Thai mass communication professors, have described the Thai quality newspapers as

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

However, among the leaders of the Thai government, the universities and even the press itself, there are conflicting opinions about the nature of the press, about its role in developing the Thai society, about its effectiveness in broadening the understanding and experience of the Thai people, and about the nature of its content (Phayakavichien, 1971). The Thai government and

the university scholars accuse the press of being irresponsible and failing to serve the public need. They claim that Thai newspapers are sensational, lack constructive news, and emphasize crime news and entertainment features, but play a minor or non-existent role in national development (Somvichien, 1968).

The press replies that the fluctuation of Thai politics, resulting in continuous change in press policies, prevents it from responsibly serving society (Suppadilok, 1984). This, then, implies the application of Western scholars' belief that press systems reflect the values of the political and economic systems of the nation within which they operate (Hachten, 1987). This simply means that press freedom and performance are determined by the government in that country.

This study applies Hachten's five concepts of the press and Professor Schillinger's "dynamic theory of world press motivation: an integrative model" (Hachten, 1987; Schillinger, 1989) to examine whether Thai press performance under different political systems and motives complies with its expected role as expressed in those two concepts, and, also to see if this holds true for both quality and mass newspapers. The author chose to examine the press in 1976 and in 1989 because during these two periods the press operated under two different systems of government with different press policies. More discussion on press concepts and motives, and how they are applied to the study is

presented in Chapter II.

Statement of the Problem

The question the author attempts to answer is "Is the change in the system of government between 1976 and 1989 related to the distribution of content topics between the two newspapers and within each newspaper over the 13-year period?"

To make this topic easier to work with, the author has broken down the research question into three parts:

1) Does the content distribution of the two newspapers differ from 1976 to 1989?

2) Do the two newspapers differ from each other as Thai journalists have described them?

3) Are Western theories of the press, such as Hachten's five concepts of the press and Professor Schillinger's dynamic triangle of primary motives, validated by Thai press content and performance?

The results of this study will validate theories of the press for the two Thai newspapers in order to support the classification of these newspapers as "mass" or "elite" and to determine how the newspapers have changed over time.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be beneficial to:

1) Newspaper Readers. Many Western scholars agree in general that communication and national development are

inseparable. Daniel Lerner has concluded that mass communication serves as the great multiplier in development: "it is a device that can spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes more quickly and widely..." (Schramm, 1964, p. 47). Schramm himself wrote,

the task of the mass media of information and the news media of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development and in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilizing human resources behind the national effort (Roger and Shoemaker, 1971, p. 27).

As communication is a vehicle for and a subject of education, which in turn results in national development, the readers need to know to what extent they are exposed to development/intellectual news. They should have a chance to know which newspaper gives the diet of information that, if they are well informed, will help them cope with their lives.

2) Media People and Scholars. This research will help clarify to what extent the two types of newspapers have changed over time and whether they have diverged from their characterization of being mass or quality newspapers as others have described them. It will examine whether the degree of government control accounts for media performance as the Thai press has been claiming. And, the results of this study will help educators test their prediction that, as a newspaper becomes a tool of national development, it will move toward being a quality newspaper. For example, Hiranrak, the dean of the Journalism and Mass Communication

Department at Chulalongkorn University, predicted that

in the future, the newspaper will be thicker because readers want a variety of content; they want to know more things which affect their lives. Newspapers will lean toward giving more intellectual rather than entertaining stories. They will provide more economic, political, and social improvement news in the forms of analytical news stories (1986, p. 164).

3) Journalism Students. Students used to express their frustration due to the lack of current information:

How can we reform our mass media with expediency when we do not exactly know how many of each medium we have, where they are and what and how they are doing? (Kaviya, 1971, p. 2)

From this objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the content of these two newspapers, journalism students will have access to another source of up-to-date research, which is a good tool in education.

Limitations

The author lacks access to the current government's press policies. Although Chatichai Choonhawan, the premier, is quoted as saying, "there is no problem; please feel free to criticize," (Kampa-U, 1989, p.1) it is hard to say that the press is operating freely. The strict press policies handed down from the time when dictatorial governments were in power are still valid and can be used whenever the government feels necessary. Greater insights might have resulted if the author had access to information about how editors select news and their comments or opinions about the current press policies.

Organization of the Study

Chapter II discusses the characteristics of mass vs. quality newspapers, press theories and designated roles, Thai politics and press performance under different government systems, the power of content analysis, and previous studies concerning the content of Thai newspapers.

Chapter III discusses in detail the research design.

Chapter IV presents the research findings and analysis.

Chapter V contains the conclusions of this study and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mass Newspaper vs Quality Newspaper

John C. Merrill divides newspapers worldwide into two main categories: mass newspapers and elite newspapers (Merrill, 1968). The mass or popular newspaper is somewhat like entertainment that is based on superficial, alarmist, sensationalist, and gossip-like stories. Anne M. Cooper described mass newspapers as

press which offers scattershot items--short, disorganized snippets of this and that--rather than a synthesized look at the world. At its most extreme, it is trivial, entertaining, splashy, superficial, alarmist, voyeuristic, gossipy and sensationalistic. It emphasizes personalities over ideas, atypical incidents of conflict over long-range trends. It tends to create envy, suspicion, and nationalistic feeling rather than emphasizing similarities between nations (1984, p. 106).

The elite, prestige, or quality newspaper, on the other hand, is fact-oriented, serious, knowledgeable, articulate, and not flippant. It gives readers a heavy diet of news along with views of politics/international relations, business/economics, education/science/culture, and the humanities with emphasis on the fine arts. An elite newspaper tends to deal with the news more seriously and to stress political and economic affairs, the serious side of

social problems, and scientific development.

Merrill and Fischer summarized the characteristics of the free elite newspaper as:

- 1) Independence; financial stability; integrity; social concern; good writing and editing.
- 2) Strong opinion and interpretive emphasis; world consciousness; nonsensationalism in articles and makeup.
- 3) Emphasis on politics, international relations, economics, social welfare, cultural endeavors, education, and science.
- 4) Concern with getting, developing, and keeping a large, intelligent, well-educated, articulate and technically proficient staff.
- 5) Determination to serve and help expand a well-educated, intellectual readership at home and abroad; desire to appeal to, and influence, opinion leaders everywhere (1980, p. 23)

Most of the elite newspapers are published in developed or modern countries, according to Merrill, who wrote that in Asia, with the exception of China, Japan, and India, there was no elite or prestige press (Merrill, 1968). However, as mentioned before, regardless of Western scholars' views, some developing countries believe they have quality newspapers. In terms of semantics, the claim may be valid. As Hachten explained, it is like looking through a crystal prism: the straight white light of truth traveling through the prism will be reflected and bent into a variety of colors and shades. One person's truth might become another's bias or propaganda (1987); what the developing countries consider quality newspapers may not fit the Western scholars' definition.

Contemporary Thailand's Politics vs.
Press Performance

In Thailand, the press system is more dependent on the political ideology of the government in power than on anything else. Though the Thai press historically has been under different forms of governments--monarchy, dictatorship, and democracy--it has taken an unusually long time to adjust to the new democratic system.

In the years since the student revolution (October 14, 1973), the press has shown little improvement in quality or professionalism (Boonyaketmala, 1982). No doubt, there have been slight changes in government regulations depending on the party in power; however, functioning basically under a democratic system, the press should have adjusted to the slight variations in regulations and performed better. The excuse of having no freedom is an exaggeration, for, as Sydney W. Head said, there is no situation in which a newsman does not have some freedom; there are some degrees of freedom within which the individual journalist has the opportunity for growth, self-improvement and social service (1963).

The conflict between the government and the press has remained unsolved; even today journalists are still fighting for press freedom and maintaining that the lack of good-quality newspapers is due to government control and harassment. If it were free to operate, it could do a better job of serving society by providing a forum for

discussion (Kumpa-U, 1989; Olarickkachard, 1987). The government, on the other hand, says that the newspapers are not responsible enough and that journalists may be abusing the freedom which they have (Kumpa-U, 1989). These opinions might or might not be true because they are certainly based on personal impression rather than on empirical study.

The following are descriptions of the press under different government systems and press policies: 1973-1976, 1976-1980, and 1980-1989.

1973-1976

After the 1973 Student Revolution, Thailand had its first civilian prime minister, Sanya Thammasak. He was very popular with Thai journalists, for he lifted the ban on newspapers and promulgated a constitution that guaranteed press freedom, abolished censorship, and restricted ownership of newspapers to Thais.

Sanya's year-and-a-half administration was noted for a press that was free but very irresponsible--resorting to sensationalism, extortion, bribery, and in some cases violence. Rumors were sometimes published as fact; for example, "Sanya to use computer to select cabinet"; facts were not always checked; headlines were often misleading (Lent, 1982). Phayakavichien commented that these weaknesses might have stemmed from Thai journalists' not being used to their newly adopted freedom and therefore not using it properly; instead, they went on with what they had

been practicing during the period of government harassment (Chulalongkorn, 1983).

However, between 1973 and 1976 a new group of journalists appeared criticizing the practices of their predecessors and aiming to promote responsible journalism in newspapers (Lent, 1982). Objective news reporting, responsible comment, and a new approach to the affairs of the nation were promised as essential features. At the height of the campaign, a journal entitled Revolution of the Flies appeared. It represented a "newspaper coup d'etat," in which 13 reporters from eight Thai daily newspapers who formed the "fly society," called for improvement in standards of both newspaper administration and Thai journalism generally (Lent, 1982).

1976-1980

Although Thailand's press enjoyed almost unlimited freedom from 1973 to 1976, this period ended with a military coup in October 1976 (Luter and Richstad, 1983). Among the tough measures immediately introduced were

- 1) the banning of political parties and political meetings of more than five people,
- 2) the annulment of the 1974 Constitution, the one which guaranteed freedom of the press,
- 3) the suppression of certain newspapers and magazines,
- 4) the imposition of rigid censorship on those allowed to publish,

- 5) the banning of Marxist literature, and
- 6) the adoption of a 24-year-old anti-Communist law (Asia 1977 Year Book).

Hundreds of students, politicians, and journalists were arrested. Publications that seemed to lean toward communism were confiscated and burned, and after two days, all publishers and broadcasting managers were summoned to come to headquarters to be told the terms under which they could resume publishing. The newspapers were directed to apply to the junta for permission to publish, and when they began publication, they could be censored under a seven-point code prohibiting news which

attacks the monarchy, makes accusations against Thailand, distorts or insults the image of Thailand, stimulates doubt about government or official institutions, propagates communism, could cause fear or uneasiness among the population, is pornographic or obscene, and contains official secrets (IPI Report, 1976, p. 1).

From Thanin's standpoint, the biggest enemy of the government was the press (Lent, 1982). During his regime, the junta issued editorial guidelines which banned materials damaging to the government and sensational stories that would "create public alarm over the destiny of the country" (Luter and Richstad, 1983). Local correspondents leaving the press conference were given sealed envelopes addressed to their editors with letters instructing them not to publish certain news items, for example about left-wing student activities (Peagam, 1976). As warnings against transgression, editors were murdered by police, and

newspapers and journals either suspended or closed down altogether. Newspaper editors and journalists learned by experience how far they could go without risking suppression; as a result, some newspapers seemed almost to lose their ability to handle political issues (Patharapanupath, 1985).

To avoid censorship and arrest as political prisoners, numbers of the press had no alternative but to concentrate on sensational news and present readers with stories of sex, murders, crimes, accidents, and human interests (Phayakavichien, 1971; Patharapanupath, 1985).

For the period 1977-1980, the new prime minister, Kriengsak Chammanand, loosened censorship temporarily, but overall the press was still controlled by the government (Lent, 1982).

1980-1989

For the period 1980-1988, when Thailand was ruled by General Prem Tinsulanonda, the country entered a new stage of political development. As the political situation changed and the government loosened controls, the country's journalists became freer to voice their opinions (Olarikkachat, 1987). The daily press of Thailand in 1980 could be characterized as highly concentrated, relatively young and usually portrayed as frivolous and sensational (Lent, 1982). In fact during this time Thailand was quite ready to have a responsible press as Scandlen and Winker

wrote:

Thailand is ripe for responsible newspapers. With a high literacy rate, increasing newspaper readership in the urban and rural sector, active support and promotion by the Ministry of Education, as well as, local and national commercial interests' use of the press as an advertising media, newspapers could be the developmental multiplier for the market of ideas so badly needed (1982, p. 333).

Several months after the beginning of the Chartichai regime, several vernacular newspapers were warned about their critical comments against the government during its first two months in office. Although none was closed, the warnings marked a disturbing new pattern which contrasted with the relative freedom that existed through the lengthy era of former prime minister Prem Tinsulanond. Although the premier himself said that he would let the press be free to function and that government criticism was welcome, his successor, Chalerm Yoobumrung, threatened to act against newspapers or columnists that publish malicious or unfair criticism of the government. Members of the public who felt they were unfairly attacked would also be allowed to air their grievances through the two state-run television stations (Sricharatchanya, 1988).

In 1985 Patharapanupath reported in his dissertation that, generally speaking, "the Thai press is privately owned and operated with an increasing profit motive and dwindling political backing" (1985, p. 152). Big newspapers compete with one another only in terms of advancement in technology and printing but not the quality of the newspapers,

especially the contents. Educators commented that Thai newspapers as a whole are irresponsible, unethical, and unprofessional (SangUrai, 1982). The problem the newspapers are facing is expanding their capital. They have invested a large amount of money in the construction of big buildings, bought advanced technology printing machines and so on. However, normally, their source of funds is wealthy investors or bankers, including politicians. Unfortunately, these sources of funds exercise control over the newspapers which may result in the lack of freedom of the press (SangUrai, 1982).

It has been 150 years since the first Thai newspapers started printing. The press has experienced times of absolute freedom and times of restriction; still it has not been responsible in leading the society to become a really democratic country (Chulalongkorn, 1983). And, as mentioned before, there are conflicting opinions among the Thai people, government, and even members of the press itself about the nature of the press, its role in developing the Thai society, its effectiveness in broadening the understanding and experience of the Thai people, and the nature of its content. People and government view the press as irresponsible and money-oriented while the press blames lack of freedom and political instability for forcing it to function irresponsibly. The latter point is supported by Joanne M. Lopez' study which concluded that the Thai press was cowed by many coups and that after each coup, tight

control of the press was introduced, leading the press to resort to the exploitation of sex and sensationalism (1971). The press also points out that newspapers are an element of society affecting human behavior; as long as the society is still undisciplined and unperfected, the hope that the media will be responsible, serving people's right to communicate, is difficult to achieve (Supadilok, 1984). Based on these arguments, it is interesting to examine how the press has performed under two drastically different political, economic, and social systems.

Press Theories and Designated Roles

Siebert et al's classic Four Theories of the Press, consisting of authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist, is studied and mentioned very often in many journalism textbooks in Thailand. Each of these press theories encompasses a philosophy involving beliefs in the nature of man, the nature of society and the state, and the relationship among them.

However, while these theories envisage pure types, the press theories that fit most nations are not pure. They combine elements from the different systems (Haque, 1986). The most critical argument against the four theories of the press is that they assign the world press to four neat categories and do not allow for change. Many scholars have taken this shortcoming into consideration and some of them

have come up with new models, theories, or interpretations, for example Altschull's three-part typology, Hachten's five concepts of the press, and Schillinger's dynamic theory of world press. For the purpose of this study, the author chose to limit discussion to the theories of Hachten and Schillinger.

Hachten's Five Concepts

William Hachten attempted to broaden and update the applications of Siebert's four theories and he came up with five concepts of the press: authoritarian, Western, Communist, revolutionary, and developmental. His concepts are less delineated and suggest some overlap (Schillinger, 1989). Hachten proposes that "all press systems exist somewhere along a continuum from complete control at one end to no control at the other" (1987, p. 16).

The earlier discussion about Thai politics and press performance indicates that, like the press in countries in Asia during the 70s, the press in Thailand in 1976 operated under an authoritarian government (Lent, 1982); whereas since 1980 it is operating under the development concept (Luter and Richstad, 1983). This is supported by Sricharatchanya, a columnist for the Far Eastern Economic Review, who wrote that the Thai press is regarded as one of the most free in Southeast Asia. He maintains that there is almost no or only a little official harassment, which permits the press to develop into an effective watchdog

against official wrongdoing (1988). However, it must be noted that some government controls still exist; "the censorship and suppression are relaxed but not ended" (Patharapanupath, 1985, p. 160).

The Thai Press and Authoritarian Theory. Under the authoritarian concept, the rulers at the time use the press to inform the people of what the rulers think they should know and the policies the rulers think the people should support. The press is a servant of the state and is dependent for much of its content on the power figures in charge of the government at any given moment. No media facility can be used to challenge, criticize, or undermine the rulers. The press must function for the good of the state, support the status quo, and not advocate change or criticize the nation's leadership (Siebert et.al, 1973; Hachten, 1987). As mentioned before, the Kraivichien regime barred the press from reporting negative news about the government or stimulating doubts about government performance while reporting what the government said. Based on this information, the Thai press in 1976 fits perfectly with this concept.

The Thai Press and Developmental Theory. Developmental theory is relatively new and mixes authoritarian with libertarian and social-responsibility principles (Luter and Richstad, 1983). It has been emerging in the wake of political independence in developing nations throughout the

third world for nearly 15 years. This theory recognizes a country's need for economic development and thus requires reporters and editors capable of understanding and transmitting increasingly complex economic, scientific, and related information (Sussman, 1978). The concept holds that all the instruments of mass communication must be mobilized by the central government to aid in the great tasks of nation building: fighting illiteracy and poverty, building a political consciousness, and assisting in economic development. The ultimate role of the press is to support national interests for economic and social development and to support the national unity, stability, and cultural integrity. Implicit here is the social responsibility view that the government must step in and provide adequate media service when the private sector is unable to do so, as is the case in many poor nations (Hachten, 1987; Luter and Richstad, 1983).

In 1989, like in many developing countries, the Thai press is operating under the developmental concept which emphasizes social, political, and economic improvement, and the media have been assumed to have a crucial role in this process.

The Thai Press and Schillinger's Dynamic Theory of World Press

Though Hachten gained some credit by taking into consideration "developing countries" and adding

"developmental" to his concepts, Schillinger argued that the progression does not imply a linear dynamism, but static integration (1989). In her view,

[To] ask "what type is it?" restricts the answer to those categories determined by the typology we have accepted. "What motivates it?," on the other hand, opens a wide vista of response predicted on the assumption that each system is supported by its own combinations of intrinsic logic, culture, history, and goals (1989, p. 13).

In the Dynamic World Press Theory, which can be visualized by a triangle, Schillinger proposed three primary motives--survival, ideology, and market--as the major determinants of press behavior. The remedy offered by the dynamic theory is the flexibility to locate press systems between or within a conceptual triangle of motives. She explained that every government and press system is determined by and represents these primary motives. However, no national press system is driven by only a single primary motive, but rather exhibits characteristics of at least two and frequently all three motives. Characteristics are subject to variation over time in response to economic, cultural, technological, and social change, whereas basic motive definitions tend to remain constant (Schillinger, 1989).

The Thai press in 1976 can be categorized as operating under the survival-dominated motive due to the Communist crisis when the country's security and unity was endangered. Thus at this time, on the motive triangle, the author placed the Thai press system somewhere between survival and market,

closer to survival. In 1989, on the other hand, it is operating under the market-dominated motive, since, as mentioned before, during this time the press is in a business-oriented era and it is free to operate, compared to 1976. Therefore in 1989, the dot representing the Thai press system moved closer to market, but it can move closer to survival again when there is a threat, or internal conflict (see appendix, Schillinger's Triangle of Motives).

Survival-motivated Characteristics. Under survival-motivated characteristics, pre- and post-censorship may be exercised by the state, accompanied by self-censorship by the media. Information prepared and provided by the state comprises a substantial proportion of press content. The state can close down press organizations, jail and punish editors and journalists, and confiscate publications. However, entertainment and art generally are not subject to careful scrutiny by government primary survival values. The government controls entry and access of foreign journalists and legally can order expulsion, detainment, and imprisonment (Schillinger, 1989).

Market-motivated Characteristics. Information that emphasizes the unusual and exceptional, and thus the negative, is highly marketable and is disproportionately represented in a press content that is market motivated. Advertising contributes the major revenues and profits, supplemented by direct sales of media products. The market

and media owners have control over content in response to advertising revenues, audience preference, and their own judgment. Government control of the domestic press is limited to the provision of legal protection against libel. All media, both domestic and foreign, are viewed as products to be sold. Marketability determines the selection of media content (Schillinger, 1989).

Based on Schillinger's model, the press in 1976 would have acted in concert with the government's objective, resulting in more pro-government news than it has in 1989.

Research Approach

To examine how the press has performed during these two periods, the content analysis type of research tends to be the most suitable because the procedure allows the researcher to carry out observations without bias (Budd, Thorp, and Donohue, 1967). Kerlinger defines content analysis as "a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner (Wimmer and Dominick, 1987). Charles R. Wright (1959) said there are at least three reasons why content analysis should be used:

- 1) People are highly selective in their exposure; their knowledge about what is being transmitted is biased by their personal tastes.
- 2) People tend to over-generalize from their particular communication experience.
- 3) In daily exposure to mass communications, people are seldom motivated to analyze the sociologically meaningful aspects of the

content; and the sophisticated professional reader, even though he may be interested in news analysis, does not have at hand the necessary information with which to make such an analysis (p. 75-76).

Previous Studies

Not much research has been done on the topic posed in this study. Almost all research concerned the overall performance of Thai newspapers; however, some research findings can be related to this study, especially when they include Thai Rath and Siam Rath, which are in the current study. Although there is no comparison of press performance under different government systems, these studies can show how the press has changed over time.

1) Comparative content analysis of Thai newspapers in 1960 and 1969, research done by Pongsak Phayakavichien, showed that the trend of Thai newspapers is toward seriousness. They exhibit strong feelings of responsibility as watchdogs of government (Phayakavichien, 1971). The findings showed that newspapers during the ten-year period decreased the use of non-current news-entertainment columns. Feature columns in other categories such as politics, culture, religion and the monarchy increased tremendously. There was a reduction in both volume and percentage of sensational and entertainment materials by 1969. However, one of the most interesting changes was found in gossip columns; they increased more than all other categories.

Phayakavichien concluded that a freer press offers more

concentration on politics and government work.

2) Blackburn's Communication and National Development in Burma, Malaysia, and Thailand, a thesis done in 1971, showed that Thai newspapers were noticeably less effectively programmed to build support for officially-determined national development ends. They tended to be sensational, oriented to scandal, and most likely to treat development related topics "from the perspective of the man on the street" (Blackburn, 1971).

3) The Thai Press, A Content Analysis, by Scandlen (1974), showed that in 1973, advertising, human interest, sports and Thai governmental affairs ranked first through fourth in amounts of space for Thai Rath, which was consistent with the 1970 analysis that found the same rankings except for the fourth which was "accidents." In 1970, Siam Rath's news categories ranked in the following order: editorials, letters to the editors; advertising; international, foreign news; Thai government news. This confirms the reputation of Siam Rath as being an elite, intellectual newspaper (Scandlen & Winkler, 1982).

4) In 1980 the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Thammasat University conducted a comparative analysis of six dailies--two large circulation (soft news), two elite (hard news), and two combination (both hard and soft news)--which showed that quality newspapers provided more intellectual items; foreign news accounted for 36%. Mass newspapers, on the other hand,

emphasized sensational news like gossip or entertainment such as novels. Popular newspapers devoted 35% of their space to advertising while for quality newspapers it was only 26%. The researchers predicted that the trend of the content in the newspapers would move toward the gossip column and the novel (Supadilok, 1987).

5) Cusripituck, Biyayendrodhin, and Kongpricha's study, done in 1985, showed that overall, local newspapers in Bangkok devoted about 25-30% of their total space to coverage of domestic news, compared to only 5% for foreign news. Since advertising remains a major source of revenue for all newspapers in Thailand, most newspapers allocated a portion of space, 25-35%, to commercial advertising. Following are comparisons between Thai Rath and Siam Rath in 1985:

	<u>Thai Rath</u> (Mass)	<u>Siam Rath</u> (Quality)
Domestic	25.53%	30.62%
Foreign	1.19%	6.09%
Editorials	.64%	.73%
Columns	15.95%	15.63%
Social News	9.57%	8.81%
Novels	4.47%	-
Youth	3.62%	1.56%
Advertising	34.05%	25.00%
Cartoons	2.13%	6.25%
Other	2.13%	6.25%

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis is an efficient way to investigate the content of media such as the number and types of commercials or advertisements in broadcasting or in print media.

The author chose Thai Rath as the representative of mass newspapers and Siam Rath as the representative of quality newspapers because both have large circulations and are the leading newspapers of their kind (Supadilok, 1984).

Newspaper Profile

Thai Rath Profile

Thai Rath was founded in 1958. In 1976 it contained 16 pages while in 1989 the range was from 24 to 32 pages. It is well-known for offering sensational news. A staff reporter of the Wall Street Journal described it quite accurately:

its columnists offer political gossip and innuendo, writing under colorful pseudonyms as "Dung Fly's News Bureau, "Dragon with five claws." Other regular features include civil servants' small talk, summaries of popular television shows and letters from readers seeking mates (White, 1987).

Although the actual circulation figures of Thai language newspapers are difficult to get due to competition,

Thai Rath currently claims to have the highest circulation among daily newspapers in Thailand, 800,000 issues a day (Showers, 1989). Thai Rath maintains its stand by taking the initiative in the use of colored banners and mass appeal headlines although it also claims to provide more hard news items than other mass newspapers.

Siam Rath Profile

Siam Rath was founded in the mid-1950s by popular and respected statesman and scholar, M.R. Kukrit Pramot. In 1976 it contained 8-16 pages, while in 1989 it consistently contained 16 pages per day. Although it is claimed Siam Rath has a high circulation, the most current circulation is not revealed. It is known as a quality newspaper although its popularity is a clear reflection of the prominence of editor-publisher Kukrit (Lent, 1977). Pickerell described it as a journal of opinion and a family newspaper, with fairly high standards and tending to a proroyalist position. It is read by government officials and other educated people (Pickerell, 1960).

Content Analysis

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The question the author attempted to answer was "Is the change in the system of government between 1976 and 1989 related to the content distribution between mass and quality newspapers and within each newspaper over the 13-year

period?" This question was broken down into three research questions and null hypotheses.

Research question 1. Does the content distribution of the two newspapers differ from 1976 to 1989?

Null Hypothesis 1. There has been no change in the content distribution of mass and quality newspapers from 1976 to 1989.

Research question 2. Do the two newspapers differ from one another as others have described them?

Null Hypothesis 2. They do not differ from one another as others have described them.

Research question 3. Are Western theories of the press (for example Hachten's five concepts of the press or Schillinger's dynamic motive) validated by and useful in explaining Thai press content and performance?

Null hypothesis 3. Western theories of the press are not validated by the Thai press content or performance. These theories cannot be applied to explain the Thai press.

Definition of Terms

1) Mass newspapers can be defined as daily newspapers which emphasize soft, sensational, and human interest types of news, for example news about crime, gossip columns, entertainment, and contain many advertisements. Ban Muang, Daily News, and Thai Rath are mass newspapers.

2) Quality newspapers can be defined as daily newspapers which emphasize hard news and intellectual

columns, for example, political/government/military, economic, education, and international news, or editorial/comment/opinion columns, while downplaying entertainment. Siam Rath, Prachachart Turakij, and Matichon, are included in this type of newspaper.

3) Western concepts of the press can be defined as theories, concepts, or models used by Western scholars in explaining the world press, for example the classic four theories of the press proposed by Siebert et al., Hachten's five concepts of the press, or Schillinger's dynamic theory of world press.

Sampling

A total of 24 issues, six issues each, from Thai Rath and Siam Rath was collected from two time periods: July 1976 - June 1977, and July 1988 - June 1989. The rationale for this sample size comes from Guido Stemple's study in 1952. The results of his study indicate that for content analysis of newspapers, a sample size of five does an adequate job and that increasing the sample size beyond 12 does not produce marked differences in the results (Stemple, 1952).

From a table of random numbers, the author came up with the following issues of Siam Rath and Thai Rath.

TABLE I
RANDOMLY SELECTED SAMPLE *

<u>First Period</u>	<u>Second Period</u>
October 1, 1976 (Friday)	July 12, 1988 (Tuesday)
November 17, 1976 (Wednesday)	October 13, 1988 (Thursday)
December 15, 1976 (Wednesday)	November 1, 1988 (Tuesday)
February 3, 1977 (Thursday)	December 8, 1988 (Thursday)
May 6, 1977 (Friday)	April 15, 1989 (Saturday)
June 23, 1977 (Thursday)	May 15, 1989 (Monday)

* It must be noted that Sunday issues were excluded because of their vast difference from the daily issues.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was the content item. A content item is an article with its headline, or a captioned photograph standing alone. An article comprising several subheadlines which contained different stories was counted as several different items. On the foreign news page in Thai Rath dated January 5, 1989, for example, the column "Window of the World" was counted as one item because it began with a single headline and talked about a single issue. The column "Around the world," on the other hand, was counted differently because although it started its headline "Around the World Today," it comprised different subheadlines referring to different stories: an accident in

London, an accident in Manila, politics in Sri Lanka, the smallest plane in Russia, etc.

Categories of Analysis

Newspapers were read to identify content under the following categories, which were revised from the Schramm and Atwood (1981) study, the Stevenson (1984) study, and the Phayakavichien (1971) study. Coders were asked to practice identifying content categories on samples of Thai Rath and Siam Rath by working in a group so that they would have a chance to discuss problems concerning instruction or categories which were not found in the instruction. After the practice, the author came up with the 14 revised content categories.

1) Catastrophes/Crimes/Disaster/Illegal activities. This category included national stories or pictures which referred to accidents, fires, natural disasters; suicides, robberies, or criminal trials; and any unlawful acts.

2) Monarchy. This category included stories or pictures about the Thai royal families and their activities, both official and private.

3) Government/Politics/Military. This category included stories or pictures about the activities/decisions/proposals/ceremonies of the prime minister and cabinet, officials in the government, parliament, political parties, politicians; internal conflict or crisis, elections, campaigns, government changes, legislation, diplomacy;

military organizations, armed conflict or threats, arms deals, weapons, or military exercises; and reports of work related to all of these officers if they did not fall into other categories.

4) Economics. This category included stories concerning business or economic development, investment, planning, or growth; finance, trade, tariffs, cost of living, inflation; industrial projects, factories; agricultural matters or projects, harvest; industrial labor relations, disputes, negotiations, wages; and monetary matters, exchange rates, stock, and banking.

5) Public service. Stories or pictures about municipal works, water supplies, bus service, sanitation and garbage removal; traffic/telephone/electric services; social problems such as health or seasonal medical advice, housing, or illiteracy, and any services available to communities; and items voicing people's complaints about unfair treatment were included in this category.

6) Education. Pictures and stories about education policies, plans, or improvements; students, teachers, or school activities; school administration and scholastic standards; and information of general interest and educational value which cannot be obtained by regular class attendance were under this category.

7) Culture/religion/ethics/morals. This category included stories or pictures about customs or traditions, religion, and historical preservation.

8) Human interest. Any stories or pictures about social events, odd/humorous/pathetic happenings, gossip, astrology, personal affairs, public figures, women's fashions, or any sensation-oriented items were counted in the human interest category.

9) Entertainment. This category included films, cinema, television actors, radio/television programs, drama, novels, fiction, cartoons, small talk, etc.

10) Sports.

11) International news. All news or pictures which originated in or were connected with foreign countries (for example, with a foreign dateline), or most of the information coming from abroad, regardless of type of news, was tabulated as international news.

12) Editorial/Opinion/Comment. Any items reflecting personal opinions, views, comments, with respect to current political, economic, social, cultural events and so on were counted under this category.

13) Advertising and announcements. Obituaries, items promoting products or services, and items informing about upcoming activities for any organization for business purposes, were counted as advertising/announcements.

14) Miscellaneous. When no other label fit an item, this category was used, for example, for lottery results, charity requests in an emergency, etc.

Overlapping areas, especially, between economics, public services and education, and government might exist

because in one way or another the government had to be involved. The solution was that the coders had to consider the prominence and main actor of the story. According to Stevenson, main actors are subjects of the story; they can be individuals, groups or other entities doing things or affected by events and they must be essential to the story in the sense that if the actor was omitted, the substance of the story would change (Stevenson and Shaw, 1984).

When more complicated problems existed, coders could vote to see where to place an item.

All items were coded according to the fourteen primary categories, while items for category No. 3 (government/politics/military) were double-coded, both for a primary category and for the direction of the item, positive, negative, or neutral. Coders were instructed to look for specific evaluative references to the government and not to make inferences from the events themselves. Stories were coded as negative when they presented an unfavorable image of the government, for example, corruption among politicians, police brutality, or government instability. Stories which showed a favorable image of the government such as a prompt decision to help Thai laborers from bad treatment in foreign countries, the initiation of reading centers in provinces to increase literacy rates, etc, were coded as positive. Stories were coded as neutral when they could be viewed as presenting neither a favorable nor an unfavorable image or only reported the government policies

or performance.

Coding

Three coders, the author and two Thai graduate students at Oklahoma State University categorized the items.

Before coding, a test of intercoder reliability was conducted. As scholars have pointed out, the frequencies obtained by content analysis would be without significance if different analysts did not agree in their classification of symbol data: "an experimental demonstration of reliability is required for such content analyses, even though the categories are carefully defined" (Janis et al., 1943). The reliability provides an answer to the question of how closely the results agree when the content analysis is repeated by a different analyst. The table showing the intercoder reliability is presented in Chapter 4.

Statistical Analysis

As the data collected consisted of frequency counts, simple and complex chi square analysis was used to find out if the differences in the content categories of the two newspapers was significant or due to chance. If the difference found was within the "critical value," that means the difference was significant and not due to chance. Relationships were examined using Phi and contingency coefficient tests, where appropriate.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Intercoder Reliability

For the purpose of checking coders' understanding of the analysis methods and their uniformity in making decisions, an intercoder reliability test was conducted after the coders had practiced in a group. Each coder read 20 items from Thai Rath and Siam Rath and decided into which category the items should be placed. After that, they read another 20 items, all from the government category, and decided the direction for each item, whether each item was pro-government (positive), anti-government (negative), or neutral. Table II shows the intercoder reliability.

TABLE II
INTERCODER RELIABILITY

	Coder 1 vs 2	Coder 1 vs 3	Coder 2 vs 3
<u>Categories</u>			
Thai Rath	.94	.94	1.0
Siam Rath	1.0	.90	.90

TABLE II (Continued)

	Coder 1 vs 2	Coder 1 vs 3	Coder 2 vs 3
<u>Direction</u>			
Thai Rath	.80	.70	.80
Siam Rath	1.0	.90	.90

Generally, there is a high correlation between each pair of coders, especially, in both distribution and direction for Siam Rath while the correlations are lower for Thai Rath's direction of news. The nature of the newspaper accounts for this occurrence. Siam Rath's way of presenting news is straightforward and thus it is easier for coders to judge what type of content categories and directions the items fall into. Thai Rath, on the other hand, usually includes a variety of many things in one item; sometimes headlines and contents are contradictory and its language usage is often misleading. Therefore, coders had a harder time judging where and in which direction to place the item.

However, overall the correlations, ranging from .70 to 1.0, are high enough to insure that the differences in decisions are not so significant that they will affect or change the conclusion.

Findings

A total of 4,211 items was recorded: for the first period, Siam Rath had 453 items while Thai Rath had 1,003 and for the second period, Siam Rath had 955 items while Thai Rath had 1,800 items.

For this research, the level of significance was set at the 0.05 level with a two-tail test. The following tables, III - XIV, show the frequency and percentages of the content distribution and direction by Thai Rath and Siam Rath in 1976 and 1989.

TABLE III
1976 THAI RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
IN 14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Items	Percentage
Advertising, Announcements	301	30.01
Human Interest	151	15.05
International News	112	11.17
Sports	82	8.18
Entertainment	81	8.08
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters Illegal activities	53	5.28
Government, Politics, Military	52	5.18
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	46	4.59
Education	39	3.89
Miscellaneous	35	3.49
Public Services	29	2.89
Monarchy	12	1.20
Economics	6	.60
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	4	.40
Total	<u>1,003</u>	<u>100.01</u>

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

In 1976, advertising, human interest, international news, sports and entertainment ranked first through fifth in amount of space for Thai Rath.

TABLE IV
1976 SIAM RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
IN 14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Items	Percentage
Advertising, Announcements	131	28.92
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	70	15.45
Government, Politics, Military	60	13.25
International News	59	13.02
Public Services	28	6.18
Sports	23	5.08
Economics	17	3.75
Education	17	3.75
Miscellaneous	14	3.09
Entertainment	12	2.65
Monarchy	7	1.55
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters Illegal activities	7	1.55
Human Interest	5	1.10
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	3	.66
	<u>453</u>	<u>100</u>

In 1976 advertising (28.92%), editorial/comment (15.45%), government/politics (13.25%), international news (13.02%), public services (6.18%), ranked first to fifth in amounts of space for Siam Rath while Culture/religion ranked fourteenth.

TABLE V
COMPARATIVE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION FOR THAI RATH AND
SIAM RATH IN 1976

Content Categories	Thai Rath	Siam Rath
Advertising, Announcements	30.01%	28.92% *
Human Interest	15.05%	1.10% *
International News	11.17%	13.02% *
Sports	8.18%	5.08% *
Entertainment	8.08%	2.65% *
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters, Illegal activities	5.28%	1.55% *
Government, Politics, Military	5.18%	13.25%
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	4.59%	15.45% *
Education	3.89%	3.75% *
Miscellaneous	3.49%	3.09% *
Public Services	2.89%	6.18%
Monarchy	1.20%	1.55%
Economics	0.60%	3.75% *
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	0.40%	0.66%
Total	<u>100.01%</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

* indicates the significant differences.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 188.645

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 13$) = 22.4

The complex chi square analysis shows a significant difference in content distribution between Thai Rath and Siam Rath in 1976. A simple chi square test was conducted

to find out where the difference is; the asterisk indicates where statistically significant differences were found. The results show that Thai Rath presented more news about crime, and more human interest, sports, entertainment, and advertising while Siam Rath emphasized government, economics, and international news together with editorial/opinion/comments.

TABLE VI
DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT NEWS PRESENTED BY THAI RATH
AND SIAM RATH IN 1976

Direction	<u>Thai Rath</u>		<u>Siam Rath</u>	
	Items	%	Items	%
Positive	12	23.08	19	31.67
Neutral	36	69.23	34	56.67
Negative	4	7.69	7	11.67

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 1.894

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$) = 6.0

The chi square analysis of direction of government news between Thai Rath and Siam Rath shows that the difference of distribution is not significant at the .05 level. This simply means that the difference might have been due to chance.

TABLE VII
1989 SIAM RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
IN 14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Items	Percentage
Advertising, Announcements	256	26.81
International News	115	12.04
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	104	10.89
Government, Politics, Military	102	10.68
Human Interest	95	9.95
Economics	84	8.80
Public Services	49	5.13
Education	41	4.29
Miscellaneous	37	3.87
Sports	27	2.83
Entertainment	24	2.51
Monarchy	9	.94
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	9	.94
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters, Illegal activities	3	.31
Total	<u>995</u>	<u>99.99</u>

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

In 1989, advertising (26.81%), international news (12.04%), editorial/comment (10.89%), government/politics (10.68%), human interest (9.95%) ranked first through fifth for Siam Rath and news about crime ranked fourteenth.

TABLE VIII
1989 THAI RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
IN 14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Items	Percentage
Advertising, Announcements	767	42.61
Human Interest	152	8.44
International News	150	8.33
Government, Politics, Military	124	6.89
Entertainment	117	6.50
Sports	103	5.72
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	70	3.89
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disaster, Illegal activities	70	3.89
Education	65	3.61
Economics	62	3.44
Public Services	55	3.06
Miscellaneous	38	2.11
Monarchy	15	.83
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	12	.67
Total	<u>1,800</u>	<u>99.99</u>

Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

In 1989, advertising (42.61%), human interest (8.44%), international news (8.33%), government/politics (6.89%), entertainment (6.50%) ranked first through fifth in amounts of space for Thai Rath.

TABLE IX
COMPARATIVE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION BY THAI RATH
AND SIAM RATH IN 1989

Content Categories	Thai Rath	Siam Rath
Advertising, Announcements	42.61%	26.81% *
Human Interest	8.44%	9.95% *
International News	8.33%	12.04% *
Government, Politics, Military	6.89%	10.68%
Entertainment	6.50%	2.51% *
Sports	5.72%	2.83% *
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters, Illegal activities	3.89%	0.31% *
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	3.89%	10.89% *
Education	3.61%	4.29% *
Economics	3.44%	8.80%
Public Services	3.06%	5.13%
Miscellaneous	2.11%	3.87%
Monarchy	0.83%	0.94%
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	0.67%	0.94%
Total	<u>99.99%</u>	<u>99.99%</u>

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 221.805

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 13$) = 22.4

* indicates the significant differences.

The complex chi square analysis of the content distribution in Thai Rath and Siam Rath in 1989 shows a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level; that

is, the difference in content distribution was not due to chance. A simple chi square test was used to find where the difference is; the asterisk indicates where the statistically significant differences were found. The results show that in 1989, Thai Rath printed more news about crime, entertainment, sports, and advertising while Siam Rath provided more educational, human interest, international, and editorial items.

TABLE X
DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT NEWS PRESENTED BY
THAI RATH AND SIAM RATH IN 1989

Direction	Thai Rath		Siam Rath	
	Items	%	Items	%
Positive	20	16.13	17	16.67
Neutral	90	72.58	65	63.73
Negative	14	11.29	20	19.61

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 3.223

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$) = 6

The complex chi square analysis of direction of government news presented by Thai Rath and Siam Rath in 1989 shows that the difference found is not significant at the 0.05 level and that the difference may be due to chance.

TABLE XI
THAI RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN 14 CATEGORIES
IN 1976 AND 1989

Content Categories	1976	1989
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters, Illegal activities	53 (5.28%)	70 (3.89%)
Monarchy	12 (1.20%)	15 (0.83%)
Government, Politics, Military	52 (5.18%)	124 * (6.89%)
Economics	6 (0.60%)	62 * (3.44%)
Public Services	29 (2.89%)	55 * (3.06%)
Education	39 (3.89%)	65 * (3.61%)
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	4 (0.40%)	12 * (0.67%)
Human Interest	151 (15.05%)	152 (8.44%)
Entertainment	81 (8.08%)	117 * (6.05%)
Sports	82 (8.18%)	103 (5.72%)
International News	112 (11.17%)	150 * (8.33%)
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	46 (4.59%)	70 * (3.89%)
Advertising, Announcements	301 (30.01%)	767 * (42.61%)
Miscellaneous	35 (3.49%)	38 (2.11%)

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 101.232

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 13$) = 22.4

* indicates statistically significant differences

The complex chi square analysis of content distribution by Thai Rath in 1976 and 1989 shows a statistically significant difference in distribution at the .05 level. A simple chi square test was conducted to find where the difference is; the asterisks in the above table indicate the significant differences. The results show that Thai Rath in 1989 provided more economic, government, public services, and cultural items; it had more advertisements while presenting less educational, sports, entertainment, international and editorial items.

TABLE XII
SIAM RATH'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN 14 CATEGORIES
 IN 1976 AND 1989

Content Categories	1976	1989
Catastrophes, Crimes, Disasters, Illegal activities	7 (1.55%)	3 (0.31%)
Monarchy	7 (1.55%)	9 (0.94%)
Government, Politics, Military	60 (13.25%)	102 * (10.68%)
Economics	17 (3.75%)	84 * (8.80%)
Public Services	28 (6.18%)	49 * (5.13%)
Education	17 (3.75%)	41 * (4.29%)
Culture, Religion, Ethics, Morals	3 (0.66%)	9 (0.94%)
Human Interest	5 (1.10%)	95 * (9.95%)
Entertainment	12 (2.65%)	24 * (2.51%)
Sports	23 (5.08%)	27 (2.83%)
International News	59 (13.02%)	115 * (12.04%)
Editorial, Opinion, Comment	70 (15.45%)	104 * (10.89%)
Advertising, Announcements	131 (28.92%)	256 * (26.81%)
Miscellaneous	14 (3.09%)	37 * (3.87%)

Percentage may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.
Complex Chi Square Statistic = 65.984
Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 13$) = 22.4
* indicates statistically significant differences.

The complex chi square analysis of content distribution by Siam Rath in 1976 and 1989 shows a statistically significant difference in the distribution at the .05 level. A simple chi square test was conducted to find where the difference is (as indicated by asterisks in the table above). The results show that Siam Rath in 1989 contained more economic, educational, and human interest items while giving fewer space to advertising, public service, international, and editorial/comment/opinion items, although it has been well-known for this type of content.

TABLE XIII
DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT NEWS PRESENTED BY THAI RATH
IN 1976 AND 1989

Direction	1976	1989
Positive	12 (23.08)	20 (16.13)
Neutral	36 (69.23)	90 (72.58)
Negative	4 (7.69)	14 (11.29)

Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 1.494

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$) = 6.0

The complex chi square analysis of the direction of government news presented by Thai Rath in 1976 and 1989 shows that the difference is not significant at the .05 level. The difference may be due to chance.

TABLE XIV
DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT NEWS PRESENTED BY SIAM RATH
IN 1976 AND 1989

Direction	1976	1989
Positive	19 (31.67)	17 (16.67)
Neutral	34 (56.67)	65 (63.73)
Negative	7 (11.67)	20 (19.61)

Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 5.562

Table Chi Square ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$) = 6.0

The complex chi square analysis of direction of government news presented by Siam Rath in 1976 and 1989 shows no significant difference at the .05 level. The difference may be due to chance.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

There is a conflict between the Western world views and the Thai view of the Thai press. According to Western scholars' opinions and standards, there are no "quality" newspapers in Thailand while Thai journalists believe they do have quality newspapers. However, among the Thai government, the universities and the press itself, there are conflicting opinions about the nature of the press, about its role in developing Thai society, about its effectiveness in broadening the understanding and experience of the Thai people, and about the nature of its content. The press sometimes uses the fluctuation of Thai politics, resulting in continuous change in press policies which usually lean toward restriction, as an excuse for not responsibly serving society. The press has claimed that it is more responsible when it is free to operate.

Based on these arguments, this research attempted to answer the question "Is the change in the system of Thai government between 1976 and 1989 related to the distribution of content topics between mass and quality newspapers and within each newspaper over the 13-year period?"

The objectives of the study were, first of all, to find out if there really are two types of newspapers (quality and mass newspapers) as Thai journalists have claimed, and, if so, how the two types of Thai newspapers differ in terms of content distribution. Second, the study attempted to test the journalists' claim that they cannot responsibly serve the public due to government restrictions. In other words, the study examines the press' claim that they will be a watchdog of the government and present intellectual news when they are free to operate, but that they have no choice but to present sensational news, human interest, or entertainment news while downplaying government news when under government restriction.

Finally, the study proposed to test Western theories of the press to see whether they are applicable and accurately explain, describe, or predict Thai press performance under different government systems. Hachten's five concepts of the press and Schillinger's dynamic motive of the world press were chosen as representative of the Western theories to be tested.

The study broke the main research question into three questions with three null hypotheses.

Research Question 1) Does the content distribution of the two newspapers differ from 1976 to 1989?

Null Hypothesis 1) There has been no change in the content distribution of mass and quality newspapers from 1976 to 1989.

Research Question 2) Do the two newspapers differ from

one another as others have described them?

Null Hypothesis 2) The two newspapers do not differ from each other as others have described them.

Research Question 3) Are Western theories of the press validated by and useful in explaining Thai press content and performance?

Null Hypothesis 3) Western theories of the press are not validated by the Thai press content or performance.

The results of this study showed that there are at least two types of newspapers in Thailand: one provides hard news (Siam Rath) and the other provides soft news (Thai Rath) as Thai journalists have claimed. The former is called a quality newspaper while the latter is called a mass newspaper, although the "quality" type of newspaper does not have the exact traits of an elite newspaper as Western scholars describe them.

The results showed that the distribution of news in these two newspapers has changed over a period of time during which the societal and governmental systems also changed. Mass newspapers, though still reserving their classification as mass, in 1989 compared to 1976, contained more hard news and a greater variety of intellectual news. Due to pressures of economic survival and competition, quality newspapers in 1989 compared to 1976, contained more human interest items while keeping their place as quality newspapers.

Concerning the Thai press's claim that it cannot

perform responsibly because of government upheaval and its fluctuating press policies, this research found data in support of that claim. And, the Western concepts of the press which categorize the world press into static types--such as the four theories proposed by Siebert, et. al (1973) or Hachten's five concepts of the press (1987) which take into account developing countries--are not clearly applicable to the performance of the Thai press. The dynamic theory of the world press proposed by Schillinger (1989), however, allows a more viable and flexible explanation of the functioning of the Thai press.

Based on these findings, null hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are not supported.

Discussion

The results of this research confirm the theory of Suthichai Yoon, editor of The Nation, an English-language Thai quality newspaper, who wrote that freedom of the press is not the main factor affecting press performance because it does not automatically improve the media or bring with it an instant awareness of responsibility (Markham, 1974).

The press argument that government upheaval and its unsteady press policies prevented the press from performing responsibly is supportable to some degree. It might sound reasonable that the press cannot or dare not touch government issues when government policies are restrictive, but neither do newspapers have to emphasize human interest,

entertainment, or sensational types of news at the expense of other types of news. They still can report educational, international, or developmental news. One remarkable fact is that journalists continue the practice of reporting human interest, entertainment and sensational news even when the government's press policies are less restrictive.

The Western concepts of the press, like Hachten's which categorizes the world press into static types, are not applicable to the performance of the Thai press. Although Hachten's category of authoritarianism explained accurately press duty and performance during 1976, his developmental concept does not fit well with the press performance in 1989 because the press is not what he predicts it should be.

Under the developmental concept, the press must help in building a political consciousness, fighting illiteracy and poverty, or assisting in economic development; freedom of the press has to be restricted according to the developmental needs of the society; information or news is to be used to further national goals. The Thai press, however, did not benefit national development as the concept theorizes, but instead worked for its own economic survival and competition.

The dynamic theory of the world press proposed by Schillinger (1989), on the other hand, provides a more viable and flexible explanation of Thai press performance because it allows for coexistence of more than one motive. For example, although in 1976 the country was driven by the

survival motive, the theory does not deny the co-existence of the market motive.

Because of this combination in 1976, in Schillinger's triangle of press motives the position of the press falls between the survival and market motives, and closer to survival (See appendix, Schillinger's Triangle of Motives). This explains the results of this research, which showed less government news, especially negative news in 1976, at a time when the national unity and security were endangered. However, the press was free to make a profit; thus the results reveal more distribution of sensational and entertainment items.

In 1989, on the other hand, the position of the press moved closer to the market motive because the survival motive was no longer dominant, though it still existed, as the government's restrictive press policies continued. Therefore, the results showed a high distribution of advertising, especially in mass newspapers, and whatever news will help to sell the papers, but nothing which might jeopardize the newspapers' right to publish.

In the author's opinion, much emphasis has been placed on the government's press policies and press freedom when one talks about media responsibility and obligation to the people. However, audience taste, and not press freedom, may be the main factor affecting press performance, and therefore is worth discussing.

Merrill pointed out that the public chooses the

frivolous over the serious, the lurid over the tragic, the trivial over facts, and the diverting over the significant. And, in any society, very few people have reasonably good taste or care deeply about ideas (Merrill, 1982). Merrill's view appears to be true when audience behavior and motivation are of concern. People tend to read, view, and listen to media and messages that are most accessible and that will give them the greatest reward with the least effort, even if the reward is a kind of escapism or momentary enjoyment (Merrill and Lowenstein, 1971).

Merrill's comments fit the Thai audience perfectly. Even Pickerell pointed out that overall public indifference to newspapers has been the chief factor in the extremely slow development of the Thai press. Even the better educated citizen of Thailand has a difficult-to-explain aversion to reading (Merrill et. al, 1970).

These Western scholars' views are validated by a Thammasart University report which shows that local crime news is the most popular news category, followed by entertainment and social news. People are not interested in political or provincial news (Kaviya, 1971). To find out what people want through readership surveys as done in Western society does not seem to work well in Thailand, perhaps because there is a difference between what people say and what they do. They may want to be seen as reading quality papers such as Siam Rath so that they will be viewed as highly educated people, but in fact, they read mass

newspapers such as Thai Rath, and Daily News (Scandlen and Winker, 1982).

This phenomenon may be explained by the nature of Thai people. Thai people like something easy, entertaining, and not serious, which is probably why "Thai newspapers are good at entertaining, giving people what they want" (Pluwangkarn, 1987). Although there are many untrue stories in the newspapers, people still buy and read them (Viboolsri and Voraphan, 1984). Mosel explains that the Thai orientation toward media content reflects a "spectator role," wherein the individual permits himself only to view impersonally the content of communications without a sense of involvement and without any impulsion to act or participate (Mosel, 1963).

For this reason, Thai journalists may look at their readers as being indifferent to public affairs, slow to voice their opinions, submissive to higher authority, and fond of fun and entertainment. Therefore, to answer the question why the Thai press is as it is, the newspapers may defend themselves by saying that they want to give their readers what they want.

However, this orientation might stem from the public's having been taught over a long period of time to want this type of news. Besides, the excuse that hard news items or developmental news items are not interesting to audiences and cannot sell is probably an exaggeration. Jose A. Mayobre Machado explained that these kinds of news items can sell because they are important and can be of interest

to the audience if professional expertise and talent are used to make them attractive, interesting, and relevant (1982). People are interested in themselves and things that affect their lives, and it is these interests and needs that the media must reach and serve. To gain readers, journalists must make reading interesting and meaningful in the audience's terms and it is also the press's job to know what those terms are (Head, 1963).

However, this does not mean the press has to abandon entertainment and human interest items; everyone needs and enjoys games and other forms of recreation, and people have all the characteristics of humor, curiosity, love, hate, envy and so on. The point is that the press has to show a serious side as well as an entertaining side.

One of the most important factors affecting press practices is ethics. Like other countries, Thailand has her own code of ethics as moral guidelines for her press. The Thai Journalists' Codes of Ethics, which imitates the Western media like England or the United States whose systems are very strongly established (Pluwangkarn, 1987), was drafted by members of the Reporter's Association of Thailand and was put into use on December 5, 1977. The author views the Thai press code of ethics as being similar to the United States' 1923 Canons of Journalism and the 1947 Report on Freedom of the Press. Sathien Pantharangsi summarized the code of ethics of Thai newsmen as follows:

- 1) Responsibility--The responsibilities to the legal benefits of individuals, the nation,

the institutions, 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 remuneration.
- 4) Sincerity--Journalists must be truthful in their news coverage.
- 5) Impartiality--Journalists must be impartial. They must not work for influential people.
- 6) Fair Play--Journalists must not intrude upon individual rights.
- 7) Decency--Journalists must not use obscene language and sensational photographs (1980, pp. 118-119).

Apart from sticking to the code, perhaps the Thai press should keep in mind that in distributing information there must be enough of the news people want so that readers will buy the paper and help it survive economically; but the press must also serve the needs of society by fulfilling its journalistic obligation to inform the people. The author agrees with and would like to propose the following suggestions revised mostly from those of Georgina R. Encanto, a scholar who wrote about developmental journalism in the Philippines (1982).

Functioning in a developing country, Thai newspapers should publish more stories of local importance and relevance to the community, adopt a more balanced editorial content or publish stories on politics, business, economics, and sociocultural issues which are of local importance; adopt innovations in content, such as the sustained exposure

of particular development projects; rewrite and popularize press releases from the government and other agencies; identify the paper's markets or audiences to consider their needs and tastes; and involve the readers in important issues through interviews and other forms of communication.

With the joint efforts of the government and the press, as well as the support of the public, the press and other media could be infused with new vigor and made a more dynamic support component of the people's struggles and efforts to attain a better quality of life (Encanto, 1982).

Recommendations for Further Research

While working on this study, the author found many differences between Thai Rath and Siam Rath and believes that extensive research and a comparative analysis of the quality of news in terms of accuracy, credibility, or language usage, is worth doing.

The influence of news on opinion--how people's thoughts are influenced by newspaper opinion, what information people tend to use in organizing their thoughts of the world and events, and what direct/indirect effect news in each newspaper has on Thai business and economics--is also crucial.

Moreover, as many Thai scholars tend to claim, Thailand's English-language newspapers like The Bangkok Post and The Nation are much different from Thai-language newspapers in terms of their news content, format, and the

types of readers; therefore they are always described as having high journalistic standards. It would be interesting to compare Thai-language and English-language quality newspapers to find out the differences between them.

In addition, a comparative analysis of quality newspapers among developing countries is another area worth researching to find out the similarities and differences between different countries' quality newspapers. Lastly, as Schillinger's dynamic theory of the world press is still new, further research is needed to determine if the theory is valid, reliable, and applicable to explain and describe media in various regions of the world.

Conclusion

This study shows that the change in societal and government system affects the press system to some degree, but the Thai government alone should not be held responsible for the media's incompetence; it is up to the press to choose to be or not to be responsible. As the author mentioned earlier, regardless of type of government system or press policy restrictiveness, there certainly is enough freedom for the press to develop its journalistic practice.

As the freest mass medium in Thailand, the press should understand the significance of its role in the society. Since the people give journalists "freedom of the press," they have an obligation to be the watchdog, bringing well-being to the society.

However, to accomplish this job, the press cannot work alone; therefore, the cooperation among the press itself, the government, and Thai people is crucial.

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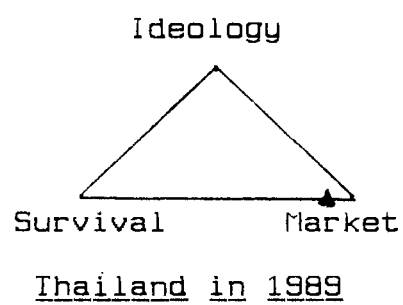
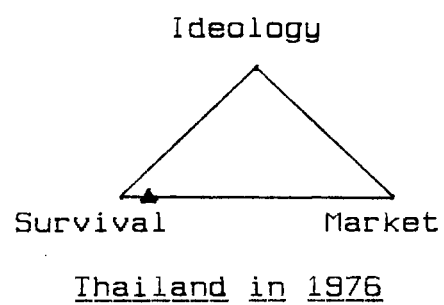
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APPENDIX

The dynamic motive of world press theory proposes that all nations and their press system subscribe to three primary vocabularies of motive--survival, market, ideology--one of which predominates at any given time. These motives are hierarchically ordered; survival is the most fundamental, but when survival is not threatened, either of the other motives assumes priority. These motives can be visualized as a triangle with a dot representing the government and press system of a certain country.

During the 1970s Thailand and all countries in Southeast Asia faced serious threats because their authoritarian governments promoted the new concept of developmental communication and kept announcing that press freedom is a "western-borrowed value"--a luxury that they could not afford due to national security, stability, public welfare, and ethnic problems (Lent, 1982).

Based on this reason, Thailand in 1976, under the Kraivichien regime, was driven by the survival motive. In 1989, however, the motive moved nearer to "market" because the nation was at peace and heading for national development, and the business-oriented objective was dominant.



2
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