POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS

AND

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN POLITICS:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

OF

THE THAI AND JAPANESE MEDIA

By

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP OF THESIS

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POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND THE MEDIA'A ROLE IN POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THAI AND JAPANESE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative analysis of the media's role in politics in Thailand and Japan. Previous studies of the media's role in politics are categorized into four groups: the pluralist model, which views the media's role as that of a 'watchdog'; the Marxist model, which argues that the media act as a 'guard dog' that guards the owners' interests; the hegemonic model, which claims that the media act as an 'agenda-setter'; the cultural relativist model, which considers that cultural factors can limit the media's role to that of a 'servant of the state'. In this study, the media are viewed as active political actors, which interact dynamically with the state and the public. The media do not pursue a single consistent role. Rather, the media's role is viewed as fluid and changeable depending on their political relations and power relations between the state, the media, and the public at the time.

This study proposes a *political information contest* model, which views the interactions between the state, the media, and the public as contests for control of political information. These interactions involve the exercise of power relations. The bulk of the analysis of these interactions is made in Chapters Two to Seven. Chapters Two and Three assess the use of coercive and reward means of power relations between the state and the media in the areas of press censorship and television regulations. The analyses suggest that both the Thai and Japanese states have always tried to regulate the flow of political information and suppress alternative political discourse, and that the media's role changed when the state undertook coercive or reward strategies. Chapter Four examines the ways in which the Thai and Japanese journalists' use expert and legitimate strategies in gaining access to, interpreting, and disseminating political information. The analysis finds that

some of the journalists' professional and ethical qualities act as impediments preventing the media from pursuing active roles.

Chapters Five and Six examine the extent to which the media change their role. This is done through qualitative content analyses of local press and television news coverage. The findings reveal that the media's role can change depending on the power relations between the state, the media, and the public that are operating, and that the media in Thailand and Japan act differently in similar circumstances partly due to differences in political culture. Chapter Seven discusses the interaction between the public and the state. The discussion points to the improvement in direct public access to official information, as well as the existence of various problems associated with the implementation of the information disclosure law and the accessibility of the Internet. This study concludes that contests over control of political information are more likely to occur in Thailand, where there is a higher degree of political pluralism, than in Japan, where one political party dominates. It also suggests that political information contests are essential elements of democratic societies as they enhance public understandings and their participation in politics, although the forms and degrees of the contests vary in each society depending on the political culture in which they operate.

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A NOTE ON NAMES

Japanese names in the text are surnames. For bibliographical references, their surnames appear first with no comma between their surnames and given names. On the contrary, the Thais referred in the text are given names, as it is more familiar to the Thais to be addressed by their given names. The bibliographical references of Thai sources also appear in the same order in accordance with the cataloging system of the Thai-language sources.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANN	Asahi News Network
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRC	Broadcasting Human Rights Committee
BS	Broadcasting Satellite
CAT	The Communication Authority of Thailand
CATV	Cable Television
CCD	The Civil Censorship Department
CDA	The Constitution Drafting Assembly
CI&E	The Civil Information and Education Section
CNN	Cable News Network
CS	Communication Satellite
DDC	Democracy Development Committee
FCC	The U.S. Federal Communications Commission
FNN	Fuji News Network
HDTV	High Definition Television
IPPS	Institute of Public Policy Studies
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
iTV	Independent Television
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JNN	Japan News Network
JSB	Japan Satellite Broadcaster
KDD	*Kokusai Denshin Denwa*
LDP	The Liberal Democratic Party

MCOT	The Mass Communication Organization of Thailand
MITI	The Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOF	The Ministry of Finance
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPT	The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications
NAB	*Nihon Minkan Hôsô Renmei* (The National Association of Commercial Broadcasters)
NBC	The National Broadcasting Commission
NBEB	The National Broadcasting Executive Board
NET	Nippon Education Channel
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NHK	*Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai* (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation)
NNN	Nippon News Network
NPKC	The National Peace Keeping Council
NRFMB	The National Radio Frequency Management Board
NSK	*Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* (The Japan's Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association)
NTC	The National Telecommunication Commission
NTV	Nippon Television Network Corporation
NTT	Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Organization
OIB	Official Information Board

OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PCT	The Press Council of Thailand
PRD	The Public Relations Department
PTD	The Post and Telegraph Department
PTT	The Petroleum Authority of Thailand
RAT	The Reporters' Association of Thailand
SCAP	The Supreme Commander for the Allied Power
SNG	Satellite Newsgathering
TBS	Tokyo Broadcasting System
TOT	The Telephone Organization of Thailand
TXN	TV Tokyo's Network
UCOM	United Communication Group
UHF	Ultra High Frequencies
VHF	Very High Frequencies

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *In the era of postmodernism, the media disengaged from*
> *politics and became the so-called "the Fourth Estate". It*
> *established itself, at least in principle, as independent of*
> *all institutions, including the state, political parties, and*
> *interest groups.*
>
> James W. Carey[1]

During the May Crisis in 1992, the majority of the Thai press vehemently attacked the military-led National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) that had toppled the elected Chatichai government a year earlier. The press allied itself with groups demonstrating against the military dictatorship and demanding a restoration of the civilian government. The press provided detailed coverage of the demonstrations, much of which was filtered out by the state-owned broadcasting media. The public turned to the press and cable television for information about the events, and also sought first-hand experience by joining in the demonstrations and forming their own communication networks.[2] As a result, the NPKC accused the press of instigating public unrest, and threatened to close down the offending publications. Despite such threats, the press continued to play a watchdog role by reporting military attacks on the demonstrators. For these reasons the role of the Thai press has become regarded by some scholars as an oppositional force within Thai politics.[3]

Consider a second event, on May 31 1993, when Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi agreed to an interview with Tahara Soichirô, the host of *Sunday Project*, a popular political talkshow broadcast live on *Asahi TV*. Unlike other political talkshow hosts, Tahara is famous ·for his blunt speech, and aggressive style of interviewing - a

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[1]   James W. Carey, "The Mass Media and Democracy", Journal of International Affairs, Summer 1993, 47(1), p. 7.

[2]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "The Development of a Participatory Democracy: Raison D'Etre for Media Reform in Thailand", Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science, 1994, 22, pp. 101-14.

[3]   Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "Thailand's Media: Whose Watchdog?", in K. Hewison (ed.), Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 217-32.

manner which is considered 'non-Japanese'. He told Miyazawa before the interview that the question of governmental reform would be a part of the discussion despite the Prime Minister's wishes to the contrary. During the interview, Miyazawa promised that he would embark upon reforms to address the deep-seated problem of corruption. When it later became clear that Miyazawa was failing to deliver on his promise, *Asahi TV* repeatedly screened a clip of his pledge to reform, a move which possibly contributed to the LDP loss in the general election of July 1993, ending 38 years LDP rule.[4]

These two events clearly indicate that the role of the mass media in liberal democratic societies today is no longer that of a neutral observer and broker of information, by impartially and objectively disseminating political opinions to the public.[5] As James Carey suggests, mass media in the era of postmodernism has become independent from all political institutions and related interest groups. Moreover, the mass media today are not simply a political spectator, but also an independent political actor. They:

> help set the political agenda, they can accelerate and magnify political success and failure, they can serve as independent advocates for victims of oppression, they can mobilize third parties into conflicts, and they are central agents in the construction of social frames about politics.[6]

The idea that the media are active agents in the political process is not new in countries such as the United States and Britain, in which the free press has a long

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[4]   See Kristin Kyoko Altman, "Television and Political Turmoil: Japan's Summer of 1993", S. J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), pp. 165-86; McCargo, however, pointed out that there is not substantial evidence that the show influenced the actual outcome, because the LDP lost little of its core support. See Duncan McCargo, "The Political Role of the Japanese Media", The Pacific Review, 1996, 9(2), pp. 251-64.

[5]   As Wheeler writes, "The mass media provide powerful channels of information between the political elite and the electorate. Traditionally, the press and the broadcasting act as proactive devices for encouraging the citizen to participate in the democratic process. The mass media, by disseminating the full range of political opinions, enable the public to make political choices and enter the national life. Therefore, they are understood as important mechanisms in ensuring the principles of modern democratic societies". See Mark Wheeler, Politics and the Mass Media (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.1.

[6]   This study rejects the notion that the media's role is merely a mirror of political life. In fact, the media have become a political actor. Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media and Political Conflicts: News from the Middle East (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3. See also Judith Lichtenburg (ed.) Democracy and the Mass Media (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

history. However, in Asian countries like Thailand and Japan where the media have been heavily controlled and regulated, debates about the growing political role of the mass media have come to the fore in recent years. In Thailand, press reports such as those which featured corruption allegations surrounding a land reform project on the Southern resort island of Phuket and contributed to the fall of the Chuan Leekpai's administration in 1995 signify the growing importance of the media in inducing political change.[7] In Japan, a late 1980s survey of eleven broad groups closely involved in the political process found that nearly all considered the mass media to be the most influential group in Japanese society.[8] The press coverage of the Recruit Scandal that brought down Prime Minister Takeshita and his administration in 1989 has drawn a similar degree of attention.[9]

Since such proactive media operations have been rare in Japan and Thailand, the analysis of media activities and institutions, as well as the relations between political and media institutions, remains relatively undeveloped. The present work seeks to address these issues by comparing the role of the media in Japanese and Thai politics. Firstly, it will provide an analytical framework that can be used to understand the political role of the media in both countries and the media's relationships with other political institutions. Secondly, the underlying factors in changes to the media's role in each country will be identified. A common analytical lens will be employed to engage in

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[7]   This scandal was disclosed by a leading local paper, *Thai Rath*. It concerned a number of influential ministers who oversaw a land reform project in Phuket during the1995 Chuan's administration. The press found that these ministers secured parcels of the land with business potential for family members and business friends. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, Thailand's Boom and Bust (Chiengmai: Silkworm Books, 1998), pp. 255-56.

[8]   The eleven respondent groups consisted of business organizations; bureaucrats; LDP members; farm organizations; mass media; intellectuals; labour unions; opposition parties; citizens' movement groups; feminist groups; and the Buraku Liberation League (BLL). All groups with the notable exception of the mass media, ranked the mass media at the top of hierarchy of influence even above the ruling triumvirate of business groups, bureaucracy, and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which were commonly assured to be the most important actors on Japan's political stage. See Kabashima Ikuo and Jefferey Broadbent, "Referent Pluralism: Mass Media and Politics in Japan", Journal of Japanese Studies, Summer 1989, 12(2), pp. 329-61.

[9]   The scandal involved senior LDP members, high-ranking bureaucrats, and members of the mass media who accepted stocks from the Recruit Cosmos Company - the property subsidiary of information services firm Recruit Co., Ltd. See Maggie Farley, "Japanese Press and Politics of Scandal" in S. J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 148; See also Chapter 1: "*Rikuruuto Hôdô no Meian*" (The Black and White of the Reports on the Recruit Scandal), in Katsura Keiichi, *Gendai no Shimbun* (Newspapers at Present), 2nd ed.(Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997).

cross-national and cross-cultural comparison. Finally, an alternative perspective that may prove to be of value in the analysis of the media's role in other democratic societies will be elaborated.

1.1 Definitions

Before proceeding with this discussion, it is necessary to define a number of important terms. First, the term 'political information' will refer to all political messages presented to the public, and required by the public to exercise their political judgements and form opinions. In modern societies, political information is largely mediated through various means of communication and mass media. As a result, public opinion is shaped by the type of political information and ideas disseminated. Democracy only functions effectively when the public has the right to access accurate political information that its government makes available.[10] When such political information conveyed to the public is sufficiently broad based, the public is well placed to form its own judgements about what policies are consistent with its basic values and interests. Conversely, democracy does not function when political information provided to the public is inaccurate, incomplete, or distorted, and the public is misled into favoring policies potentially harmful to itself or the nation.[11]

Secondly, the term 'political communication' denotes all aspects of communication between institutions encompassing the state, the media, and the public. The state consists of all government agencies and their representatives, the media defined here as the press and television broadcasting, and the public consisting of the immediate audience and all the recipients of political information. However, this unit of analysis is not unified or conclusive, as each is a result of an interplay of various

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[10]   See International Commission for the Studies of Communication Problems, Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), p. 253; Also Judith Lichtenburg (ed.), Democracy and the Mass Media (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John Keane, The Media and Democracy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); Benjamin Page, Who Deliberates?: Mass Media and Modern Democracy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Uchida Mitsuru, "Chiiki medeia to Demokurasii" (Local Media and Democracy), Masu komunikeshon kenkyû (Journal of Mass Communication Studies), 49, July 1996, pp. 3-13.

[11]   Benjamin Page, op. cit., p. 2.

political and social actors at a particular point of time.[12] Each actor should therefore be seen as a process, not a structure. Based on this view, this study adopts a systematic outlook to address important aspects of communication between the actors of different groupings, in order to avoid the overemphasis of a single element. The 'political communication system' will therefore refer to a four part system consisting of: all aspects communication between the state, the media, and the public; political aspects of media institutions such as those of the press and television broadcasting; audience orientations to political communication; and political information accessed, interpreted, and disseminated in the political communication process.

Notably, the definition of 'political communication' employed in this thesis goes beyond the more limited concept articulated by Duncan Watts, who sees the term as encompassing "all those means by which information is conveyed from those who rule, or aspire to do so, to those over whom they have influence, the governed".[13] Indeed, this definition of 'political communication' is typical of those working within the Marxist tradition, as the flow of political information is seen to be structured, controlled, and located within the dominant framework of class interests. Other popular definitions of 'political communication' are based on studies that mainly focus on voter-persuasion paradigms. These studies typically define the term as a process whereby political organizations use, react to, and are used by the news media to achieve certain political results, or a process whereby the news media influence their audience to think about and make judgments on politically significant issues. According to Blumler and Gurevitch, such a preoccupation with the audience has "resulted in an imbalance of activity favoring studies of the audience at the expense of other elements in the communication process".[14]

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[12]   Surin Maisrikrod, for example, suggests that the Thai state consists of three main actors: the military/bureaucracy, the monarch, and the government. These three main actors are in alliance with one another from time to time, but at the other times they are in opposition. See Surin Maisrikrod, "Emerging Patterns of Political Leadership in Thailand", Contemporary Southeast Asia, June 1993, 15(1), pp. 80-97.

[13]   Duncan Watts, Political Communication Today (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 1.

[14]   Jay G. Blumler and Micael Gurevitch, The Crisis of Public Communication (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 11.

Thirdly, the term 'political culture' is defined here as "the particular pattern of orientation in political action in which each political system is embedded".[15] This pattern of attitudes and orientations also leads to specific forms of political organizations and activities. Although it is known that cultural factors may contribute to the formulation of such orientations, no theory has yet been clearly elucidated about how ethnicity, religion, or other cultural manifestations relate to specific attitudes and behavior toward government. However, as most scholars agree, culture is a set of shared psychological values and practices; thus, political culture, as a subset of culture, consists of "patterns of psychologically based political orientations" toward the state that flow from cultural norms and values, and the boundaries of these shared values and practices represent significant variance.[16] Therefore, 'political culture' in a political communication system encapsulates the values, norms, beliefs, means, and traditions that are shared by actors involved in a political communication system.

1.2 Why A Comparative Study?

James Carey has suggested that the definition of the relationship between the mass media and politics varies across nations, and therefore the political role of media in each society must be examined on a country-by-country basis.[17] However, British political communication scholars such as Blumler and Guerevitch suggest that comparative research of different political communication systems offers a number of methodological advantages.[18] Firstly, a comparative study is an antidote to naive universalism, that is an antidote to the presumption that the research findings of the political role of media in one society are applicable everywhere. Secondly, comparative studies provide a view of both the similarities and differences between systems, thus attention is drawn to the

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[15]   Daniel J.Elazar, <u>American Federalism: A View from the States</u>, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 109.

[16]   David L. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (eds.), "The Field of Political Communication: Beyond the Voter Persuasion Paradigm", <u>New Directions in Political Communication: A Resource Book</u> (California: Sage, 1990), p. 35.

[17]   James Carey, "The Mass Media and Democracy", <u>Journal of International Affairs</u>, June 1993, (47), p. 7.

[18]   See Chapter Six: "Comparative Research : The Extending Frontier" in Michael Gurevitch, and Jay G. Blumler (eds.), <u>The Crisis of Public Communication</u> (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 83.

shared characteristics of the interaction between the media and political systems as well as culturally specific features in different societies. Lastly, and most importantly, a comparative analysis helps determine the degree to which Western-based theories of political communications systems are applicable to non-Western societies. At the same time, such an analysis may contribute to the formulation of theories based on experiences and issues in non-Western societies.[19]

However, the most compelling reason to engage in comparative research is the extent of the globalization of media -- a situation that has been brought about by the rapid development of new media technologies. The global diffusion of political information is a result of how these new media technologies cross the boundaries of national communication systems. Indeed, this process is just part what Arjun Appadurai has described as broader "global cultural flows which include *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financesapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes*".[20] Two of these terms -- *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes* -- relate directly to the process of global diffusion of political information. Appadurai refers to *mediascapes* as the "distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information ... throughout the world (in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed)".[21] As a result of this, we are living in an 'imagined world' in which the lines between realistic and fictional landscapes become blurred. The *CNN* coverage of the Gulf War, for example, has been regarded as an 'imagined war', because little combat footage or that of the victims of the war were broadcast. Indeed, global audiences saw little more than repeated footage of SCUD missile attacks, or footage from the Battle of Khafji.[22] Yet these media practices resulted in unprecedented rates of TV news viewership and newspapers readership across the globe. At the same time, the term *'ideoscapes'* refers to political ideas, terms, or images that each national government has adopted to suit its

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[19]   *Ibid.*, pp. 83-96.
[20]   Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Culture Economy", Theory, Culture and Society, 1990, (7), pp. 295-310.
[21]   *Ibid.*, pp. 298-99.
[22]   William A. Dorman, "Press Theory and Journalistic Practice: The Case of the Gulf War", in S. Iyengar and R. Reeves (eds.), Do the Media Govern?: Political Voters and Reporters in America (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), pp. 118 - 125.

own political culture. Through this term, we can see a growing trend whereby the United States, in particular, exports professional media ideologies and practices to other countries.[23] The extent to which these ideologies and practices are adapted to suit the political communication systems and political cultures in each country are questions that can best be analyzed and understood in comparative terms.

1.3 Why Japan and Thailand?

There are several reasons for selecting Japan and Thailand as case studies in the analysis of the role of mass media in politics. From a historical perspective, Japan and Thailand have similar cultural environments. In his comparative work on "Value Systems and Economic Development in Japan and Thailand", Ayal writes:

> A Japan-Thailand comparison has numerous advantages. There
> was a striking chronological similarity between the histories of
> the exposure of the two countries to the West and in the nature of
> the contacts with the West. Both countries possess traditions of
> selective cultural borrowing over a long historical past, and both
> are within what might be loosely called the same general oriental
> cultural area (as opposed to the Western-Christian area). The
> similarities extend to factors often mentioned as important
> for the economic development of Japan : both countries maintained
> their political independence; both were characterized by a homogenous
> culture, awareness of national identity, a high degree of authority enjoyed
> by the central government, and an early realization by the rulers that
> it is imperative for national survival to learn Western methods.[24]

Indeed, Japan and Thailand do share a number of historical similarities. First, they both opened up to the West in the 1850s. Second, the Meiji period and the reign of King Chulalongkorn, which both began in 1868, were considered times of major reform and modernization in each country. Third, the reasoning behind modernization -- resistance to the encroachment of colonial power -- was also strikingly similar, even though the results were economically and politically different.[25] Last, as a result of

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[23] See, for example, Nick Stevenson, The Transformation of the Media: Globalization, Morality and the Politics (London: Longman, 1999).

[24] Eliezer B. Ayal, "Value Systems and Economic Development in Japan and Thailand", Journal of Social Issues, 1963, 19, p. 36, cited in Douglas H. Pressman, "Thai Modernity: A Study in the Sociology of Culture", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1990, p. 86.

[25] In his work on Thai modernization, Jacobs argued that the reason that Japan was able to modernize and develop while Thailand did not was that Japan was a society in which individual, innovative potential led the country to development. Thailand, on the other hand, was a society which sought to preserve the traditional system. This point is also agreed to by Murakami who argued that Japan was ready to adapt and integrate to the requirements of industrialization since the Meiji periods, which was more advanced than other East and

modernization, they were the only two countries in Asia to actually maintain their political sovereignty in the face of European colonialism. Though Thailand was seized by Japan during the Pacific War and Japan was occupied by the United States after the Second World War, this was for less than a decade -- a period too short to leave any really substantial colonial legacy. In comparison to other previously-colonized Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia upon which culture and values are often imposed by the government in order to bridge vastly different ethnic groups, Japan and Thailand have their authentic culture embedded in every aspect of society.

These relative cultural homogeneities, in addition to unique national language systems, give rise to a number of socio-cultural factors that link the two countries. In Thailand, values such as gratitude, obedience, and respect for authority and seniority are viewed as culturally important, and these values are largely passed along from generation to generation by means of teaching and socialization.[26] Studies of Japanese society suggest that Confucian values passed down through the generations have influenced the Japanese to become highly group-oriented, disciplined, and to have a strong sense of responsibility toward their duties and obligations (*giri* and *ninjô*).[27] A pioneer comparative study of Thai and Japanese societies was undertaken by Embree in 1950.[28] However, he marked a major difference between the two societies, labelling Japanese society as 'tightly structured' due to the presence of order and regularity within it, and Thai society as 'loosely structured', due to its supposed absence of order

Southeast Asian countries. Surangsri's comments were also in consensus with these arguments. She contrasted the role of the intellectual groups in Thailand and Japan, the *Young Siam* and the *Merokusha* that during the modernization period. She argued that the less pronounced role than their Japanese counterparts of the Young Siam intellectuals was another reason that resulted in gradual development in Thailand. See Norman G. Jacobs, <u>Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study</u> (New York: Praeger, 1971); Surangsri Tonsiengsom, "Western Knowledge and Intellectual Groups in Japan and Thailand in the Nineteenth Century", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1990; and Murakami Yasusuke, "Modernization in Terms of Integration: The Case of Japan", in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), <u>Patterns of Modernity Volume II: Beyond the West</u> (New York: New York University Press, 1987), pp. 65-88.

26   Chancha Suvannathat, "The Inculcation of Values in Thai Children", <u>International Social Science Journal</u>, 1979, 31(3), pp. 477-85.

27   Hayashi Chikio conducted a research on the national character among the "new breed"(*shinjinrui*) Japanese, and pointed out that attitudes regarding *giri* and *ninijô* still maintain their significance in the minds of the young Japanese. See Hayashi Chikio, "The National Character in Transition", <u>Japan Echo</u>, 1988, 15(Special Issue), p. 8.

28   John F. Embree, "Thailand - A Loosely Structured Social System", <u>American Antropologist</u>, 1950, (52), pp. 181-93.

and regularity.[29] However, Embree's theory was later debunked by critics who pointed to the lack of empirical data, and a high degree of order and regularity is in fact discernible in Thai society.[30] In a similar vein, there is also a controversy concerning the characteristics that make up Japanese society and its people. Scholars who study the concept of 'Japaneseness' (*Nihonjinron*) question the validity of claims based on what were formerly known as peculiar characteristics of the Japanese, such as conformity, consensus, and group orientation. Sugimoto and Mouer have discarded such claims, and emphasized the prevailing tensions and conflicts among different classes in the Japanese society.[31] Due to these disparate interpretations of social factors in Thailand and Japan, it seems more prudent to assume that social factors in both countries are neither totally similar, nor dichotomous, but there are overlapping categories that are perhaps yet to be classified.

There are two features of political systems in contemporary Thailand and Japan that owe much to national characteristics but are still quite similar: the preponderance of factions, or groups within the major political parties, and the prominent role of money in politics.[32] In Japan, one feature of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) - which ruled for 38 years (1955-1993), and has been leading a coalition government since 1996 - is that the party comprises factional alliances (*habatsu*), based on personal loyalty rather than ideological affinities. When a new cabinet is formed, factional leaders acquire ministerial posts by turn. In Thailand, a political party comprises a number of groups (*kloom*). Each group is centered around a certain powerful individual who is able to able to exert influence (often of a financial nature) over a large number of local constituents and *hua khanaen* (voting chiefs).[33] These voting chiefs operate in a similar manner to

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29   *Ibid.*

30   See an editorial volume on the subject in H.D. Evers (ed.), <u>Loosely Structured Social Systems: Thailand in Comparative Perspective</u> (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 1969).

31   Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto, <u>Images of Japanese Society: A Study in Social Construction of Reality</u> (London: KPI, 1986).

32   Likhit Dhiravegen, "The One-and-a-half Party System and a Halfway Democracy: A Comparative Perspective", in Yoshihara Kunio (ed.), <u>Thai Perceptions of Japanese Modernization</u> (Kuala Lumpur: Falcon Press, 1989), pp. 68-90.

33   James Ockey, "Capital Accumulation by Other Means: Provincial Crime, Corruption, and the Bureaucratic Polity", Paper presented at the 5th International Conference on Thai Studies, (London, SOAS, 1993).

networks of local supporting groups in Japan, or the so-called *kôenkai*, connecting factional politicians with local bureaucrats and businessmen, and canvassing votes at election time.[34] However, the dissolution of factions and shifts in alliances within and between political parties are more common in Thailand than in Japan. As Likhit argues, alliances within *kloom* are based loosely on patron-client relationships, and so are less stable than *habatsu* in Japan, which are based on *oyabun-kobun* relationships that emphasize the loyalty of workers (*kobun*) to their lord (*oyabun*).[35]

Money, on the other hand, seems to play an equally important role in the politics of both countries. While the term 'money politics' describes a feature considered inherent in Japanese politics, 'business politics' (*thurakit kan-muang*) characterizes the enormous influence of business on politics in Thailand. Yet both terms share a similar meaning -- they denote a reciprocal relationship between businessmen and politicians, and this relationship is particularly strengthened via the local networks of political support groups, such as *hua khanan* in Thailand, and *kôenkai* in Japan. For instance, businessmen want politicians to push for legislation and policies favorable to their interests. Politicians, in turn, receive financial contributions from business to support their costly re-election campaigns.[36]

A further analogy can be drawn from postwar interpretations of Japanese and Thai politics, especially in the context of the distribution of political power. A number of political scientists regard Japan and Thailand as 'bureaucratic polities', in which public administration and policy decision-making is dominated by bureaucrats. For many years there were two popular theoretical models of the post-war Japanese political system. One saw the bureaucracy as the single dominant power in policy-

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[34] *Kôenkai* is a mass membership organization with the function of organizing large members of the general electorate on behalf of a particular candidate. Gerald Curtis, for instance, saw it as the most important campaign strategy of the LDP during the postwar period. See, Gerald L. Curtis, Election Campaigning: Japanese Style (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); Also for a discussion on the role of *kôenkai* in giving a rise to Former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei see Jacob M. Schlesinger, Shadow Shoguns: The Rise and Fall of Japan's Postwar Political Machine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

[35] Likhit, *op. cit.*, p.78.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

making, largely as a result of postwar development in which bureaucrats had the leading role in rebuilding the economy and society.[37] The other model viewed the bureaucracy as one of the three main pillars of an exclusive 'ruling triad' coalition of the bureaucracy, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and big businesses.[38] However, it has been argued that these models were no longer plausible by the 1980s due to an emergence of pluralist elements in Japanese politics and policymaking. As a result of these changes, a new model called 'patterned pluralism' was formulated, emphasizing the importance of various autonomous interest groups which have multiple points of access to policymaking process.[39] Yet, it is also recognized that these interest groups have lately aligned themselves with bureaucrats in order to gain access to the policy-making process, since the latter retain a powerful influence in this process.[40]

In Thailand, the center of political power, according to Fred Riggs' 1966 interpretation, was located within the "bureaucratic polity", which comprises the armed forces, the police, and the civil administration, rather than political parties operating under parliamentary rules.[41] Until the end of the 1980s, Thailand was ruled by the military strongmen around 86.5 per cent of the time, while the rest of the time it was led by civilian governments whose survival rate averaged around 9 months.[42] Riggs'

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[37] For example, see Chalmers Johnson, MITI and the Japanese Miracle (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 1982); John C. Campbell, "Democracy and Bureaucracy in Japan", in Ishida Takeshi and E. Krauss, Democracy in Japan (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), pp. 113-137.

[38] For details on this model see Muramatsu Michio and Ellis S. Krauss, "Bureaucrats and Politicians in Policymaking: The Case of Japan", American Political Science Review, 1984, 78, pp. 126-48.

[39] Muramatsu Michio and Ellis Krauss, "The Conservative Party Line and the Development of Patterned Pluralism", in K. Yamamura and Y. Yasuba (eds.), The Political Economy of Japan Vol. I (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 516-54; and Muramatsu Michio, "Patterned Pluralism Under Challenged: The Policies of the 1980s", in G.D.Allinson and Sone Yasunori (eds.), Political Dynamics in Contemporary Japan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 50-71.

[40] See Ellis S. Krauss, "Japan: Divided Bureaucracy, Unified Regime", in John Pierre (ed.), Bureaucracy in Modern State: An Introduction to Comparative Public Administration (Hants, England: Edward Elgar, 1995), pp. 118-139; Chapter 7: The Structure and Process of Central Government: Is Japan a Bureaucratic Polity? in J.A.A Stockwin, Governing Japan: Divided Politics in Major Economy, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

[41] The main thesis of Riggs' argument was that there was no guiding force outside the bureaucracy capable of establishing the parameters of bureaucratic action. Thus, the bureaucracy was free to act as it chose. Fred Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity (Honolulu : East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 197.

[42] Rangsan Thanpornpan, "Process of Economic Policy Formulation in Thailand: A Historical Political-Economic Analysis (1932-1987)", Paper presented at the TDRI Year-End Conference, December 1988, p. 71 (in Thai), cited in Suntaree Komin, Psychology of the Thai People:

depiction of Thailand as a 'bureaucratic polity' centering on the political struggle within the bureaucracy was, however, challenged by Girling, who argued that the political changes in the direction of a more pluralistic system in the late 1970s meant that political parties became more prominent, with the business sector developing greater influence.[43] Kevin Hewison also pointed to some serious flaws of Riggs' analysis, which was based on modernization theory. He identified such weaknesses as a failure to account adequately for historical changes and conflicts, and unwarranted assumptions of class homogeneity.[44] Anek Laothamatas has even suggested that since the early 1980s the 'bureaucratic polity' is dead and has been replaced by so-called 'liberal corporatism', which refers to a political system dominated by capitalists and the middle class.[45] The leading Thai political scientist, Chai-Anan Samudavanija, reinterpreted the political developments of the 1980s and 1990s and suggested that there has been a trend towards increasing political participation from different social groups, and that political parties have emerged at the center of power supported by bureaucrats and business groups.[46] Yet as Pasuk and Baker argue, bureaucratic power still dominates the Thai political system.[47] This may be due, in part, to the fact that there are frequent cabinet reshuffles - on average these take place every eleven months. Such a state of affairs reflects the shifting alliances of the *kloom* and the consequent inability of political parties to develop the skills needed for long term policy-making.

Values and Behavioral Patterns, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: National Institute of Development Administration, 1991), p. 123.

[43] John L.S. Girling, The Bureaucratic Polity in Modernizing Societies (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1981).

[44] Kevin Hewison, Power and Politics in Thailand: Essays in Political Economy (Wollongong, Australia: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1989), p. 14.

[45] Anek Laothamatas, Business Associations and the New Political Economy of Thailand, from Bureaucratic Polity to Liberal Corporatism (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

[46] Chai-Anan Samudavanija (2nd), *Anakhot kanmuang thai* (The Future of Thai Politics (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1996), p. 54. See also Kevin Hewison, "Of Regimes, State and Pluralities: Thai Politics Enters the 1990s", in K. Hewison, G. Rodan, and R. Robison (eds.), Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, Democracy, and Capitalism (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), pp. 159-190.

[47] Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, "Power in Transition: Thailand in the 1990s", in K. Hewison (ed.), Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 39. Further readings on Thai bureaucracy see, for example, Chai-Anan Samudavanija, "Old Soldiers Never Die, They Are Just Bypassed: The Military, Bureaucracy and Globalization", in K. Hewison (ed.), Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 42-58.

Another important similarity between Thailand and Japan is that both countries retain their traditional monarchical systems. The *tennôsei* (Imperial system) in Japan and the *Sathaban Mahakasat* (institution of the monarchy) in Thailand float sublime and receive only minor challenges from the surrounding society, as they are protected by legal sanction, superstition, terror, and powerful influence. A serious crime would be committed should the Thai or Japanese media direct at their monarch even a fraction of what the British media regard as normal coverage of its royal family. In Thailand, for example, 'self-censorship' is regularly adopted by domestic reporters in relation to the monarchy (as is also the case with Buddhism, the official state religion). Journalists who write negative reports on these subjects can face long jail term, and publishers can be threatened with orders of closure. In Japan, by contrast, reports in Japanese media on the Imperial family are somewhat more relaxed. For example, in 1993 there was a media campaign engineered by traditionalists using weekly magazines to attack Empress Michiko, a commoner. She was portrayed as a "domineering and insensitive harridan, willing to trample over time-honoured traditions and the memory of her husband's father, Hirohitô".[48] Although similar direct attacks against, or negative reservations about, the royal family never appear in any of the Thai mass media, they exist and are spread by underground pamphlets, fascimiles, and rumour. As a famous social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa, who has been twice charged for the crime of *lèse majesté* observes:

> Although we [the Thai press] don't behave like the British press, we gossip
> even much more. And nowadays, of course, we don't only gossip. We send fax
> which are very revealing about the audacity, sometimes very negative elements
> of the royal family, and that we cannot stop.[49]

Finally, and most importantly, Thailand and Japan are the two Asian countries whose modern histories most closely parallel those of Western democracies. As mentioned earlier, both countries embarked on modernization, industrialization and democratization under the control of local elite rather than as colonies. Therefore, if media theory written about Western political democracies works anywhere outside the

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[48]   Richard McGregor, <u>Japan Swings</u> (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996), p. 279.

[49]   Sulak Sivaraksa is interviewed in the BBC production of 'The Royal Court of Thailand Pt. 2'.
This program was aired by the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) on February 12,
2000 at 6 pm.

West, then it should work in these two countries. The comparative study of Thailand
and Japan will certainly help define the limits of Western media theory.

However, it is important to note the discrepancy in the democratic status of
political systems in these two countries. Although Thailand and Japan have established
democratic political systems, their actual democratic status differs. Japan was the first
industrialized democracy in the non-Western world. It had its first parliamentary
election in 1890[50], during the Meiji period, whereas Thailand only held its first election
in 1933 after the political revolution of 1932[51]. Even so, Thailand is often seen as "a
semi-democracy"[52] where bureaucratic and nonbureaucratic forces share political power,
and continually engage in a struggle to maximize their position.[53]

Given Japan's longer history of effective democracy and rapid economic
development, its media are far more technologically advanced, diverse, and educative
than the Thai media. However, genuine investigative newspaper and television reporting
on sensitive matters is rare. The major dailies, for example, often follow each other's
themes closely. The reader is therefore likely to be bombarded with the same message.
As a result, Japan is not yet regarded as a mature democratic society as Britain and the
United States which possess strong, reliable, and watchful media. This is due to the
'soft-authoritarian' nature of Japanese media (to borrow a term used to describe the

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[50]   See Robert A. Scalapino, "Elections and Political Modernization in Prewar Japan", in R.E.
        Ward (ed), Political Development in Modern Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
        1968), pp. 254-83.

[51]   Thailand has also had 17 coup d'états and sixteen constitutions since 1932. Discussion on the
        failure in the development of democracy in Thailand is taken up by Anek Laothamatas in *Mop
        mu thu: Chon chan klang kab kanphatthanakan prachathippatai (The Mobile Phone Mob:
        The Middle Class and Democratic Development)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 1993).

[52]   An example of a semi-democratic political system is one which a strong executive branch is
        preferred to the legislative branch; the prime minister does not have to be an elected member of
        the parliament ; the upper house is composed mostly of military and civilian bureaucrats with
        more or less equal powers to the lower house; and the total number of senators is almost equal
        to the number of elected representatives. See Chai-Anan Samudavanija, "Thailand: A Stable
        Semi-democracy", in L. Diamond et al. (eds), Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing
        Experiences with Democracy (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990), pp. 271-312.

[53]   Since the revolution in 1932, there has been a constant power struggle between army factions
        and civilian leaders. There was also a struggle between the government of the day and various
        mass movements organized by trade unions, student, and the left-wing groups. For a
        discussion on the power struggle between the military establishment and the civillians in the
        Thai political history see Ji Ungpakorn, "The Struggle Against the Military for Thai
        Democracy", Working Paper No. 55 (Perth: Murdoch University, Asian Research Center,
        1996).

Japanese political system by Chalmers Johnson), in which a symbiotic relationship exists between journalists, media organizations, and politicians. Hence, the media sometimes serve the holders of political power for their own personal or commercial interests.

As for Thailand, the media, which were previously seen as a 'servant of the state'[54], are changing their political roles. The country has had a long history of newspaper closures sanctioned by the repressive Press Act of 1941, which allowed the state to dismiss any editor or shut down any publication that has printed material deemed to be improper, or a threat to the peace that affects public morality. The press has frequently been used as a tool for exerting political and business influence, and at times this has led to dramatic situations. For example, in 1992 Sondhi Limthongkul, the publisher of the *Asian Times* and the local newspaper, *Phujadkarn rai wan*, was the target of an assassination plot when he refused requests from the military government to stop publishing critical stories.[55] Thai broadcasting also retains tough censorship standards despite a considerable degree of liberalization in the last few years. In May 1993, an FM radio station owned by the Nation Group was taken off the air for broadcasting remarks by Sulak Sivaraksa, an outspoken Buddhist critic, who had criticized the army.[56] More recently, a media-watch center was established, in which a high level committee closely monitored news reports that are critical of the ministries and the government. This initiative was based on the government's view that talk-back radio programs permitted listeners to ring up and disseminate false information that scared away foreign investors and hurt the economy. Although this media-watch center was abolished in 1997, then Interior Minister, Mr. Sanoh Thienthong, made a claim

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[54] According to Likhit and Thinapan (1989), the Thai media system has been generally supportive of social stability and political conservatism. The Thai press is also seen to reinforce political culture rather than the emergence of new political values and behaviors. See Likit Dhiravegen and Thinapan Nakata, "Social Cultural Aspects of Thai Polity", in S. Prasith-Rathsint (ed), Thai National Development: Social and Economic Background (Bangkok: Thai University Research Association, 1989), pp. 166-96.

[55] Sondhi Limthongkul, Speech made at a Hong Kong Conference on "Asia Values and the Role of the Media in the Society", December 1-3, 1994, organized by the Freedom Forum Asian Center in Hong Kong and the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong.

[56] Arunee Iab, "Wad-wong Su" (The Realm of Media), *Jodmai Khao* (The Newsletter). The Reporters' Association of Thailand. May 17, 1993.

which summed up a common official view among Thai political representatives: "Democracy does not mean anybody can do whatever he or she wishes without any control".[57]

1.4 Theoretical Approaches

Previous studies of the mass media and their political role in liberal democratic societies have focused on the interrelationship between the state, the media, and society. These studies, for the most part, were informed by one of four main theoretical approaches: the pluralist model; the Marxist model; the hegemonic model; and the cultural relativist model. The strength and weakness of each approach will now be ascertained.

1.4.1 The Pluralist Model: Media as a 'Watchdog'

The pluralist model is based on the assumption that the role of the press and the broadcasting media in liberal democratic countries is to participate in the 'free marketplace of ideas'. In the 1950s, this American perspective was projected globally by Siebert[58], who developed four theories of the press, which collectively remain the dominant paradigm for explaining mass media systems. The four theories emphasize distinctions between 'authoritarian', 'libertarian', 'communist', and 'social responsibility' press systems. Authoritarian governments limit freedom of the press to those values that observe the primacy of the government administration. In such systems, censorship or regulation allows the government to directly supervise the gathering and dissemination of news. In extreme cases, authoritarian practices allow for total government domination of the press so that it can serve primarily as a medium for official statements or propaganda, as with former communist states such as the USSR and East Germany. In contrast, liberal democratic systems place the individual above the government. The system nurtures a press free of government control, and this free market of ideas allows fair exchange in a public forum. At the same time, the libertarian

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[57]   M. Baker, "Thai Economic Crisis Brings Media Crackdown", Asia Online, June 11, 1997
        (http://www.theage.com.au/special/asiaonline/media.html).
[58]   Fredrick S. Siebert, Four theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social
        Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press should be, 2nd ed. (Urbana:
        University of Illinois Press, 1963).

may invoke the values of social responsibility, which modifies the *laissez faire* posture of the libertarian press.

The pluralist view favors the libertarian system, which allows the press to be commercially owned and operated in a free, democratic political culture. The role of the press is regarded as that of a 'public watchdog'. In this watchdog role, the mass media disseminate vital information to the citizenry, they facilitate the formation of public opinion by providing an important forum of debate, and they enable the people to influence the conduct of government by articulating their views. Other essential elements of the media's watchdog role include a substantial autonomy and the ability to represent the public rather than that of vested economic and political interests. In doing so, the media may reveal abuses of power by these dominant groups and help to sustain or develop democratic society. Underlying this theory is the view that the media are central to the construction of what is termed the 'public sphere', which is defined as the space between state and society in which private individuals can conduct their rational discussion. This discussion, in turn, will influence the government through elections and the mobilization of public opinion.[59] However, the concept of the 'public sphere', developed in the West during the eighteenth century, has been challenged by Habermas:

> The liberal model of the public sphere...cannot be applied to
> the actual conditions of an industrially advanced mass-democracy
> organized in the form of the social welfare state. In part the liberal model
> had always included ideological components, but it is also in part true
> that the social pre-conditions, to which the ideological elements
> could at one time at least be linked, had been fundamentally transformed.[60]

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*[61], Habermas distinguished his concept of the 'bourgeois public sphere' from the classical liberal concept of the 'public sphere'. He argued that the emergence of capitalism in the late 19th century gave rise to

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[59]   James Curran, "Rethinking the Media as a Public Sphere", in P. Dahlgran and C. Sparks, Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 29.

[60]   Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere", in A. Matterlart and S. Siegelaub, Communication and Class Struggle Vol.1 (New York: International General, 1979), p. 200, cited in Nicholas Garnham, "The Media and the Public Sphere", in P. Golding et al. (eds), Communicating Politics: Mass Communications and the Political Process (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), pp. 41-42.

[61]   Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (London: Polity Press, 1989).

a new political class, the bourgeoisie, whose members succeeded in constructing the public sphere by creating a network of institutions within a society. These institutions included newspapers, publishing enterprises, libraries, universities and debating societies, which enabled the bourgeoisie thereby to transform its own class-specific political agenda into broader public opinion. Habermas further pointed out that the transformation of the public sphere was brought about by a combination of advertising pressures, monopolization and concentration of media ownership which accompanied capitalist development. He argued that public opinion would then no longer derive from a process of rational discourse, but be the result of manipulative social engineering:

> Ever since the marketing of the editorial section became interdependent
> with that of the advertising section, the press became an institution of certain
> participants in the public sphere in their capacity as private individuals;
> that is, it became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded
> the public sphere.[62]

Following the thrust of Habermas's argument, the weaknesses of the liberal theory of the free press becomes apparent. The liberal theory simply assumes that the free market will provide appropriate institutions and processes of political communication to support a democratic polity. It ignores the way in which market forces can produce results in forms of oligopoly control of information. The content is highly politicized in support of bourgeois positions, but offered as if neutral. The arguments put forward within the next model address this proposition. They contend that genuine public opinion does not exist in today's media environment, as the mass media are the agents of those who hold the economic, political, and social power in the system.

1.4.2 The Marxist Model: Media as a 'Guard Dog'

In his analysis of capitalism, Marx argued that the mass media emerged from capitalist relations of production, and that the bourgeoisie's control over the proletariat was defined by its ability to determine the ideological landscape; one way of doing this is through the manipulation of media content.[63] In Marx's theory, the press is a central

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[62]   *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[63]   See Chapter 11 The Communitarian Press: The Role of Karl Marx in J. Herbert Altschull, <u>Agents of Power: The Media and Public Policy</u>, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1995), pp.

element of the 'superstructure' that the ruling class created as their literary, political and ideological mechanism for maintaining power. Many political analysts of the media have applied a Marxist approach to their works. Chomsky and Herman, for example, argue that the media may give the impression of promoting public debate by confining political discourse to legitimate areas of controversy, and by grounding their assumptions in ways that do not challenge the structure of social power. Hence, they are primarily engaged in manufacturing social consent. In their opinion, the role of the media is to "inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the society and the state".[64] The media are seen as instruments for the preservation of existing institutions and social order. While the media can criticize individuals, the fundamental nature of the political, economic, or social systems goes unquestioned.

For example, the news coverage of the Watergate scandal focused mainly on the activities of President Nixon. Nixon was portrayed in the press as a villain who allowed criminals to break into the Democratic Party headquarters for reasons that remain obscure. The issues which still interest American journalists today are largely limited to "what the president knew and when he knew it?".[65] Even during the investigation, questioning did not delve into the underlying causes behind the scandal. Chomsky and Herman argue that the Democratic Party was untouched by the media because it represented "powerful domestic interests, solidly based in the business community".[66] They contend that the media viewed the party as a privileged group, which had been an important part of the American political system and should be protected. They also comment on the difference between the watchdog role of the media in traditional liberal thought and that of the media in contemporary society, arguing that nowadays media watchdogs only bark when the privileged members of the system are threatened.[67]

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[64]   Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman (2nd.), Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 298.

[65]   Ellen Hume, "The Weight of Watergate", Media Studies Journal, Spring 1997, 11(2); http://www.mediastudies.org/define/hume.html.

[66]   Chomsky and Herman, op. cit., p. 299.

[67]   Ibid., p. 300.

Communication scholars, such as Donahue *et al.*, agree that the media no longer carry out a watchdog function. Instead, they act more as 'guard dog'.[68] This metaphor suggests that the "media perform as a sentry not for the community as a whole, but for those particular groups who have the power and influence to create and control their own security systems".[69]

Another approach based on the Marxist model has been developed by Altschull.[70] In his book, *Agents of Power: The Media and Public Policy*, he dismisses Siebert's categorization of the press into four distinct systems formulated during the Cold War, arguing that such a schema is no longer relevant. He asserts that Siebert's analysis simply adopted an "us-versus-them" approach which reflected the tension and hostility manifest at the time. Altschull writes, "the fall of the Soviet empire has demonstrated the fragility of ideological analyses of press history. If the 'theory' of one-half of the theoretical contest, that of Soviet communism, can be shown to be illusory, what can be said of the validity of the other half of the theoretical equation?".[71] Instead, he applies the Marxist approach to view the news media as agents of those who exercise political and economic power, and to consider media ownership as a key element in manipulating media content. In his book, the holders of political and economic power are also seen to be able to naturalize and universalize their interests because of their control over media production. This points to the dominance of media moguls in some countries, such as Rupert Murdoch in the UK, the US, and Australia, and Kerry Packer in Australia. Yet it seems that the overemphasis on the superstructure of ownership in this model neglects factors that are also highly influential in manipulating media content. These factors include journalists, their organizations, and their newsmaking processes,

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68   George A. Donahue, Phillip J. Tichenor, and Clarice N. Olien, "A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of Media", Journal of Communication, Spring 1995, 45 (2), pp. 115-32. Another interpretation of media as 'guard dog' has been developed by Ellis S. Krauss, who suggests that media as 'guard dog' provide public with information and guidance necessary to make political judgments and decisions. However, this latter interpretation of media's role is considered closer to that of an 'agenda-setter' as discussed later in this chapter. See also Ellis S. Krauss, "Japan: News and Politics in Media-Saturated Democracy" in R. Gunther and A. Mughan (eds.), Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 273.

69   *Ibid.*, p. 122.

70   J.Herbert Altschull, *op. cit.*

71   *Ibid.*, p. 140.

which are addressed in the following model.

1.4.3 The Hegemonic Model and the Media as an 'Agenda-Setter'

This model is primarily based on the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which argues that a "certain way of thought and life is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout the public society in all its institutions and private manifestations".[72] The concept of hegemony holds that the elite classes rule by consent rather than force, and that the media have a central role in developing public acceptance of the status quo.[73] This model stresses how ideology creates its own forms of expression and signification, and serves as a mechanism which shapes the consciousness of a compliant public. From this perspective, the media are regarded as active agents not as passive participants as in the pluralist model. The media are active because they define the interests of the ruling elite through highlighting important issues upon which the public can formulate opinions. The hegemonic model is similar to the more traditional Marxist model insofar that it emphasizes the domination of the political and economic elite. However, it also focuses on the news creators and views them as being the extensions of the power holder groups. Hegemonic theory thus focuses more on the production of media content rather than the structure of media ownership, arguing that the economic imperatives of the owner and affiliated power holders are mediated by organizational norms which provide journalists with linguistic rules, and vocabularies for encoding and decoding events and activities. But how do journalists use these codes strategically to promote dominant ideological interests?

In answering this, it is important to mention contemporary theory concerned with the question of media effects. According to this theory, the media perform an 'agenda-setting' role. This 'agenda-setting' role is based on the premise that the news media are necessarily selective in their reporting of politics and public issues. In the course of news gathering, reporters, editors and producers routinely make 'gate-keeping'

[72]   Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks (New York: International Publishers, 1971), cited in David L. Altheide, Media Power (London: Sage, 1985), p. 57.
[73]   Mark Wheeler, Politics and the Mass Media, p. 25.

judgments about which issues to cover and which to ignore, as well as 'manufacturing news', that is, to decide on the placement and prominence to be given to these issues. Cohen and Young suggest that journalists interpret events to fit their preconceived models of the social universe:

> In a real sense the court correspondent going through the
> daily list, the crime reporter phoning up the police desk,
> the London editor of TV news deciding whether to run an
> item on the Birmingham robbery, the editor selecting the
> news story on abortion statistics as suitable for an editorial
> : all are involved in *making* news.[74]

In the news selection process some public issues will be pursued more frequently and receive more prominent coverage than others, and some will be altogether ignored. The media output will signal to the audiences who read and watch the news that some policy issues are more important than others. As a result, over time the news media tend to shape the public's own agenda, which, in turn, preserves and strengthens the dominant ideology of the society.[75] The key role of the media in this model, as suggested by McCombs and Shaw, is not that it tells people what to think, *but what to think about*.[76] The results from McCombs' and Shaw's study of the 1968 American presidential election led many researchers to believe that the mass media could decide which issues are important, and that they could influence the public agenda, and thereby transform into a policy agenda.[77] Their study was emulated by many others, most of which yielded similar results.[78] For example, Iyengar and Kinder concluded from their analysis of the television coverage of the U.S. presidential performance that public judgments as well as recognition of issues resulted from mass media agenda-setting.[79] They employed the concept of "media priming" in an attempt to explain how television news actually shapes the way in which individual viewers think about politics. Through a series of

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[74] Stanley Cohen, and Jock Young (eds.), The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media (London: Constable, 1973), p. 18.

[75] Ian Ward, Politics of the Media (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1995), p. 49.

[76] Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 120, cited in Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media", Publics Opinion Quarterly, Summer 1972, (36), pp. 176-87.

[77] Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, *op. cit.*

[78] Everett M. Rogers and James W. Dearing, "Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has It Been, Where Is It Going?", in D.A. Graber (ed.), Media Power in Politics, 3rd ed. (Washington D.C.: C.Q. Press, 1994), pp. 77-95.

[79] Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, News that Matters: Agenda-setting and Priming in a Television Age, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

controlled experiments which they manipulated the content of news bulletins, they concluded that media prime an audience to be receptive towards certain issues and not to others. Thus, priming sets standards by which people evaluate politics.[80]

Another competing conception of the media's power in setting the public agenda has been formulated by a German sociologist, Noelle-Neumann.[81] Using German poll data, she claims that the mass media are not pluralistic, but rather tend to confine their interpretation of political information to moral and political stance consonant with the views of newsmakers. She bases her thesis on the premise that while individuals have opinions on public issues, they are not always willing to express them publicly. Instead, they observe the political environment and determine which opinions are widely accepted by their reference group, and which are not. Over time they tend to express dominant views and reject alternative positions. However, they still have the ability to change their opinions. In this case, the mass media become their prime source of information by providing exposure to the newly established public opinion. Noelle-Neumann's refers to this concept as "spiral of silence", in which those whose views are not well supported by the media lose confidence and develop a more reserved attitude when expressing their views in public. This reluctance to speak also reduces their confidence in their own views, as well as encouraging them to embrace popular opinion. Although Noelle-Neumann's concept of the 'spiral of silence' was originally quite influential, it has been criticized on the grounds that it views audiences as essentially passive observers, and critically fails to consider the individual's relationship with other members of his or her reference group.[82] Moreover, attempts to use this concept outside of the German context have not always provided the same results, with many researchers suggesting that cultural factors elsewhere influence public behavior differently. As claimed in the following model, the failure to consider domestic factors such as political culture and local languages in studies of media content is a critical

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[80]   *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[81]   Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion, Our Social Skin (Chicago: University Press, 1984).
[82]   Slavko Splichal, "Public Opinion: A Critique of the Spiral of Silence", in J. Servaes and R. Lie (eds.), Media & Politics in Transition: Cultural Identity in the Age of Globalization (Amersfoot, Netherlands: Acco Leuven, 1997), pp. 111-126.

weakness of the hegemonic model.

1.4.4 The Cultural Relativist Model: Media as a 'Servant of the State'

Recent studies of political communication systems and the political role of the media in various countries shy away from the media-audience paradigm. Instead, such studies emphasize the role of political culture in creating a significant impact on how the local political communication system operates, and how the media perform their roles in the political arena. For example, Swanson and Nimmo refer to the work of Wildavsky, who argues that a cultural theory considers that culture acting as a "social filter" will enable people to construct 'political preferences'.[83] They suggest that this perspective is crucial in understanding how cultural factors influence state-media-audience relations within the political system.[84]

This perspective is also shared by Blumler and Gurevitch, who claim that "all political systems generate principles derived from the tenets of their political cultures, for regulating the political role of the mass media".[85] Elements of political culture, such as the degree to which freedom of expression is cherished as a basic political value, or conversely, the degree to which restrictions on it are regarded as necessary and permissible for the sake of other political goals, are seen as regulating mechanisms that indicate the media's degree of autonomy and the extent to which and by what means this autonomy is constrained. A recent publication on the relationship between the mass media, politics, and society in the Southeast Asian countries carefully adopts this approach, arguing that indigenous elements of consensual and communal traditions have shaped the political functions of the local mass media. These functions are:

> (to) support nation-building, political stability, national development,
> and social justice; promoting regional cohesion; moulding national
> identity; promoting social harmony; explaining public issues;
> informing and educating; and exercising self-restraint in sensitive,

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83   Aaron Wildavsky, "Choosing the Preferences by Constructing Institutions: A Cultural Theory of Preference Formation", American Political Science Review, (81), pp. 3-21, cited in David L. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (eds.), "The Field of Political Communication: Beyond the Voter Persuasaion Paradigm", New Directions in Political Communication: A Resource Book (California: Sage, 1990), p. 39.

84   *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

85   Jay G. Blumler and Micael Gurevitch, The Crisis of Public Communication, p. 19.

racial, ethnic and religious matters.[86]

Several Southeast Asian statesmen, including Lee Kuan Yew and Soeharto, both of whom contributed to this Southeast Asian press volume, went further in saying that the press should be an extension of the government. They advocated a government-media framework of relationships called 'developmental journalism'. Within such a framework, the media work co-operatively with the government to educate the people, promote government policies, and strengthen harmonious relations among the citizenry. In Singapore, for example, there is a close relationship between the press and the government[87], to ensure that journalists broadly share the values and perceptions of the authorities, and thereby better "shape public opinion to help build up a national consensus on important issues".[88]

This cultural approach to the analysis of the political role of media is seen to provide a useful understanding of the relationship between the state and media in the countries which have so-called "authoritarian governments". For instance, an Australian media scholar, David Birch, points to the importance of understanding the political culture in his study of the Singaporean media:

> This is a legitimating strategy for keeping the PAP in power:
> it requires a compliant media to stage the myths, generated by
> government, in order to manipulate and control social
> consciousness. All societies and cultures do this to some
> extent. What makes Singapore different from most is that it
> admits what it is doing, and legitimates it within the postcolonial
> discourse of nation building. Understand this discourse and
> the media in Singapore begins to make sense.[89]

The application of a cultural approach, however, has its critics who argue that it abuses the notion of liberty and freedom of the press. They see it as a myth to legitimate excessive government control over the media. The media are considered a

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[86]   Achal Mehra (ed.), Press Systems in ASEAN States (Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center, 1989), p. 10.

[87]   For further discussion see David Birch, Singapore Media: Communication Strategies and Practices (Malaysia: Longman, 1993).

[88]   Lee, Kuan Yew, "Singapore and the Foreign Press", in A. Mehra(ed), Press Systems in ASEAN States (Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center, 1989), p. 118.

[89]   David Birch, Singapore Media: Communication Strategies and Practices, p. 74.

government propaganda tool used to preserve the status quo. In this model, the media are a 'servant of the state', forging a consensus of social and political values to generate support for a particular regime. The articulation of the concept of 'Asian Values' by several Southeast Asian governments, is seen as a process of myth creation whereby which legitimizes particular political orders, and ensures that domestic media remain subservient to state. This is reflected in comments made by Suthichai Yoon, editor-in-chief of Thailand's *The Nation*:

> We're quite suspicious [that] the words, 'Asian Values', are being used by authoritarian governments as a cover for security-related issues they'd like to impose. Before the end of the Cold War, it was the communist threat that was used by the government when we were told not to publish a certain story. Now it's Asian values that are being used as a new excuse for governments to tell journalists not to publish certain story because it could threaten our values.[90]

Journalists in some Asian countries argue that 'Asian values' such as group orientation and high levels of personal discipline impinge on their normative journalistic practices. A Bangladesh editor mentions that "Asian values, like all values, are political and historical. They run through the media like shadows that constantly move with us, follow us, precede us, yet never disappear".[91] However, a recurrent weakness in this discussion has been that there is no clear definition of the term 'Asian values' among journalists. Schidlovsky, the Director of Freedom Forum Asian Center, for example, argues that a single set of 'Asian values' is impossible to define, particularly among journalists, within such a culturally diverse region.[92]

Indeed, some have argued that the concept of 'Asian values', which assumes regional similarities without substantial justification of local cultural distinctiveness, is merely an excuse for authoritarian practices and control of the media.[93] Those who have adopted this model have therefore suggested that local cultural factors must be assessed

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90   Comments made at a conference on "Asian Values and the Role of Media in the Society", organized by the Freedom Forum Center and Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong, December 1-3, 1994.

91   Enayetullah Khan, "Roundtable", Media Asia, 1996, (23), p. 32.

92   John Schidlovsky, "Is there an Asian Model for Journalism: The Asia Press Forum", Paper presented at the Asia-Pacific Media Conference, Sydney, Institutional Federation of Journalists, February 6-8, 1995.

93   Alan Knight, "Fact or Friction?: The Collision of Journalism Values in Asia", in D. Kingsbury, E. Loo, and P. Payne (eds.), Foreign Devils and Other Journalists (Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 2000), pp. 1-16.

at the domestic level first, and then cross-national comparative studies of these factors should be made to accurately assess the impact of national values and their effect on the media's roles in politics.[94]

1.5 Towards A New Model

The foregoing discussion outlined four different approaches for analyzing the political role of the media in democratic societies. Critics of each model argue that the political role of the media in a liberal democracy is contested and debatable. Unsurprisingly, previous studies on the political role of the media in a soft-authoritarian society such as Japan and a semi-democratic society such as Thailand have applied different theoretical models, leading to different results. In Thailand, for example, Siriwan Sermcheep has used Siebert's pluralist view to argue that there are certain characteristics of the Thai press that are clearly authoritarian in nature, and that the role of Thai journalists differs considerably from that of a public watchdog.[95] Ramaimas Bowra, on the other hand, has analyzed the Thai media system within the hegemonic model framework and saw the Thai press as a policy advocator that can set the agenda for political reform.[96]

In contrast, Ubonrat Siriyuvasak has pointed out that the Thai press assumed a 'watchdog role' in reporting the protests and subsequent killings in Bangkok during May 1992, and acting as a counterweight to the despotic military government led by General Suchinda.[97] A similar argument was made by Thitinan Pongsudhirak, who claimed that the press acted as an oppositional force against Suchinda's abusive government, and denoted that it had discarded its earlier role as a servant of the state. Yet at the same time he argued that sections of the Thai press increasingly acted as

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[94]   D. Ray Heisey, "Cultural Influences in Political Communication", in A. González and D.V. Tanno (eds.), <u>Politics, Communication, and Culture</u> (Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 1997), pp. 9-26.

[95]   Siriwan Sermcheep, "Characteristics of the Press in an Authoritarian System: A Case Study of Thailand", Unpublished Master's Thesis, California State University, 1992.

[96]   Ramaimas Bowra, "Media and Political Communication in Thailand: The Role in Policy Advocacy", <u>Policy Advocacy and the Media in Thailand</u> (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policies Studies, 1997), pp. 66-85.

[97]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "The Development of a Participatory Democracy: Raison D'Etre for Media Reform in Thailand", <u>Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science</u>, 1994, 22, pp. 101-14.

guard dogs for certain business groups.[98] Some political scientists argue that the role of

the Thai press is ambiguous. They suggest that while the press has portrayed itself as a

check on government conduct and exposed its wrongdoings, it does not appear to have

genuine autonomy. In his evaluation of the Thai democratic spirit after the May 1992

crackdown, Callahan notes that although the national newspapers did an outstanding job

in covering the events of May 1992, commercial and political survival factors were

crucial in shaping the 'truth' of the news.[99] In a similar vein, McCargo's recent study of

the media's role in policy advocacy affirms that the Western 'watchdog' label is not

appropriate in the Thai context. He argues that although the Thai media, the press in

particular, is often a political actor in its own right, it is somehow linked to or owned by

prominent political figures, and dedicated to the promotion of particular interests.[100]

Disparate interpretations of the media's political role are also common in Japan.

Watanabe Takesato, for example, identifies four characteristics of the Japanese press,

which he regards as major impediments to the promotion of liberal democracy. They

are: the favoring of big businesses; conforming to the system of reporters' (*kisha*) clubs,

which provides journalists with privileged access to politicians; support for political

conservatism by not providing critical analyses of major issues or scandals; and

maintaining the status quo.[101] In combination, these characteristics create and maintain a

close and intense relationship between journalists and politicians, which often works

against the public interest. According to revisionist scholars such as Karel van Wolferen,

the former President of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, these factors make

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[98]   Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "Thailand's Media: Whose Watchdog?", in K. Hewison (ed.), <u>Political</u>
        <u>Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation</u> (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 217-32.

[99]   During the May 1992 crackdown, people went out to join the demonstration on the
        Rajdamnoen Road because the "truth" received from radio and television (the "truth" (*khwam-
        ching)* was the term that was often emphasized by the broadcasting media at that time) was
        widely believed to be distorted and unreliable. Therefore, people relied very much on other
        sources of information such as newspapers and faxes. However, in fear of closure, newspaper
        reports often presented the real "truth" as either "rumour", or "anecdotes". See William
        Callahan, "Astrology, Video, and the Democratic Spirit: Reading the Symbolic Politics of
        Thailand", <u>Sojourn</u> , 1994, 9(1), pp. 102-34.

[100]   Duncan McCargo, "Policy Advocacy and the Media in Thailand", <u>Policy Advocacy and the</u>
        <u>Media in Thailand</u> (Bangkok: Institute of Pulbic Policy Studies, 1996), p. 25.

[101]   Watanabe Takesato, "Japan's Media at Present", *Hyôron Shakaigaku (Social Science Review)*,
        1996, (55), pp. 1-40.

the Japanese media a 'servant of the state'.[102]

Similarly, in a comparative study of the regulatory constraints on television broadcasting in Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan, Ki-Sung Kwak suggests that common cultural factors impinge on each country's broadcasting legislation. Confucian values, in particular, are employed by these countries to form the groundwork for regulating television broadcasting. In his view, the lack of strict legal constraints in Japan points to the country's Confucian legacy, which emphasizes the use of ethical norms to harmonize society rather than legal principles. He also views the system of reporters' clubs in Japan as fostering mutual beneficial relationship between the government and broadcasters, and concludes that the Japanese media serve as propaganda organs for the authorities.[103] However, in a recent volume entitled *Media and Politics in Japan*, Farley sees the role of the Japanese press as closer to that of a guard dog which acts on behalf of the political elite, and only reluctantly exposes major scandals which seem too close to disrupt the center of political power.[104] Pharr, on the contrary, argues that the Japanese media are tricksters who can transform the state over time. This argument, Pharr claims, is supported by recent critical programs such as *TV Asahi* and *Sunday Project* which broadcast the interview with former Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa mentioned earlier, which contributed to the LDP downfall in 1993.[105]

Disagreement over the political role of the Thai and Japanese media in the various studies noted above is generated by their assumption that the media pursue a *single* consistent role in relation to the state and the public. However, it can be argued that the political role of the media is *fluid* and *changeable*, depending on relationships

[102]   Karel van Wolferen, The Enigma of Japanese Power : People and Politics in a Stateless Nation (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 93.
[103]   Ki-Sung Kwak, "Structural and Cutlural Aspects of the Regulation of Television Broadcasting in East Asia: A Comparative Study", Gazette, 1997, 59(6), pp. 429-443; Ki-sung Kwak, "The Context of the Regulation of Television Broadcasting in East Asia", Gazette, 1999, 61(3-4), pp. 255-273.
[104]   Maggie Farley, "Japan's Press and the Politics of Scandal", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 133-64.
[105]   Susan Pharr, "Media as Trickster in Japan: A Comparative Perspective", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 19-43. See also Duncan McCargo, "The Political Role of the Japanese Media", The Pacific Review, 1996, 9(2), pp. 251-64.

formed with other political actors:

> When one asks functional questions, one is in a sense seeking
> the operative elements of the system with full realization that
> these elements and their relationships differ among systems and
> also change with the passing of time in the same system.[106]

Previous research on the Thai and Japanese media treat different elements in the system -- the state, the media and the public, in particular -- as given and uncontestable, rather than as objects of study. Although their analyses have generated questions about the interdependent nature of relations between the government, the media, and the public, most have overlooked the issue of political interactions among these important actors.

Recent comparative studies in politics suggest that explicit attention should be paid to the importance of interactions between institutions within a given political context.[107] Likewise, it can be argued that to understand the role of media in politics of the democratic society, it is important to understand the social and political relations and interactions between relevant elements in the system within which the media must operate. In this case, the most relevant elements are the state, the media, and the public. Two concepts useful in assisting our comprehension of the state-media-society relationships and the role of the media within the political system are those of power relations and power-dependency.[108] These concepts are useful because they focus attention on three important aspects of the interrelationship: key centers of influence, resources, and institutional linkages.

1.5.1 Concepts of Power Relations and Power Dependency

Most studies in which a concept of power is used as the principal theoretical explanation for the relationship between media and politics draw on the hegemonic model. This literature sees the media as powerful forces that influence what people

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[106]   Richard R. Fagen, Politics and Communication (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1966), p. 21.

[107]   Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo (eds.), "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1992), pp. 1-32.

[108]   See Richard M. Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations", in M.Olsen and M. Marger (eds.), Power in Modern Societies (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 48-58.

know and believe.[109] However, the notion that power is inherent in relevant actors is also implicit in other models. The Marxist model, for example, is concerned with how power resides in certain interest groups, known as power holders. The cultural relativist model, on the other hand, implies that power is manifested in the government's control and manipulation of political information.

However, the conventional idea that power is concentrated or centered in the subject has been rejected by Michel Foucault, who saw power as rather more complex, diffused through many nonpolitical organizations and groups.[110] Foucault insisted on the omnipresence of power, that it is inherent in the process of social interaction :

> Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here and there, never in anybody's hands, never appreciated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization...Individuals circulating between its threads...are always also in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.[111]

From a Foucauldian perspective, power is not simply inherent within the state, the media, or the public. Rather, it springs from the interaction among these three actors -- interaction which involves political information. The state, more particularly, should be seen as "being in the making", and thus understood as a process in which different actors interact by establishing their interests in the process of state formation.[112] Recently, some media scholars have applied the concept of power relations to interactions between the state, the media, and the public in a formation of a political communication system. Reese, for example, applies the concept of power relations in analyzing the interdependency between the media and their sources. He suggests that the media rely on official and governmental sources for political information, but these

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[109]   See many writings in this view in Doris A. Graber (ed.) (3rd.), Media Power in Politics
         (Washington D.C: A Division of Congress Quarterly, 1994).
[110]   Michel Foucault, "Power and Strategies", in C.Gordon (ed.), Power/Knowledge: Selected
         Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77 by Michel Foucault (Hertfordshire, England: Harvester
         Wheatsheaf, 1980), pp. 140-3.
[111]   Ibid., p. 98.
[112]   Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, "Class, Democracy and Modernity", Theory and Society,
         1983, (XII), pp. 211-44.

sources largely depend on the media in their capacity to deliver large audiences to make the matters, in some cases preferably themselves, known. Reese suggests that treating power as a series of changing relationships helps avoid the tendency to regard the media or their sources as inherently powerful.[113] Defleur and Ball-Rokeach have also developed a media system dependency theory, which utilizes a broad concept of power relations and dependency to explain the degree of audience dependence on the media.[114] They suggest that the degree to which the media can alter an audience's beliefs, values, and behavior depends on the degree to which the audience relies on the media for information. Therefore, power resides in the other's dependency on information. Indeed, this perspective on the sharing of information and the interdependency among actors falls into Max Weber's line of thought about power and domination. As Weber claims, the exercise of power involves the mobilization of resources such as wealth, skills, and knowledge, which are unequally distributed among classes, to produce effects. Domination is caused by inequalities in the distribution of resources that make possible the exercise of power.[115] Therefore, the exercise of power by the government, the media, or the public within a political communication system is determined by their unequal levels of interdependence on the mobilization of, and interaction with, information resources. This mobilization and interaction with information can be referred to as 'the ability to control political information'.

1.5.2 *Political Information Contest Model*

In *Media and Political Conflict*, Gadi Wolfsfeld identifies the following key oppositional forces involved in the political communication system: the authorities, the challengers, and the news media. He conceptualizes relations between these actors as strategic games and suggests the best way to understand the role of the news media in political conflicts is "to view the competition over the news media as part of a larger and more significant contest among political antagonists for political control". He develops a "political

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[113]   Stephen D. Reese, "Setting the Media's Agenda: A Power Balance Perspective", in J. Anderson (ed.), Communication Yearbook, XIV, 1991, pp. 309-40.

[114]   Melvin L. Defleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach (5th.), Theories of Mass Communication (New York: Longman, 1989).

[115]   Max Weber, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology in H. Gerth and Wright Mills (eds.) (trans.) (London: Routledge, 1970).

contest model" to explain how and why power relations among the news media, the authorities, and their political antagonists -- such as terrorist groups -- can be exercised to gain political control.[116] This model is useful because it focuses on the interrelationship between influence, available resources, and institutional linkages of key actors involved. Building on Wolfsfeld's model, a *political information contest model* asserts that power relations are manifest in the outcomes of active conflict and contest between the state, the media, and the public. The locus of power relations at any given time can be established by reference to the visible results of the contest over political information. This innovative model differs from Wolfsfeld's model in two respects: first, it includes the public as a unit of analysis; and second, it highlights the way in which power relations shape political interactions, particularly when these interactions involve a contest in which each actor aims at gaining greater control of political information. In the *political information contest model,* the ability to control political information varies from one actor to another.

The state's ability to control political information depends on the following variables:

- The ability to control the political environment;
- The ability to deploy information and regulate access to that information;
- The ability to control the flow of that information; and
- The ability to mobilize elite support.

The media's ability to control political information depends on the following variables:

- The ability to gain access to such information;
- The ability to accurately construct issues/meanings from that information;
- The ability to disseminate such information to the public; and
- The ability to mobilize supports for or oppositions to particular issues.

The public's ability to control political information depends on the following

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[116]   Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media and Political Conflict, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

variables:

- The degree of access to such information directly;

- The ability to interpret political information and form judgments regarding particular political issues; and

- The ability to influence political outcomes.

This model also incorporates a typology of the power relations that emerge in contests between actors as they try to control political information. According to French and Raven, there are five categories of power relations: coercive, reward, expert, legitimate, and referent.[117] These types of power relations are exercised by the state, the media, and the public while gaining control over political information within the political communication system. Accordingly, there are four major premises underpinning the *Political Information Contest* model. Firstly, in order to gain greater control over political information, the state is likely to use a coercive approach towards the media, or at least one based on rewards or incentives. The former strategy includes the use of law and regulations whereas the latter involves providing access to media ownership. Due to the asymmetry of relations between the state, the media, and the public, the state is relatively free to use its authority -- embodied in such things as media regulations -- to increase its ability to control the flow of political information and mobilize elite support. The introduction of strict laws and regulation, however, inevitably leads to a change in the media's role from being a 'watchdog' to being a 'servant of the state'. As Curran observes, "Once the media become subject to public regulation, it will lose its bite as a watchdog and may even be transformed into a snarling Rottweiller in the service of the state".[118] In a similar vein, control over ownership can be exercised both directly and indirectly to influence media output. Accordingly, the ownership of

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[117]   These terms - coercive, reward, expert, legitimate, and referent - were originally identified by John French and Bertram Raven as five common resources of power, which A must possess to get B to undertake or not undertake any action. Although the terms used here have relatively similar meanings, they are intended to explain types of power relations, not power resources. Accordingly, definitions and meanings of these terms in this thesis are different from those in John R.P. French, Jr. and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power", in D. Cartwright (ed.), Studies in Social Power (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), pp. 150-67.

[118]   James Curran, "Mass Media and Democracy: A Reappraisal", in J. Curran and M. Guerevitch (eds.), Mass Media and Society (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 84.

material resources and the power to determine the content and format of the mass media, as Ubonrat notes, "should therefore be seen in terms of a complex and dialectical set of relationships and not as uni-directional".[119]

Secondly, the media tend to resist the state's attempts to control by having 'expert', or employing 'legitimate' power relations with the state. On the one hand, the media can maximize their professional expertise in disseminating accurate political information and closely watching for abuses of power by the state. On the other hand, they can give legitimacy via the process of co-ordination in which journalistic practices such as access to political information, the construction of meanings and the dissemination of information rely on access granted by state officials. When many journalists are keen to access particular information, the relevant officials in charge may, for example, exploit the situation by using personal relationships with journalists for their own benefits. Moreover, the question of media practices also relates to media organizations and resources as well as professional ethics. Indeed, the media are not a unified entity. The media actually consists of a multitude of different organizations and organs. The better-financed media are in a stronger position to gain high level access to political information. They also have the ability to train their journalists or hire gifted journalists capable of providing thoughtful political analysis and disseminating it to the public. Yet there are also some journalists within such media organizations who lack ethical values and are thus prone to being influenced by the elite or interest groups to distort the political information that they have obtained.

Furthermore, the media may initiate 'legitimate' power relations with the state by reinforcing conservative elements within political culture. Indeed, political culture is thereby forged in the process of the media's construction of meaning and dissemination of political information. As Gronbeck suggests, "mass media allow the whole populace to share in the unifying rites that reinforce the political culture and legitimate the

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[119]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "Cultural Mediation and the Limits to "Ideological Domination": The Mass Media and Ideological Representation in Thailand", Sojourn, February, 1991, 6(1), p. 48.

leadership".[120] The type of culture embedded in the political communication system and reinforced by the media is likely to play a critical role in shaping public attitudes towards politics, particularly in forming public opinion. According to Lippman,

> public opinion is primarily moralized and codified version of the facts.
> I am arguing that the pattern of stereotypes at the center of our codes largely determines what group of facts we shall see, and in what light we shall see them.[121]

Thirdly, there are what may be considered as 'referent' power relations between the public and the media. The media construct and disseminate meanings, to which the public refer in making their own political decisions. The public may adopt either positive or negative referential power relations with the mainstream media, depending on the political information available, and perceived accuracy of the information that the media disseminate. If the political information is easily accessed by the public perhaps via the use of the Freedom of Information Act or Internet technology, the public may not rely on the traditional mass media as their main reference for information. Otherwise, the traditional media will remain an important channel for political information. Furthermore, better-educated members of the public tend to have a greater ability to interpret political information and form judgments than the less educated public. Media literacy is crucial because political information received by the public has been mediated in many ways by process and activities such as legal maneuvers, ownership issues, journalistic practices, and political culture.[122]

Finally, it should be emphasized that the media's role in politics varies depending on what types of power relations are operating at a given time. Although the power relations in specific instances are inherently unique, certain recurring patterns of power relations between the state, the media, and the public that determine the media's role in

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[120]   Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Popular Culture, Media, and Political Communication", in D. Swanson and D. Nimmo (eds), "The Field of Political Communication: Beyond the Voter Persuasion Paradigm", New Directions in Political Communication: A Resource Book (California: Sage, 1990), p. 207.

[121]   Walter Lippman, Public Opinion, (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 49.

[122]   Ibid., pp. 82-3.

politics can be identified. The *Political Information Contest Model*, as demonstrated in the following table, recognizes that the media's role is fluid and can shift from that of a 'watchdog', as in the pluralist model, to the role of a 'guard dog', or an 'agenda setter', or a 'servant of the state'. Power relations among the central actors which involve conflicts or contests over the control of political information creates the possibility in shifts in the media's role, and largely determines what function the media will play in politics.

Table 1: Political Information Contest Model[1]

Roles	State vs Media	Media vs State	Public vs Media	Relations of Media to State	Relations of Media to Public	Effects on State	Effects on Public
Watchdog	Coercive	Expert	Referent	Independent	Resource of information	Induce Change	Increase participation
Agenda Setter	Reward	Expert	Positive Referent	Independent	Further societal or certain objectives	Coalition Formation	Emergence of Status
Guard Dog	Coercive/Reward	Expert/Legitimate	Referent	Dependent to some degree	Agents of power holders	Extension of Power Network	Building consensus
Servants of State	Coercive	Legitimate	Negative Referent	Highly Dependent	Manipulator	Preserve status quo	Withdrawal/ Personal Network

[1] This table is an extension and adaptation of "Competing Interpretations of the Media's Role", developed by Susan J. Pharr in "Media as Trickster in Japan: A Comparative Perspective", in S. Pharr and E. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), p. 34. However, the roles of media as a spectator and a trickster, as categorized by Pharr, are omitted in this table, as the interpretation of media's role as 'spectator' is based on the 'inactive' political participation of the media, which is no longer suitable in today's fluid media environment. The interpretation of the media's role as 'trickster' is, on the other hand, too confined within a specific political environment. Media as 'trickster' refers to the ability of the media to perform one role in a specific environment, and another role in a different environment, which over time can transform the state.

The dynamic process implicit in the *Political Information Contest* model largely depends on changes in the power relations between the three actors. For instance, the media can take on an agenda-setting function when they are able to gain maximum access to sources of political information, including those found outside the power structure, such as in the business community, the academy and the like. In such cases, intense media coverage based on a mass of detailed political information can attract the public. As a result, members of the public are likely to develop a kind of 'positive referent' power relation with the media; that is the public will in all likelihood increasingly depend on the media for political information, and focus more closely on what the media have to say. They are likely to start to link their own social and economic welfare to the media agenda, which in turn forms the basis of a public agenda. At times this public agenda can be transformed into a policy agenda by various means: for example, through the organization of public demonstrations. In such a situation, the state will be compelled to take sides, that is, to form a coalition with either the media or the public. If the state sides with the public, then it may alter its policy priorities in order to assuage public opinion. Conversely, if the state forms a coalition with the media, it may urge, force, or indirectly manipulate the media to play down issues, causing public disquiet.

However, if the state in any given democratic society does not permit freedom of access to information, and if the media are denied access to information, then the media will essentially become little more than a 'servant of the state'. In acquiescing to state authority, the media may provide inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information to the public. If the public recognizes such misinformation, then it will develop a type of 'negative referent' power relation with regard to the media, and accord their pronouncements little or no significance. As a consequence, the public may become uninterested in and eventually withdraw from politics, or seek alternative sources of information, such as the international media, the Internet, or social networks. On the other hand, the media are highly motivated by financial considerations, or an interest in obtaining newsworthy information from political elite such as high ranking officials, politicians, the media may act as a guard dog protecting elite groups' interests, for

example, by seeking to manufacture public consent on certain issues beneficial to the elite. The media may also make use of members of the elite as their information channel. While the media may, to some degree, have a network of informants within sections of political elite, these political elite also utilize the media as their own private sources of information. Members of the public also seek to establish their own information networks that secure accurate and adequate political information substantial to heighten broader public opinion.

1.6 Objectives

The principal objective of this thesis is to conduct a comparative analysis designed to explore new perspectives drawn on the *political information contest model*, which will assist in the understanding of the interrelationship between the state, the media, and the public, and the extent to which the media's political role varies over time and according to circumstance. As most previous studies have been confined to the analysis of the role of the media in a single country, a comparative approach focusing on Thailand and Japan will develop a broader analytical view and a more comprehensive understanding of the political communication systems in both countries.

Four central questions underpin this study:

- What is the nature of power relations between the state, the mass media, and the public in both countries, particularly when they are competing for control over political information?

- What are the factors (the dependent variables) that escalate or impede the change in power relations, that is the contest over control of political information among the three actors in both countries? Are these similar or different?

- In what ways have the media changed their role in politics, and is the *political information contest model* useful in explaining such transformations?

- What are the independent variables that have spurred significant changes in the media role in one country but not in the other?

To answer these questions, it will be necessary to formulate subsidiary questions as follows:

- What are the features of the Japanese and Thai media systems in terms of ownership structures and media regulations, and why have they evolved in such a manner?

- To what extent have the ownership patterns and media regulations been significant to the dissemination of political information in both countries?

- To what extent have political newsgathering and other journalistic practices been crucial to the Japanese and Thai media's dissemination of political information?

- What roles have the mass media played in the political history of each country?

- To what extent does the Japanese and Thai media's coverage convey the values of the local political culture?

- Have the Japanese and Thai mass media been considered as driving forces promoting reform and the transformation of politics, or have they simply been bastions of conservatism serving existing interests?

1.7 Chapters and Methodologies

This comparative analysis of political information contests and the media's role in the Thai and Japanese politics is divided into seven chapters. Chapter Two and Three encapsulate the articulating relationship between political and media institutions, and the impact of the political system on the media system in both countries. Chapter Two applies the *political information contest* model to the analysis of press censorship laws and regulations in Thailand and Japan. Chapter Three then discusses the *political information contests* within the systems of distinctive ownership structures and related regulations of television broadcasting in both countries. The analyses in these two chapters are based on literature reviews, interviews with the key actors and agencies involved, such as journalists, editors, owners and broadcasters, and media intellectuals, as well as analyses of Japanese and Thai governments' media policies, censorship laws, and systems of media regulation. Relevant interviews were mostly conducted in 1998 and 1999 during fieldwork in Thailand and Japan.

Chapter Four concerns the media's ability to gain access to, interpret, and disseminate political information. This account focuses on political information contests in the process of political newsgathering and journalistic practices. It explicates both historical and recent developments in journalistic circles, including comments by journalists gathered at *Matichon* newspaper in Bangkok, and *Asahi Shimbun* in Tokyo. Chapters Five and Six look at political information contests and consequent shifts and changes in the political roles of the press and television broadcasting by providing content analyses of press coverage and television news programs concerned with political issues. In Chapter Five, characteristics of news representation in the domestic press in Thailand and Japan are discussed, and four case studies are presented. These include a content analysis of major press coverage on Thai political reform in 1997 in a comparison with a content analysis of 1993 and 1994 press coverage of political reform in Japan, and an analysis of headlines of four Thai major newspapers during the last month of the Chavalit cabinet in 1997 in comparison with a similar analysis of headlines of Japanese press during the last month of the Hashimoto administration in 1998. Chapter Six compares and contrasts selected prime time TV news programs of both countries. In particular, the chapter examines the extent to which political news content related to significant political events. Domestic comparisons of popular TV news programs and discussion of several case studies will demonstrate how the Thai and Japanese television media have changed their roles. The question of how a political culture is transmitted nationally through semiotic signs including text, image, symbol, myth, and events is also addressed. Finally, Chapter Seven discusses the Thai and the Japanese public's struggle in gaining direct access to political information. Then, it re-examines the *Political Information Contest* model and its usefulness in explaining the transformation of political role of the media in both countries, and summarizes the relationships between the state, the media, and the public in Thailand and Japan.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND PRESS CENSORSHIP

*Although it's risky to publish the news with the revealed
information that is confidential and may affect the
government, and even though the government could
order closure of the publication, we still dare to publish
such reports.*

Kietchai Phongphanich[1]

*"Freedom of the Press" in Japan suffers from a range
of external and internal constraints that inhibit the ability
of newspapers to either actively search or print as much
politically sensitive information as they potentially could.*

Professor Sugiyama Mitsunobu[2]

2.1 Censorship, Press and the State

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze political information contests and power

relations between the press and the state. It outlines the historical interplay of different

types of power relations between the state and the press, which predates other kinds of

media. From the beginning, press censorship was a coercive instrument through which

the state contested to gain control over political information. In doing so, the state

designs stringent regulations, or alternatively gives rewards and incentives to the press

in order to induce self-censorship. According to Sue Jansen, censorship is

> all socially structured proscriptions or prescriptions which inhibit
> or prohibit dissemination of ideas, information, images, or other
> messages through a society's channels of communication whether
> those obstructions are secured by political, economic, religious, or
> other systems of authority".[3]

Censorship can also be described as the knot that ties knowledge and political control.

Censorship has been a means that the state has employed to spread its ideas of

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[1]   Kietchai Phonphanich is an executive editor and publisher of *Khao Sod Daily*. Interview on
       April 23, 1998.

[2]   Professor Sugiyama Mitsunobu teaches media studies at the Institute of Socio-Information and
       Communication Studies, The University of Tokyo. Interview on October 26, 1998.

[3]   Sue Jansen, Censorship: The Knot that Binds Power and Knowledge (New York: Oxford
       University Press, 1991), p. 14.

nationalism (knowledge) for the purpose of accelerating the 'nation-building' process,[4] and enhancing its position as a 'strong state'.[5] It has also been an instrument for increasing the state capabilities to overcome resistance (control), and suppress alternative political discourse (knowledge). The state establishes the awareness of the conditions for political knowledge by imposing and maintaining the control of political information.

The state's ability to control the political environment is the most important factor determining the level of political information contestation. However, the state's ability to maintain control of political information also varies depending upon its ability to regulate access to information, its ability to control the information flow, and its ability to mobilize media support. This ability can be achieved by the state's employment of legal and extralegal controls. Legal controls are a coercive type of power relations, which are exercised to regulate access to information and control the flow of information. They consist of: placing limits on the freedom of printing, including holds on the authority to grant and revoke publishing licenses, and the pre-censoring of media content; placing limits on freedom of expression, such as the imposition of strict post-censorship laws with heavy fines and jail terms; and by placing limits on freedom of distribution, such as the prohibition or restraint of publication sales, or their outright confiscation. Extralegal controls, to the contrary, are not based on any legal provision and are subtle means to mobilize media support. They are reward type power relations, which combine together the impositions of reward and punishment, such as the forewarning of editors or owners to impose self-censorship, or the influencing of advertisers not to endorse certain publications. More drastically, extralegal means of

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[4]   As Benedict Anderson suggests, the national press is an important bastion of an 'imagined community'. A public community could be united with other communities because members of both communities imagined they read or receive the same kind of information. If the state could control the political discourse in the press, then it could spread its concept of nationalism to these communities via the press. See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Community: Reflections on the Level of Origin and Spread of Nationalism, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

[5]   The notion of a 'strong state' is associated with state social control, which denotes "the successful subordination of people's own inclinations of social behavior or behavior sought by other social organizations in favor of the behavior prescribed by state rules. See Joel S. Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society relations and State Capabilities in the Third World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 22-23.

maintaining control over political information include death threats, kidnapping, personal attacks, and even murder.

The historical development of both legal and extralegal controls in Japan and Thailand is outlined in this chapter. This account concentrates on how certain censorship laws and regulations affect the political role of the press, and the extent to which coercive and reward approaches have been used in competing for control over political information. The comparison is expected to highlight why press censorship evolved historically and became an institutionalized feature which characterizes the role of the press and its engagement in a process whereby political information is disseminated in both countries.

2.2 The Press and Absolutism

Censorship laws in both Thailand and Japan were first introduced by the states to suppress criticisms and attacks against royal administrations. Due to initial lack of stringent regulations, the press' role could be recognized as that of a watchdog. The press often criticized government wrongdoings, and presented the public with diverse opinions that partly led to political changes in both countries -- the change from the absolute monarchy to a constitutional democratic rule in Thailand, and the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in Japan.

Censorship in Siam[6] was introduced to protect the court and the royal family firon criticism. Thai censorship provisions can be traced back to a libel law of 1864,

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[6] For history of the Press in Thailand see Supapan Boonsaat, *Prawat nungsuphim nai prathet Thai (History of the Press in Thailand)* (Bangkok: Banakit, 1974); Sukanya Tiravanit, *Prawatkan nungsuphim thai phai nai rabob somburanayasitthirat (History of the Thai Press Under the Absolute Monarchy)* (Bangkok: Thai Wathanaphanich, 1977); Sukanya Tiravanit, *"Kan nungsuphim nai prathet thai"* (Newspapers in Thailand), in *Wiwatthanakan seumolchon Thai (Evolution of theThai Mass Media)*, Paper Presented at the seminar on the occasion of the Year of the World's Communication at the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok: Buddha Bhucha Publishing, 1983); Boonrak Boonyaketamala, "Thailand" in J.A. Lent (ed.), Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems (Hong Kong: Heineman Educational Books, 1982), pp. 334-363; John D. Mitchell, "Thailand", in J.A. Lent (ed.), The Asian's Newspaper Reluctant Revolution (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971), pp. 210-233 ; Also Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "Thailand's Media: Whose Watchdog?", in K. Hewison (ed.), Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 217-32.

which was enacted during the reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868). This law imposed jail sentences and heavy fines for publications judged to have defamed the royal family, to have treated the law with contempt, or to have incited the populace to revolt.[7] Yet the Siamese government at that time had more difficulty in dealing with foreign editors and their publications, as it could not order any foreign publications to close because of the protection under "extraterritorial rights".[8] These extraterritorial rights were granted to foreign nationals who undertook commercial activities in Siam;[9] hence any legal proceedings against foreign-owned enterprises and their workers had to be undertaken in the consular courts.[10] King Mongkut, however, took a number of steps, such as limiting the scope of activity among the Siamese literati, and attempting to exert influence over foreign publishers.[11]

Whilst King Mongkut had problems in curbing freedom of expression in the foreign press, his successor, King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), devised an alternative strategy for controlling press discourse. This strategy was twofold. Firstly, King Chulalongkorn established a Royal Printing Office, and encouraged his immediate family

[7] The law imposed three-year jail terms and 1,500 baht fines on conviction. John D. Mitchell, "Thailand", in J.A. Lent (ed.), The Asian's Newspaper Reluctant Revolution (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971), p. 215.

[8] There were a number of foreign journalists working for small but growing number of foreign-registered newspapers. Added to the first Thai language newspaper, *Bangkok Recorder*, were *Siam Times, and Bangkok Press* , both of which were launched in 1864 and folded in the same year, as well as *Siam Weekly Monitor* and *Bangkok Summary* which came out in 1867 and 1868 respectively. Prakart Wacharaporn, *Tham-niab khon tham nungsuphim (The Cabinet of the Newspapermen)* (Bangkok: Dok Ya, 1990), pp. 46-7.

[9] Nakarin also asserts that the privilege of 'extraterritorial rights' motivated a large number of Thai public intellectuals to take on the journalism profession with the foreign-owned press in the following reigns of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) and King Vajiravudh (1910-1925). See Nakarin Mektrairat, *Kan-patiwat Siam por-sor song si jed ha (Siamese Revolution of 1932)* (Bangkok: Mulaniti khrongkan tamra sangkhomsat ruam kan fai sing phim 60 pi prachathippatai, 1992).

[10] Matthew Copeland, "Contested Nationalism and the 1932 Overthrow of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The Australian National University, 1993, pp. 15-16.

[11] King Mongkut himself wrote letters of complaint to foreign publishers in Bangkok on a number of occasions to express his displeasure over editorial commentary; Reynolds (1973) also mentioned that Bradley was watchful in selecting articles to publish in *Bangkok Recorder* . The paper had to avoid Christian proselytization and printing articles on physics, chemistry, philology, and medicine as well as news of Europe, America, China, and Singapore. See a translation of King Rama IV's letter to Dr. Bradley in 1865 in *Ibid.*, p. 15 and also Craig J. Reynolds, "The Case of K.S.R. Kulap: A Challenge to Royal Historical Writing in the Late Nineteenth Century Thailand", Journal of the Siam Society, 61(2), pp. 63-90.

members to launch their own newspapers to cover issues like state and royal affairs.[12] Secondly, newspapers with existing royal connections received substantial but unofficial subsidies, assistance with printing technology, and news releases directly from the court. Private newspapers, such as *Phim Thai, Bangkok Times,* and *Krungthep Daily Mail* received official subsidies of around 8,000 baht[13] a year.[14] Not surprisingly, newspapers in this period were used as political tools, and as a means of disseminating the official, and seemingly authoritative directives.[15] Some became political mouthpieces for financially influential groups outside the court,[16] but generally the press was considered a 'servant of the state', as it was "either so minor or so clearly under royal direction that there was no need for the throne to take notice in terms of legalistic controls".[17] However, subjection to the throne was still rigidly enforced by extremely coercive methods. For instance, a famous journalist named Tienwan who held radical views advocated the abrogation of slaves and recognition of women's rights, was jailed for seventeen years on a charge of *lèse majesté*.[18] Likewise, K.S.R Kulap, a famous historian and journalist, was punished with hard labor for wordplay suggesting that the king was incompetent.[19]

After King Vajiravudh succeeded to the throne in 1910, the number of daily newspapers increased sharply.[20] One major reason was because the personal

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[12] The court during the reign of King Chulalongkorn published the *Royal Gazette, Darunowadh, Court-Khao Ratchakan, Wachirayan, Wachirayan Wiset, Thammajaksu,* and so on. Articles published in these papers contained biographies, poetry, epic literature, proverbs, history, and foreign affairs. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8. See also Supapan, *op. cit.*

[13] A major newspaper, *Sararasd,* which was published in the Sixth reign reported news about the exchange rates on June 1, 1923. According to the newspaper, 100 baht was approximately equal to 8 U.S. dollars.

[14] Nakarin, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

[15] John D. Mitchell, "Thailand", in J. A. Lent (ed.), The Asian's Newspaper Reluctant Revolution (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971), pp. 215-16.

[16] One important group included influential figures among a group of Chinese merchants and entrepreneurs. Further, there were four newspapers run by Chinese entrepreneurs at the end of the Fifth reign. *Midnum Yidpor, Chinum Yidpor* were published in Chinese, while *Sino-Siam Warasap* were published in Thai and Chinese languages. In addition, a Japanese-owned newspaper, *Yamato*, was published in a Thai language. See Nakarin, *op. cit.*

[17] Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[18] Sor. Songsaksee, *Yod Khon Wannakam* (Supreme Writers) (Bangkok: Dok Ya, 1978), pp. 37-56.

[19] Craig Reynolds, "The Case of K.S.R. Kulap: A Challenge to Royal Historical Writing in Late Nineteenth Century Thailand", Journal of Siam Society, July 1973, 61(2), p. 77.

[20] Sukanya Tiravanit, "*Kan nungsuphim nai prathet thai*" (Newspapers in Thailand), in *Wiwatthanakan seumolchon thai* (Thai Mass Media's Evolution), Paper Presented at the Seminar on the Occasion of the Year of the World's Communication at the Faculty of

involvement in journalistic activities of King Vajiravudh himself, who had been contributing articles to the press since he was a Crown Prince.[21] Ironically, the first formal censorship came in response to a press attack on King Vajiravudh's administration and his luxurious personal life. The government promulgated the Press Act of 1919, prohibiting all criticism of the bureaucracy and restricting all military news.[22] Despite this law, the press was able to avoid the censorship by launching indirect attacks.[23] Nevertheless, press controls increased in accordance with the growth in the number of newspapers, particularly during the reigns of King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok (1925-1935). Two publication laws were promulgated in 1922 and 1927. The first law stipulated that those who wished to own a printing press needed to seek permission from the court. The direct attack, however, came under the second law which forbade any foreigners who had not been residing in Siam, as well as public servants and military personnel, from engaging in publishing activity.[24] It also allowed the withdrawal of publication licenses from any publishers if an article threatened national interests.[25] Furthermore, these laws solidified divisions between the royal-subsidized press, the foreign owned press, and the locally owned press. Heavy penalties directly targeted the increasing aggressiveness of local newspapers.[26] On the other hand, strident foreign newspapers that had heavily attacked the throne were bought out by King Vajiravudh.[27]

Despite the introduction of the second Publication Law in the Seventh Reign, the

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Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok: Buddha Bhucha Publishing, 1983), p. 7.

[21] In the late 1912, Prince Vajiravudh began writing for the press under the pen name "Asvabahu". By the opening of the Sixth reign, he owned as well as subsidized a number of publications such as *Chinosayamwarasap* and *Phim Thai*. His famous articles were such as *"clon tid lor"*, *"jew haeng burapa tith"*, *"muang thai jong tuen therd"*, and an English article "A Siam Miscellany". His famous pen names included "Asavaphaahu", "Ramchitti", and "Phun Lham".

[22] Pira Chirasophone, "Thailand", in A. Mehra (ed), Press Systems in ASEAN States (Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center, 1989), p. 92.

[23] For example, Copeland's comprehensive study of 'Contested Nationalism' in the Sixth reign demonstrates the extensive use of comic strips and satiric verse in which animal symbolism was used to ridicule the King, and his administration. In many occasions, pictures of *'hia '* or monitor lizard were often used to compare to the administrators, as the term *'hia '* could mean 'low-life bastard' when applied to human being. See Matthew Copeland, *op. cit.*

[24] Supapan, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1.

[25] Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[26] Nakarin, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8.

[27] Sulak Sivaraksa, Siam in Crisis, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Rung Sang, 1990), p. 146.

number of daily newspapers rose sharply. The press became a 'public space' for rational discussion among the urban literati by the Seventh reign. This urban literati included not only the European-educated political elite, but also the urban literate commoners.[28] These groups of urban literati played an important role in disseminating critical views against the absolute monarchy, and promoting constitutionalism through the press. The press set a constitutional agenda that paved the way for a revolutionary movement and an eventual transition towards democratic rule. The press had relative freedom of expression to the extent that offensive articles such as one titled "The Royal is a Hindrance for Development" (*Chao pen look tum thuang kwam charoen*) were published without subsequent legal action.[29] David Wyatt observed this period and called it 'the age of the popular press':

> This was, indeed, the first period in the Siamese history in which there may be said to have been something readily identifiable as public opinion. It was the age of the popular press, of daily newspapers, and weekly magazines...In the absence of any other regular mode of taking the popular pulse, the government and the educated elite seem to have regarded newspapers as the voice of public opinion. By the mid-1920s, there was no mistaking the fact that criticism of the government was increasing and that elite opinion was being both expressed and shaped in the popular press.[30]

Ironically, such a public sphere disappeared soon after the 1932 revolution, in which the absolute monarchy was replaced with a constitutional rule. Political information contests between the state elite who wanted to protect their bureaucratic interests and the press were subsequently heightened. Various coercive measures were introduced to control press discourse, despite the introduction of the first Thai constitution which guaranteed freedom of expression.[31]

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[28]   See Nakarin, *op. cit*, and Copeland, *op. cit.*

[29]   This article was published in "Rassadorn" Newspaper in 1928. Another example is an article titled "*Nungsuphim kab rassadorn"* (Newspapers and the Private Citizens) published in *Sri krung* only three months before the revolution in June 1932 with content that could be considered outrageous. One sentence, for instance, reads: "The New People's Government is going to stay, therefore, every Siamese had better make the best of it, whether he likes it or not". *Sri krung*, March 25, 1932, p. 3.

[30]   David K. Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: O.S. Printing house, 1984), p. 235.

[31]   The first constitution was promulgated on 10 December 1932. Article 14 guaranteed "full liberty of person, abode, property speech, writing, advertising, education, public meeting, association, or vocation"; however, the restriction on such liberties may be imposed by virtue of laws enacted for the purpose of "maintaining security of the state or safeguarding the liberties, dignity, or reputation of other persons or maintaining public order or good morals or preventing deterioration of the mind or health of the public". See Boonlert Suphadilok, *"Sitthi kan seusan nai prathet thai"* (The right to communicate in Thailand) (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1984), pp. 14-15.

A parallel to this history of press censorship occurred in Japan during the Meji era (1868-1911).[32] The first Japanese censorship law came with the advent of Western-style political discussion or mainstream newspapers (*seiron shimbun* or *ôshimbun*).[33] Among the pioneers of these high-brow political newspapers were *Kôko Shimbun*[34], launched by an ex-samurai intellectual, Fukuchi Genichirô, and *Chûgai Shimbun*, published by another ex-samurai, Yanagawa Shunsan. Most of newspapers in the early Meiji period were published by former Tokugawa retainers, especially the *samurai* intellectuals, who had been stripped of their feudal social status and hereditary rice stipends, and hence took a stance against the autocratic Meiji government.[35]

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[32] For a good account of the press censorship in Japan prior to 1945, see Richard H. Mitchell, Censorship in Imperial Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). For detailed discussion of the Japanese press prior to and during the Meiji period see James Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), and his earlier work on a famous journalist in the Meiji period in James Huffman, Politics of the Meiji Press: The Life of Fukuchi Genichirô (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980). For detailed studies of the press in the early Meiji era, see Peter Fidgor, "Newspaper and Their Regulation in Early Meiji Japan", Paper on Japan Vol.6 (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1972), and Chapter 2: The Law on Liberty in Modern History in Lawrence Ward Beer, Freedom of Expression in Japan : A Study in Comparative Law, Politics and Society (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984). For Japanese sources, see Nishida Taketoshi, Nihon Jaanarizumu-shi Kenkyû (Studies of History of Japan's Journalism) (Tokyo: Misuzushobô, 1989); For a short summary of the press in Meiji period, see Uchigawa Yoshimi and Arai Naoyuki (eds)(2nd), Nihon no jaanarizumu: Taishû no kokoro o tsukandaka (Japanese Journalism: has it captured the spirit of the masses? (Tokyo: Yûhikaku, 1997), and for a history of the rise of presently prestigious newspapers such as *Asahi*, and *Mainichi* read Daba Hiroshi, "Ôshimbunsha: Sono jinmyaku kinmyaku no kenkyû"" (Big Newspapers: Research on the human and money connections) (Tokyo: Hamano Shuppan, 1996).

[33] Prior to the Meiji period, censorship in Japan targeted books and woodblock prints concerned with Christianity, foreign affairs, the Tokugawa family and their allies. Censorship was self-policed through book guilds and mutual survilliance groups. The earliest form of Japanese newspapers, so-called *Yomiuri* (reading and selling), or *kawaraban* (slate impression), a single sheet paper, limited themselves printing news related to non-sensitive matters like disasters, earthquakes, supernatural occurrences, and domestic stories like love suicides. James Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 13-14, 21-22.

[34] *Kôkô Shimbun* was launched on May 24, 1868. The creator, Fukuchi Genichirô, who had previously been in Europe, used his European experience in producing a newspaper for everyone, including 'women and children'. The newspaper was accordingly filled with a variety of columns, such as news, gossips about officials and *samurais*, correspondence, and translations from foreign newspapers. The paper was also well-known for its depth in political commentaries. See James Huffman, Politics of the Meiji Press : The Life of Fukuchi Genichirô, *op. cit*, pp. 47-50.

[35] It was evident that they launched pro-Shogunate papers in order to offer competing views against the government's own publication called *Dajôkan nisshi* (Council of State Journal), which had been a main instrument in disseminating official information about the new Meiji government and its policies. Fidgor, *op. cit*, p. 3.

The first formal censorship law came as a means to suppress these anti-government newspapers which became increasingly popular with their reports of the civil war.[36] The Decree of 1868 stipulated that publishers must seek government licenses, and that commencing a publication without permission was prohibited.[37] Despite the introduction of this law, the anti-government papers became increasingly strident. The government could only use tough extralegal controls to obviate the paper and its editor. For instance, Fukuchi Genichirô, was attacked in his house by gun troops, and was arrested soon after on charges of assistance to resisters after he had strongly criticized the Meiji Government in his editorial pieces. He was later released, but his printing blocks were seized and his publication of *Kôko Shimbun* was prohibited.[38]

The Meiji statesmen determined to further curb the obstreperous press by designing two censorship decrees. The first came about seven days after Fukuchi's release, and provided punishment for publisher, editor and vendor who did not have licenses, and confiscation of printing blocks and binding equipment. As a result, all Edo newspapers were closed down on that day, as their publishers had to seek publishing licenses before resuming printing. Yet a few newspapers, most of which were those protected by extraterritoriality, were reissued afterwards.[39] The second law, the Newspaper Publication Ordinance (*Shimbunshi inkô jôrei*), for the first time dealt with the newspaper content by specifying matters that could and could not be published.[40]

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[36]   Battle reports from the Boshin War between the Meiji army and Tokugawa loyalists became the core of the newspapers' reports. Huffman, <u>Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan,</u> p. 39.

[37]   Fidgor, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[38]   Huffman, <u>Politics of the Meiji Press,</u> *op. cit.*, pp. 55-9.

[39]   There were only three non-governmental newspapers remaining in Japan after August 1868. These were *Moshiogusa* in Yokohama and *Bankoku Shimbun,* both of which had foreign editors, and thus were protected by the extraterritoriality, and a pro-government newspaper in Osaka was also exempted, the *Nagai Shimbun.* See Huffman, <u>Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan,</u> p. 45.

[40]   For instance, contents which were related to "unusual natural events, prices, commerce, politics, military affairs, fires, marriages, births and deaths, art, recreation, food, clothing, official announcements, translation of Western books, and foreign news" were allowed to be published as long as they did not jeopardize social values The law forbade the mentioning of matters that sound "indiscriminate criticism of the government and laws, criticism of individuals, preaching religious doctrines and false explanation of military affairs", and that the publishers were required to submit two copies of each issue for inspection and to publish the paper titles as well as publishers' and editors' names in each issue. Fidgor, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

Scholars on the subject of the Meiji Press, such as Fidgor and Huffman, have forcefully argued that this law was actually 'progressive', as it did not stipulate pre-censorship (only self-policing guidelines), and thus was crucial in stimulating the rise of an independent press, which helped create an era of popular press in the early Meiji period.[41]

Four years after the Publication Law of 1869 had been promulgated, the government's adoption of a 'civilization and enlightenment' (*bunmei kaika*) policy began.[42] The government believed that through newspapers it could seek to shape public opinion in support of its policies, and abruptly changed its relationship with the press, from one of total suppression to one of mutual sponsoring.[43] Newspapers were now assisted both financially and editorially by the central government and local administrations.[44] Editors were financially motivated to self-censor, and publish suitably moderate political views. The government's orchestration of this reward subsidy and payroll strategy proved so effective that it was able to persuade the previously hypercritical Fukuchi to become an editor of *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, a semi-official paper. Likewise, other editors were uneasy with competitive pressures, were even induced to turn their publications into fully official papers, or *goyô*

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[41] Peter Fidgor, "Newspaper and Their Regulation in the Early Meiji Japan"; James Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan, p. 60; Mitchell, Censorship in Imperial Japan, p. 34. Evidently, there was a remarkable growth of number of newspapers published in this period. For instance, there were 84 newspapers published between 1871 and 1873, and by 1877 there were as many as 225 newspapers published in Japan.

[42] A policy that was aimed to transform Japan from a traditional to a modern nation, one in which the state and the people held a common desire to maximize all their resources in order to build a rich country, strong military (*fukoku kyôhei*). Peter Fidgor, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[43] As stated with the authoritative words, "*Kaika no sendô, bunmei no shôkei wa shimbunshi ni shiku mono nashi* " (There is nothing equivalent to the newspaper in leading to enlightenment,and hastening the civilization), Uchigawa and Arai, *Nihon no jaanarizumu : Taishû no kokoro o tsukandaka* (Japanese Journalism: has it captured the mass spirits?) (Tokyo: Yûhikaku, 1997), p. 8.; See also Chapter 3: Serving the Government 1868-1874 in James Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan, *op. cit.*

[44] Firstly, the Finance Ministry purchased three copies of every issue of *Shimbun Zasshi, Tôkyô Nichichi Shimbun, Yokohma Mainichi Shimbun*, and *Nisshin Shinjishi* and distributed them to seventy-two prefectures and three major cities (Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka). Secondly, the central government assisted in the development of metal type printing to replace wooden blocks. Thirdly, local governments established a kind of newspaper reading groups, called *Shimbun Kaiwakai* (Newspaper Conversation Association), in order to promote newspaper reading among the general public, including women and children. And lastly, reporters of certain newspapers were allowed to attend court hearings, and publish the reports. See Uchigawa and Arai, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Fidgor, *op. cit*, pp. 8-9.

shimbun.[45]

Indeed, the government assistance package encouraged an overall growth of the number of Japanese newspapers. As newspapers flourished, they became increasingly competitive and politicized, especially following the rise of the People's Rights Movement (*jiyû minken undô*) in 1874, which called for the election of a national assembly and the promulgation of the constitution. The split in the mainstream politics led to lively political debate in the press. The press published diverse views of liberal rights and politics, and strongly criticized government policies. The relationship between the government and the newspapers became increasingly strained. Following its failure in attempting to buy out opposition newspapers, the government withdrew most of its newspaper assistance and issued a new Press Ordinance in 1875[46], which prohibited newspapers from having foreign publishers and editors[47], and contained a list of penalties. To further restrict the strident newspapers, the Meiji statesmen also revised the *Dajôkan* Decree No.98, which allowed for the suspension of a newspaper that violated public order.[48] The new regulations including the Press Ordinance of 1883, which added the new system of security bonds in return for permission to publish,[49]

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[45]   For instance, John Black, an editor of *Nisshin Shinjishi* had to accept assistance from the government because of his financial problems, and thus he had to run his newspaper as an official organ for the Ministry of Finance (*Okurashô*) and the Left Chamber (*Sa-In*) in return. See Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan, *op. cit*, p. 53.

[46]   This law required newspaper publication to apply to the Home Ministry (*Naimushô),* to give a license permission, instead of the formerly empowered Education Administration Office (*Gakkô Gyôseikan*). It also punished the newspapers with content that criticized the law or the Imperial family, or defamed an individual of a crime, or reported the court procedure, or published unauthorized memorials or petitions presented to the government, or incited criminal behaviors or instigate riots. Fidgor, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[47]   John Black, mentioned earlier as the Irish owner and the editor of *Nisshin Shinjishi* had to cease his publication three months after the promulgation of the new press law. His following attempt to launch another newspaper under the old name, *Bankoku Shimbun*, lasted barely a week, as the authority sought the British Consulate to take action against the paper. A scholar on the subject saw the ban on *Bankoku Shimbun* as a government crusade to end extraterritoriality in Japan. Yet extraterritoriality in Japan was not finally abolished until after 1899. See J.E. Hoare, "The 'Bankoku Shimbun' Affair: Foreigners, the Japanese Press and Extraterritoriality in Early Meiji Japan", Modern Asian Studies, 1975, 9(3), pp. 289-302.

[48]   The application of these two laws was so pervasive that in 1876 alone there were as many as five newspapers banned, and eighty-six journalists jailed. Uchigawa and Arai, *Nihon no jaanarizumu (Japanese Journalism), op. cit.*, p. 11.

[49]   All newspapers except those dealing exclusively with science, art, statistics, government directives, or price reports, were required to deposit a large sum of money with the government to guarantee their compliance with legal requirements. The deposit was set at 1,000 yen for newspapers in Tokyo, 700 yen for newspapers in major cities, and 350 yen for newspapers elsewhere. Mitchell, Censorship in Imperial Japan, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

represented a recognition by the government that the press had an important function to serve, not as a government watchdog, but as a tool of the state.

Yet the press's unified campaign for people's rights was successful in setting an agenda for subsequent political changes despite the existence of harsh press laws. As Huffman explains:

> The press played a central role in making the *jiyû minken* era possible, spreading information about the movement's key activities, providing a rationale for its central positions, and agitating directly for wider support. The most obvious, or at least the most traditional, press role was informational.[50]

However, despite of such progressive political changes, freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association were, however, strictly limited under Article 29 of the Meiji Constitution. The article read: "Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings, and associations".[51] Yet these 'limits of law' included constitutional clauses on military service, the secrecy of court and Diet proceedings, administrative prerogatives, emergency executive powers, and parliamentary laws which might eradicate press autonomy.[52] In particular, new legal and extralegal controls were designed to curb the opposition press. For instance, the 1909 Press Ordinance doubled the amount of the security money, and allowed the authorities to ban particular issues of a journal from sale and distribution, and to confiscate all copies when the journal was deemed to disturb public peace and morals.[53] Several extralegal control mechanisms in the forms of 'warnings', 'suggestions', and 'advice' were also employed to elicit compliance and encourage self-censorship among publishers and journalists.

'Warnings' seemed to have been the favorite government device, and often

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[50]   James L. Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[51]   Itô Hirobumi, Commentaries on the Constiution on the Empire of Japan (Tokyo: Chûô Daigaku, 1906), cited in Gregory Kasza, The State and the Mass Media in Japan 1918-1945, (Berkeley University of California Press, 1988), p. 10.

[52]   Richard Mitchell compared the number of suspension orders issued by the Home Ministry before and after the promulgation of the Constitution and found out that there were more issued after the promulgation of the Constitution than previously, within a shorter time span. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[53]   Gregory Kasza, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

yielded results, as most publishers who received a warning dared not disobey.[54] 'Suggestions' and 'advice' were delivered through four levels of government interaction with the press. Firstly, the system of government deliberation councils (*Shingikai*) brought bureaucrats and journalists together. Secondly, the establishment of the International Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (*Kokusai Shimbun Kyôkai*) was established to "promote 'exchanges' between the government and the executives of the newspaper companies".[55] Thirdly, the *Shunjû-kai*, or Spring and Autumn Association was established to hold regular meeting in Spring and Autumn between the owners and editors of prominent newspapers, powerful government bureaucrats, and the Chiefs of the Police Bureau and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. Finally, the 'press club' system, or *'kisha kurabu'* (literally, reporters' club), was established to channel information to journalists from important ministries and agencies.[56]

The first reporters' club was originally an on-site newspaper reporters' waiting room (*shimbun kisha tamarijô, shimbun kisha hikaejô*), established at the beginning of the 1880s. Later, this 'waiting room' gradually developed into "a place where official news for public dissemination was brought to reporters". By 1910, the use of the words "*kurabu*" and "*kishakai*" became widespread along with the rapidly increased number of clubs attached to ministries and agencies. The club also changed from an ordinary waiting room to a place where announcements were made, and news was gathered. At *kisha kurabu*, relationships between the official sources and reporters were easily established and accumulated over years of newsgathering and personal entertainment.[57]

[54]   Wildes noted that "A favorite device is to send a policeman, or other attaché, in plain clothes to the editors to warn against publishing items whose general knowledge is not convenient to officials. These men do not proffer their credentials, nor give their orders in written form, but often, in the case of foreign publications, command a Japanese employee to tell the editor that certain news must not be printed". Harry Emerson Wildes, Social Currents in Japan: With Special Reference to the Press (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 114.

[55]   Yamamoto Taketoshi, "The Press Clubs of Japan", Journal of Japanese Studies, 1989, 15(2), p. 383.

[56]   Mizuno Takeya, "*Kisha kurabu kanren-shi* " (History Related to the Reporters' Club), Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô 1995, 13, p. 58.

[57]   It was claimed that Ôkuma Shigenobu, the leader of a leading political party at that time, the Kaishintô, could form the press supports to the government schemes to sell properties in Hokkaidô. Ôkuma was well known for his accessibility to the press. His office at the party headquarters was claimed to be a place that journalists could freely come and go. He successfully persuaded a number of journalists to become politicians and his party members. The following Katsura Cabiet not only employed these tactics, but also used 'money, liquor, and women' to

Through a calculated combination of enticements, entertainment, and the privilege provided by public offices to which the club-journalists were attached, the Meiji government claimed to have succeeded in transforming the club journalists into "transcription machines".[58]

By the end of the Meiji period, individual clubs established rules that closely interlocked the press and the state. These rules promoted a shift to a pro-government stance among Japanese newspapers, and self-restraint among the journalists. As a result, the political newspapers (*ôshimbun*) lost ground to the more popular newspapers (*koshimbun*) not only because they abandoned their critical stance against the government, but also because informative reporting became increasingly necessary due to the monopolization of news promoted by the Japanese administrative techniques and the system of *kisha kurabu*.

However, it can be argued that the market in these periods of absolutism in Japan and Thailand appeared to be a countervailing force against the states' coercive and reward instruments. The increased competitiveness in the newspaper market fostered the media's ability to access, interpret, and disseminate political information, and to reduce the state's ability to control the flow of political information. In particular, the highly competitive marketplace in Siam during the Sixth Reign forced the press to compete for urban Siamese readers by publishing critical news and diverse editorial views. In this process, the press assumed an agenda-setting role moulding popular support for a constitutional democratic rule. Likewise, during the rise of the People's Rights Movements (*jiyû minken undô*) in Japan during the 1880s, the competition in the newspaper market pressured the press to offer varied political views and standpoints despite recurrent attacks from the government. The press campaign in promoting the People's Rights Movements was successful in setting an agenda for subsequent political changes. The Meiji Constitution that recognized freedom of speech was promulgated in

lure the press. See William de Lange, A History of Japanese Journalism: Japan's Press Club as the Last Obstacle to a Mature Press (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998), pp. 128-9.

[58]   Yamamoto Taketoshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-88.

1889, and this led to the establishment of a parliamentary system and the formation of political parties.

2.3 Censorship, Military Concerns and the State

In contrast to the civil revolutions in Europe or America, which were carried out by the commoners or the public from below, the Meiji Restoration in 1868 Japan and the Siamese Revolution in 1932 were carried out by the elite who, more or less, tended to continue absolutist methods of control. These elite imposed stringent laws to suppress attacks from those who were dissatisfied with the change. Although Constitutions were promulgated in both countries afterwards, the provisions protecting freedom of expression in both Constitutions were limited. Subsequent censorship imposed by the successive military regimes in Thailand (1938-1988) and military-led governments in Japan (1926-1945) clearly reflected the views of these military states that the press should serve not as a watchdog but as a servant of the state.

The overthrow of the absolute monarchy in Siam during June 1932 was organized by a group within the elite called the People's Party. This group consisted of middle-level military officers and overseas-graduated civil servants, who were motivated as much by the desire to protect and further their own interests as by a belief in constitutionalism.[59] To suppress the oppositional newspapers, the People's Party enacted the Statutory Law of 1933.[60] This law established a Bureau of Censorship to check all articles and news pieces against an official list of news sources.[61] Publication

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[59] For further discussion, see Prudhisan Jumbala, <u>Nation-building and Democratization in Thailand: A Political History</u> (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Social Research Institute, 1992), pp. 22-23.

[60] The Press Act of 1933 included Section 18(1) and (3) which forbade the press to publish articles detrimental to public order and good morals, or which were aimed against foreign powers that had treaty relations with Thailand. Section 26 added that in time of war or when there was danger of internal disorder, the government would require all newspapers to submit publishable materials to the official censor for examination. Section 39 stated that the Press Office was empowered to publish in the Government Gazette an order prohibiting the importation of any newspapers specified by name in that order. Appropriate fines and punishments were also listed. This act was aimed at curbing the pro-monarchy, anti-government papers such as *Krungthep Daily Mail, Thai Mai,* and *Shuay Kamakorn.* It also enhanced a demarcation between the pro-government press, anti-government press, and neutral press in that era.

[61] Supapan, *op. cit.*, p. 103. See also Thammakiet Kanari, *"60 pi prachatippatai thai kab nungsuphim"* (60 Democratic Years and the Newspapers in Thailand), *Wan nak-khao 5 minakhom 2536 (Reporters' Day March 5, 1993),* The Reporters' Association of Thailand,

of news from unapproved sources, and editors with less than twelve years of education were prohibited.[62] Consequently, twenty-one newspapers were closed in less than one year for minor misconduct.[63] For example, *Lak Muang* was closed because of its publication of a letter to the editor written by a Thai living in Beijing. This reader wrote to congratulate the newly established democracy, and attack the disadvantages of the monarchical system.[64]

When a leading military figure within the People's Party, Field Marshal Phibulsongkram, became Prime Minister,[65] the newspapers and broadcasting media were employed as propaganda tools to spreading and propagate his nationalist ideologies and policies, including a new set of social and moral values.[66] Newspapers that did not conform to the regime's orders were subject to severe penalty and closure.[67] The new Press Act of 1941, imposed by the Phibul's regime, gave absolute authority to the police and provincial governors in censoring news reports, revoking publishing licenses, prohibiting sale and distribution, as well as closing down publications that were deemed to jeopardize law and order and public morality during the Second World War or

	March 5, 1993, pp. 76-86. Thammakiet argued that the People's Party suppressed the newspapers for two main reasons: to prevent the royalists from regaining their power, and to prevent any chance of foreign intervention.
62	Supapan, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
63	From May 1993 to April 1994, there were overall twenty-one newspapers that received orders of closure. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-12.
64	*Lak Muang* was closed for three days on the ground that it was agitating the order and the peace of the country. See Thammakiet Kanari, "*60 pi prachatippatai thai kab nungsuphim*" (60 Democratic Years and the Newspapers in Thailand), *Wan nak-khao 5 minakhom 2536 (Reporters' Day March 5, 1993)* (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1993), p. 81.
65	At the end of 1938, there were several newspapers, such as *Siam Review*, *Thai Kasem Ruam Khao*, *Issara*, and *Siam Rath*, which appeared to favor the rise of of military. They supported for the so-called duty and righteousness of the military in protecting and preserving the national constitution. This paved the way to an emergence of a military leader, Field Marshal Phibulsongkram, who seized the premiership and the position of the Chief Commander of the Army. See *Ibid.*
66	For example, the Phibul's government regulated for newspapers to print the official slogan - "The nation is safe if we believe our leader", on the front page every issue. See detailed discussion in Pornpirom Iamtham, *Bot-bat thang kan-muang khong nungsuphim thai (2475-2488) (The Political Role of the Thai Press (1932-1945)* (Bangkok: Thai Wattanapanich, 1977), p. 63.
67	In particular, the Phibul's government devised Article 34 of the new Publication Act of 1941, which dealt with newspapers that issued critical comments that might endanger the international relations.

the concomitant states of emergency.[68] While the Director-General of the Police Department had authority to censor the press, the Minister of Interior could judge whether a particular article was offensive to public order and morals, and he had complete power to decide whether to suspend or confiscate an offending paper.[69] Based on his unilateral power to shut down the paper, there was absolutely no way that the press could legally fight the Minister's censorship power.

Furthermore, in 1942 a provision was added to the Press Act of 1941. A minimum capital investment of 50,000 baht was deemed necessary to establish a publishing business, supposedly to ensure the raising of printing standards. Yet this provision was interpreted by newspapermen as an effective means of control, because many newspapers were closed down, and a number amalgamated as a result.[70] The degree of punishment stipulated in this Press Act of 1941 was also reinforced by Section 5 of the Anti-communist or "Un-Thai" Activities Act of 1952, which made a number of press offenses subject to criminal rather than civil action and considerably stiffened penalties.[71] Indeed journalists at that time were kept in line by increases in both formal censorship and 'extralegal' control. For instance, Police General Phao Sriyanon who assumed positions of the Deputy Minister of Interior was well-known for using his 'extralegal' control in dealing with the press.[72] This extralegal control included intimidation, or serious and unexplained "accidents" occurring to editors unwilling to conform.[73] Since the press was not allowed to report impartially, or to

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[68] These provisions also led to orders of closure even when the country was neither under any threat of was, nor in a state of emergency. See Pisith Shavalatawat, *Kodmai seusan molchon (Mass Media Laws)*, 6th ed. (Bangkok: Dok Ya, 1995); Also Manich Sooksomchitre, *Khoomu kodmai thi na ru samrab nak-khao (Legal Manual for Reporter)*, 3rd ed. (Bangkok: TP Print, 1995).

[69] Pira, *op. cit*, p. 97; Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[70] After the revised Publication Act of 1941 was announced, the number of newspapers fell by half from 25 to 12. See Sukanya Tiravanit, *Prawatkan nungsuphim thai phai nai rabob somburanayasitthirat (History of the Thai Press Under the Absolute Monarchy)* (Bangkok: Thai Wathanaphanich, 1977).

[71] Paul Blackburn, "Communications and National Development in Thailand, Burma, and Malaysia: A Comparative Systemic Analysis", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The American University, 1971, pp. 93-4.

[72] Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

[73] Sommai has listed a number of interesting cases in which editors and journalists were assassinated or injured because of their attempts to investigate stories on the illegal actions of high rank officers, military and police officers, as well as reports regarding the unexplained death of King Rama VIII. See Sommai Parichatre, *Khao cho cho khao: sudyod khao pulitzer*

stimulate independent thought, much of the press shifted its focus to entertainment and sensationalisation, serialising romantic novels, and Chinese kung-fu fiction.

At the end of the Second World War, the press clearly became a political tool as they were divided into pro-Phibul, and anti-Phibul factions.[74] Partisan newspapers also attacked one another as a part of contest for power between military cliques.[75] Indeed, this pattern of the Thai press well reflected the Thai notion of 'semidemocracy' -- competition for power was not linked with the electorate but with factions in the military.[76] The press not only became outlets for particular individuals who led cliques within the militaristic government, but also a stage for launching the political careers of ambitious individuals. It was unthinkable in those days that a half-Chinese born in a merchant family outside Bangkok would one day become an elected member of parliament, given the mainstream attitudes towards Chinese immigrants. However, Prasit Kanjanawat made this possible by launching his own weekly paper *Kan-muang*, and having an interest in another daily paper, *Thai Mai*, both of which aired his views.[77] Thus, the press in this period was not only sensational in nature but mostly biased in regard to politics.

In 1948, Phibul staged a *coup d'état* and returned to the premiership after being

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nungsuphim thai (Investigative News: The Best 'Pulitzer' Stories in the Thai Newspapers) (Bangkok: Matichon, 1993), pp. 65-66.

[74] For example, when the result of the 1957 national election was judged fraudulent by the public and the press, the government prohibited all public servants from reading any other newspapers except Phibul's own *Thammatipat*.

[75] As already mentioned, Field Marshal Phibul had his own newspaper, '*Thammatipat*', and was closely associated with one English-language newspaper, '*Bangkok Tribune* '. Police-General Pao Sriyanon, who headed *Soi Rajakru* clique or police clique, owned '*Phao Thai*', and '*2500*', as well as an English-language newspaper with a pro-American stance, '*Bangkok World* '. The *Si Sao Theves* clique led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat owned '*Sanseree*' and '*Thai Rai Wan*'. In 1955 approximately 8 out of 22 Thai-language newspapers at that time were said to be owned or supported by leaders of military clique. The contestation was so severe that the government even blocked the opposition papers an access to paper supplies. As most of the quality printing paper was imported, the opposition papers needed to convert to the poorer quality rice paper. See Sukanya Tiravanit, "*Kan nungsuphim nai prathet thai*" (Thai Newspapers), *op. cit*, p.9.; and Thomas Fitzsimmons, Thailand, *op. cit*, p. 209.

[76] Chai-Anan Samudavanija, "Thailand: A Stable Semidemocracy", in L. Diamond et al. (eds.), Politics in Developing Countries (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990), pp. 276-7.

[77] Prasit later became deputy ministers in the Sarit and Thanom administrations. See Kasien Tejapira, "Imagined Uncommunity: The Lookjin Middle Class and Thai Official Nationalism", in D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), Essential Outsiders: Chinese and the Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp. 82-3.

jailed as a war criminal. A successful crusade for a freer press was led by the Press Association of Thailand, in the sense that the power to censor the press was removed from the Director-General of the Police Department and transferred to the provincial governors, who were considerably less threatening agents of law enforcement than the police.[78] Nevertheless, the direct control of press censorship returned to the Police Department after Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat organized a coup d''etat and ordered strict press control under the Revolutionary Order No.17 issued in 1958.

'National Security' has been frequently used as an excuse by military governments to curb press freedom.[79] Sarit claimed that 'national security' dictated the licensing of all publications, and any publications that were issued with statements alleging the instigation of subversive activities or offences caused to the King or the government, or the divulging of official secrets, were subject to severe punishment.[80] By 1959, there were a total of nine legal provisions that were directly associated with the press.[81] The Sarit administration also had its Department of propaganda write pro-government news reports for the newspapers.[82] Consequently, the press could serve little function but to publish official stories and avoid reporting sensitive stories. Journalists who did not conform to the order were to be arrested and face long jail terms under martial law. All charges against publications that were considered 'political cases',

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[78]   Because of a decline in power, Phibul attempted to regain supports from the public. After his return from a tour of the United States and United Kingdom, he allowed regular press conferences and Hyde Park meetings at the Central Park of Bangkok. However, this public space continued only for a short period. The government saw it as a threat because most speech delivered at the Hype Park meetings and the press conferences clearly demonstrated the disunity within the government. See Fitzsimmons, op. cit., p. 226.

[79]   Suchit Bunbongkarn has suggested that Thai military leaders have shared a very broad concept of 'national security', one which is not only limited to military factors, but also includes social, economic, political, psychological factors. It was also widely believed by military governments in the past that controlling the media was an important ingredient in creating psychological cohesiveness among the public, and thus, promoting national security. See Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Thailand: The Military and Development for National Security" in J. Soedjati Djiwandono and Yong Mun Cheong (eds.), Soldiers and Stability in Southeast Asia, 2nd ed. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 133-162.

[80]   Boonrak Boonyaketamala, "Thailand", op. cit., p. 340.

[81]   These were: Martial Law, the State of Emergency, Revolutionary Order No.17, the Publication Act of 1941, the Communist Ac, Revolutionary Orders No. 12, 21,31, and 43 which largely empowered the officer to detain suspected communists and gangsters without going through court, Criminal Law, Civil Law, and Juvenile Court Regulations.

[82]   Sukanya Tiravanit, Prawatkan nungsuphim thai phai nai rabob somburanayasitthirat (History of the Thai Press Under the Absolute Monarchy) (Bangkok: Thai Wathanaphanich, 1977), p. 92.

and journalists who were considered 'communist suspects', were referred to military tribunals and not the civil courts.[83] This new law made obtaining a license for a new publication very difficult. Newspaper licenses thus became scarce commodities, which led to the practice of selling and hiring newspaper licenses for profit-making.[84]

Due to Sarit's sudden death in 1963, his political heir, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, became Prime Minister. For the first time in many years, the press was allowed to clearly express their opinions. Yet by then journalists had learnt by experience how far they could go without risking suppression. The new Constitution drafted by Thanom's administration still maintained that freedom of speech was subjected to the provision of special laws, and Order No.17 remained intact. Nonetheless, for the first time newspaper publishing emerged as a profit-making industry. Due to the increased competition for commercial money and higher circulation, an increasing number of newspapers became political 'guard dogs', merely protecting their commercial interests and preserving the *status quo*. The content of the Thai press under the Thanom administration was well reflected in Boonrak's comments:

> The decay of political morality resulted in unimaginative journalism which tamely conformed to the political whims of the military men in power. Businessmen who invested in newspaper enterprises in this political setting seemed to seek merely commercial ends from newspaper publishing.[85]

However, the newspapers under Thanom's administration had much more freedom than before, to the extent that some newspapers with neutral political orientations started to reflect the growing dissatisfaction of the public with the government's performance, which eventually led to the 1973 students' revolution. These democratic rallies were organized to oust Thanom Kittikhachorn and his powerful aides

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[83]   Dangtoi Sangchan compiled a detailed list of Sarit's suppressive order imposed on the press. For example, on October 22, 1958, Sarit ordered the arrest of fifty-three editors and journalists, and a closure of ten newspapers, two of which were Chinese, in one day on the suspicion of being involved in Communist activities. See Dangtoi Sangchan, "Freedom of the Press in Thailand". Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, North Texas State University, 1976.

[84]   The market price of a newspaper license rose from 20,000-30,000 baht to about a million baht or over after Order No.17 was in use. See detailed examples of newspaper trading in this period in Soombooon Vorapong, *Bon sen-thang nungsuphim (On the Newspapers' Path)*, 3rd ed. (Bangkok: Dok Ya, 1995), pp. 158-62.

[85]   Boonrak, *op. cit*, p. 344.

from the country.[86] They successfully re-ignited the democratic spirit among the public

to the extent that the new royally appointed interim government of Prime Minister

Sanya Thammasak drafted a Constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press, and

abolished the use of martial laws and Order No. 17. This was a landmark period,[87] as

Wyatt observes: "public expression was exceptionally free, and newspapers and

magazines circulated all shades of opinion".[88] Boonrak has explicitly argued that this

period brought fundamental changes to the Thai press system -- one of them being that

the press progressed towards becoming the real watchdog of a democratic society.[89]

However, it was also evident that some newspaper journalists were not qualified

for the 'watchdog' role. They were not used to the long overdue press freedom. Their

news reports were biased and opinionated because of their own personal and political

interests, especially during the frequent political turbulence in 1976.[90] Evidently, some

large national newspapers, which had close links with the administration, were

employed by the state to create feelings of anti-communism. For instance, in 1976 the

coverage of a series of student protests against the return of Field Marshal Thanom

from exile to lead the life of a Buddhist monk reinforced the division between the left-

wing groups and the right-wing groups, and accelerated the violence.[91] Two influential

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86   In 1973, the Thai government was apparently controlled by a totally corrupt and ruthless
military trio: Thanom Kittikhachorn, Praphat Charusathien, and Thanom's son, Narong
Kittikhachorn.

87   Indeed, during this period, there was an unprecedentedly increase in a number of small,
Bangkok-based, articulated and critical newspapers published in favors of pro-democratic
activities such as *Prachachart, Prachatippatai, Athipat, Sieng-Mai*, and so on. Sukanya
Tiravanit, *"Kan nungsuphim nai prathet thai"* (Newspapers in Thailand), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

88   Wyatt, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

89   Boonrak, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-2.

90   After the student revolution of 1973, the political landscape in Thailand was filled with
problems and conflicts between the revolutionary leftists such as peasants, teachers, laborers
and students, and the conservative rightists including military personnel, administrators and
public servants. There were frequent reports of rallies and protests, with some ending military
violence. The press in this period was clearly divided into 'pro-demonstrator', 'anti-
demonstrator', and 'neutral' newspapers. Pro-demonstrator newspapers included *Athipat,
Prachathippatai*, and other small campus newspapers. Anti-demonstrator newspapers were those
papers with close ties with the ruling elite and the military. These included *Dao Siam, Ban
Muang*, and *Siam Rath*. Neutral papers included *Thai Rath* and *Sieng Puang Chon*. However,
these neutral papers also inclined to protect the political interests of the elite in order to preserve
the *status quo*. See further discussion in Wilasinee Pipithkul, *"Thob-thuan jud yuen
nungsuphim jak sibsi tula thueng pathiroop kan-muang"* (Revision of the Press' Standpoint
from the Oct 14th Crisis to Political Reform), in *Jub-jong mong seu* (Media Watch)
(Bangkok: Krongkarn Susantiphap, 1998), pp. 102-7.

91   The national press carried an interview with Kittiwutto, a monk who was a co-leader of the
Nawapol Group. He suggested that it was not sinful to kill communists.

newspapers, *Bangkok Post* and *Dao Siam* published a photograph of the student's re-enactment of the brutal murder of two workers, who were accused of being communists after distributing pamphlets protesting Thanom's return. These publications ignited the bloodshed of 6 October 1976, in which hundreds of students who were accused of pro-communism were murdered, and thousands were arrested.[92]

On that same day, a group called the "National Administration Reform Council" organized a *coup d' état* and issued an order to close down *all* newspapers, and set up an "Information Examining Committee" (*Khana kamakan trauchsoab khaosan*) to consider which newspapers might re-open on the next day.[93] The new administration launched its own newspaper, *Chao Praya*, and further curbed the press freedom by promulgating Decree No. 42 (*Por. Ror.* 42), which outlined principles that the press must follow, in addition to those stipulated in the Press Act of 1941. The Decree was reminiscent of Order No. 17 in Sarit's era, but returned censorship power to the Minister of Interior, who was vested with the complete authority to close down a newspaper.[94]

Samrueng Kampau, a veteran newspaperman, observed three subsequent governments that continued to impose the Decree No.42 on the press and mentioned that "despite using the same legislation, each government applied it differently".[95] Indeed, stability in a political environment was a crucial factor in how one example of

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[92]   *Dao Siam* newspaper, in particular, was recognized as a right-wing newspaper. It publicized the photograph of the reenactment by Thammasat students of the brutual murder of two workers who protested against the return of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn. This photograph immediately ignited an anger among the right wing group as they began to point out that the photo of one of the actors resembled the Crown Prince. Although there has been no clear evidence whether the photographs have been touched up to inflame the situation, it is understood by many political activists that the private press at that time allowed intervention from political power holders to ensure political survival and patronage. For further details of the event see Puey Ungpakorn, "Violence and the Military Coup in Thailand", <u>Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars</u>, July-September 1977, 9(3), pp. 4-12.

[93]   Sukanya,Tiravanit, *"Kan nungsuphim nai prathet thai"* (Newspapers in Thailand), *op.cit.*, p. 15.

[94]   It prohibited publishing statements or pictures that were offensive to the King, the royal family, the nation, the government or government departments; that implicated any corruption within the government or presented a distorted, contemptuous, or insulting image of the government; that propagated communism; that were untrue and likely to create fear and endanger social peace and order; that were pornographic, obscene or coarse, or likely to injure the morals and culture of the nation; and that were official secrets. See Pira, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-8.

[95]   Samroeng Khamphau, *Mong wongkan nungsuphim* <u>(A Look Into the Newspaper Industry)</u> (Bangkok: Samnakphim Phirap, 1989), p. 10.

censorship legislation was imposed on the press in various ways. In the years of political crisis during the Thanin (1976-77) and Kriengsak (1977-80) administrations, the Decree No.42 was largely applied. Many newspapers were unjustifiably closed down so frequently that some avoided altogether the reporting of political news or critical comments.[96] On the contrary, under General Prem's long-term administration (1980-88), censorship was very relaxed due to a close relationship between General Prem and major newspaper owners, and the authority to close down newspapers was moved from the Minister of Interior to the Supreme Court Judge. During General Prem's leadership, no newspaper was closed down.[97]

A striking similarity between the Thai military states and the military-dominated governments in Japan in the early Shôwa era (1926-1945) was marked in the sense that both coercive and reward instruments were applied to direct press discourse towards promoting nationalism. Throughout this period, the military states were portrayed as protectors of national security that unified and advanced the nation. In Japan, restrictive regulatory press controls and an extensive yet subtle network of self-censorship developed in the early years of the Meiji administration, continued undisrupted into the Taishô period (1912-1925), and into the years of military rule. It was this kind of practice that prompted Huffman to note that: "when possible, officials tried to win journalists over to their side, when that did not work, they used coercion and control".[98] Indeed, the intricate web of coercive and reward strategies employed by the government was heavily reinforced by both laws and administrative techniques. For example, as the number of newspapers and circulations grew, the number of *kisha kurabu* also rose.[99]

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[96] For example, throughout November 1978 the printing officer of Bangkok revoked the publication and editors' licenses of 57 dailies and threatened legal action against 32 other dailies, claiming that they violated the Printing Act since they published weekly and not daily as their licenses indicated. John Lent (ed.), "After 1975: Another Downswing", Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems (Hong Kong: Heineman Educational Books, 1982), p. 366.

[97] General Prem Tinsulanonda had a very gentle personality. He could thus easily develop a very close relationship with the press. He called all journalists 'look', meaning 'son', and the press called him 'Pa', or 'Daddy'. Not surprisingly, no journalist during this period tried to bring his homosexuality into news coverage. This cosy relationship between him and the press has been claimed to have strengthened and lengthened his premiership for as long as eight years despite cabinet reshuffles.

[98] Huffman, Creating a Public : People and the Press in Meiji Japan, op. cit., p. 165.

[99] While there were thirty-seven clubs in Tokyo in 1925, this number rose to sixty clubs in 1936.

Further, the ties between the government and the press were reinforced by relationships developed at the personal level, through which more and more politicians became editors and journalists, and vice versa.[100]

As the Japanese government undertook a course of colonial expansion, it revived prior press censorship on all news items connected with the military by issuing a special Emergency Imperial Ordinance.[101] Furthermore, all matters affecting the Imperial Household were subjected to close scrutiny, and defamation against the Imperial family (*fukeizai*) would receive criminal conviction. Any publications with negative references to any members of the Imperial Family would be suspended, and their editors would be jailed.[102] The government also commenced what Mitchell called "a relentless campaign of harassment"[103], by using techniques of surveillance, appeals to patriotism, intimidation and assaults.[104] For instance, *Asahi*'s founder, Murayama Ryôhei, was reportedly attacked by a right-wing group for printing articles about the 1918 rice riots in his *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, which supposedly disturbed public peace.[105] Following

By 1939, there were as many as eighty-four clubs. See Mizuno Takeya, "*Kisha kurabu kanren-shi* " (History Related to the Reporters' Club), *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô* 1995, 13, pp. 58-9.

[100] Kawabe Kisaburo, The Press and Politics in Japan: A Study of the Relation between the Newspaper and the Political Development in Japan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1921). Kawabe notes, for example, that Ki Inukai, the leader of the Nationalist Party (*Kokumin-tô*), a former Minister of Education, Katsundo Minoura, and Yukio Ozaki (both leaders of *Kenseikai* who also held ministerial posts) all worked for the *Yûbin Hôchi Shimbun*, while Seiji Hayagawa, an ex-vice speaker of the House of Representatives, and Tokitoshi Takemori, an ex-Minister of Finance, were also ex-journalists.

[101] According to the Article 3 of the Meiji Constitution, the Emperor could issue 'Emergency Imperial Ordinances' to maintain public peace or to avoid disasters resulting from such situations. These 'Emergency Imperial Ordinances' were similar to the Marshal Law, and they were issued by the Cabinet in the name of the Emperor. Okudaira Yasuhirô, Political Censorship in Japan From 1931 to 1945 (Pennsylvania: Institute of Legal Research, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), pp. 8-9.

[102] *The Twenty-sixth Century*, an English publication, alleged a charge of forgery against Prince Ito and Count Hijikata, minister of Imperial Household, saying that the imperial seal had been wrongfully used. The charge had never been investigated but the paper was suspended and its printing equipment was seized as a consequence. Harry Emerson Wildes, Social Currents in Japan: With Special References to the Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 118.

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] Even though, the samurais who attacked Murayama were later arrested, they escaped imprisonment. Instead, Murayama was obliged to temporarily retire from the presidency of *Asahi* as a means of showing repugnance to the liberalness of his paper. Harry Emerson Wildes, Social Currents in Japan: With Special Reference to the Press (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 111; Uchigawa Yoshimi and Arai Naoyuki, *Nihon no jaanarizumu: taishû no kokoro o tsukanda ka* (Japanese Journalism: has it captured the spirit of the masses?), 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Yûhikaku, 1997), p. 57; Daba Hiroshi, *Daishimbunsha (Big Newspaper*

the rice riots, the government promulgated the Law to Control Radical Social Movements (*Kageki Shakai Undô Torishimari Hô*), which included a clause specifically dealing with socialist propaganda.[106]

The subsequent government also initiated the 'banning an article' system as a framework of extralegal control. This system was aimed at preventing newspapers from printing any comments on topics covered by the ban. According to Mitchell, the 'banning an article order system' had three categories of orders: firstly, an 'instruction' (*shitatsu*), or an order sent out to publishers reminding that if anything was published on a specific subject it would be prohibited; secondly, a 'warning' (*keikoku*)[107], or a threat of probable prohibition; and lastly, a 'consultation' (*kondan*), or administrative advice not to publish on certain subjects.[108]

Although these orders carried no penalties, the publishers and editors in the late Taishô and early Shôwa eras chose to follow these administrative techniques.[109] As a result of the state's enactment of repressive laws, coupled with the extralegal efforts to exert control over the press, the press failed to act as the government's watchdog. The extent of the failure of the press to accurately reflect the situation in the Japanese society of that time was aptly summed up in Wildes' comment:

> Domestic news, thus closely supervised, is thoroughly untrustworthy,

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Companies) (Tokyo: Hamano Shuppan, 1996), pp. 84-9.

[106] Okudaira Yasuhirô argued that this piece of legislation was used not only to restrain 'socialist activities, but also to suppress 'democratic thought". Okudaira Yasuhirô, Political Censorship in Japan From 1931 to 1945, (Pennsylvania: Institute of Legal Research, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), p. 11; Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-1.

[107] The use of warnings was the most extensive. During the depression years of 1929-1932, at least twenty-three warnings about the coverage of the bank failures were issued. There were nine warnings on *lèse majesté* offenses following the assassination attempt on the Crown prince in 1923, and seven warnings to silence on the reports on the pursuit of Communist suspects. See Gregory Kasza, The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 33.

[108] Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 236. Consultations could be done through telephone calls, individual interviews, or group meetings arranged in conference halls or private restaurant rooms. According to Kasza, most of these consultation sessions were held in secret, and their contents were absolutely confidential. See also Gregory Kasza, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[109] Okudaira Yasuhirô, for example, mentioned that, on occasion, newspaper writers avoided using words like 'dictatorship, proletariat, bourgeoisie, capitalism, socialism, communism, and so on', and replaced them with 'X' marks. For instance, instead of 'communism', 'XXXXXXXXX' was inserted, noting that the number of Xs corresponded to the number of letters in the word. In one occasion, a journalist managed to fill a whole page with 'Xs' without any other letter. Okudaira Yasuhirô, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

because no perfect picture is presented of conditions in Japan. Neither the Japanese themselves nor foreigners can learn the truth about the Island Empire from the press...Within Japan itself the national solidarity is weakened by the failure of the press to give the full appreciation of the existing situations.[110]

Subsequent to the failed ultra-nationalist *coup d'état* on February 26, 1936,[111] new censorship mechanisms came into force. The promulgation of the Extraordinary Control Law for Seditious Literature Bill (*Fuon bunsho torishimari hôan*) was specifically designed to punish journals and publication filled with seditious articles.[112] The Cabinet Information Committee (*Naikaku jôhô iinkai*) was also established,[113] as was the government's *Domei Tsûshinsha*, a news agency designed to counterbalance 'anti-Japan propaganda', and to centralize and monopolize news media.[114] What is interesting here is how the government also incorporated certain extralegal actions to pressure the press into playing a more positive role in the war effort. One of the extralegal actions that proved extremely effective was the control of the paper supply, which was tantamount to forcing 'voluntary liquidation' among Japanese newspaper publishers.[115] After it had been introduced, a number of daily newspapers dropped

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[110]   Harry Emerson Wildes, Social Currents in Japan: With Special Reference to the Press (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 131.

[111]   Also known as "*ni niroku jiken*". The militarists who organized the *coup* also attacked the Tokyo Office of *Asahi Shimbun*, causing it to miss the evening edition. Komatsubara Hisao, in John A. Lent (ed.), Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1982), p. 106.

[112]   For example, anyone who distributed the so-called "seditious materials" was subject to a fine of up to three hundred yen. Richard Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

[113]   It later evolved into the Information Bureau (*Jôhô kyoku*) with members including representatives from the Army, Navy, Communication, Home and Foreign Ministries undertaking the duties of writing a government propaganda, and censoring publications.

[114]   *Ibid.*, pp.281-2; See also Uchigawa Yoshimi and Arai Naoyuki, *Nihon no jaanarizumu: taishû no kokoro o tsukandaka* (Japanese Journalism: has it captured the spirits of the mass audiences?), 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Yûhikaku, 1997), p. 69.

[115]   Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 305. This strategy involved three steps. Firstly, publishers were ordered to voluntarily reduced the number of their editions on the grounds that material resources had to be preserved, and the imported paper materials were rationed among the publications. Secondly, the authorities called for a policy of only one daily per prefecture (*ikken isshi shugi*). Lastly, the authorities introduced the franchising system to the newspaper publication. The number of dailies were further reduced as franchises to publish were awarded only to national (*Asahi, Mainichi*, and *Yomiuri-Hôchi*), bloc (*Nichi Nihon Shimbun* in Fukuoka, *Chûbu Nihon Shimbun* in Nagoya, *Tôkyô Shimbun* in Tokyo, *Hokkaidô Shimbun* in Hokkaido), and local papers in their respective prefectures. Press amalgamation was intensified with the sharing of circulation between the national and local press, in which the latter received bulk circulation as well as printing press from national papers. As a result of this forced amalgamation, the Big Three national papers - *Asahi, Mainichi*, and *Yomiuri* - were able to multiply their circulation, and accumulated wealth well into the postwar years. See Uchigawa Yoshimi and Arai Naoyuki, *Nihon no jaanarizumu: taishû no kokoro o tsukandaka* (Japanese Journalism: has it captured the spirits of the mass audiences?), 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Yûhikaku, 1997), p. 80.

sharply from 1,200 in 1937 to a mere 55 in 1943, as most of them amalgamated and some permanently closed.[116] Other extralegal controls the government frequently pursued at a personal level included *kondankai* (consultation meetings) and *naimen shidô* (private guidance).[117] These *kondankai* and *naimen shidô* were largely implemented through *kisha kurbu*, and became recognized as institutionalized features of press controls during the war years (1937-1945).[118]

News and political information was further monopolized and suppressed by the introduction of new press laws,[119] and the development of national press policy associations to oversee the reporters' clubs. These associations included *Nihon Shimbun Renmei* (Japan Newspapers League), established in 1941, and *Nihon Shimbun-kai* (Japan Newspapers Association), created in 1942.[120] The Newspapers Association took over the responsibility of imposing sanctions on journalists who violated the club's

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116   *Ibid.*

117   For example, editors of Tokyo's seven leading dailies and the one wire service (*Domei Tsûshinsha*) met weekly with officials, who pressured the journalist to follow the government's 'Principles for the Guidance of Newspapers' issued in 1938. One of the principles, for example, read that "In writing any account, whether concerned with politics, economics, communities, or diplomacy, the editor needs to consider the following elements: its influence on the minds of the soldiers at the front; its influence on the mind of those at home; its impact upon foreign ministries; its influence on the newly established Government of China". Okudaira Yasuhirô, Political Censorship in Japan From 1931 to 1945, (Pennsylvania: Institute of Legal Research, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), p. 25.

118   See Chapter two: The Press : The Consultation System, in Gregory Kasza, The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 168-193.

119   Richard Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp.321-334. Toward the end of the war, press policy was exacerbated by the Emergency Law for Control of Speech, Publication, Assembly and Association, and so forth (*Genron Shuppan Shûkan Kessha nado Rinji Torishimari Hô*) promulgated in 1941, and the Publication Business Ordinance (*Shuppan Jigyô Rei*) issued in 1943. The former laws directly targeted at any heterodox opinion by giving the authorities a unilateral power to withdraw publication permission at will. The latter law forced journalists and editors to register, and editors were required to have professional licenses.

120   Mizuno Takeya, "*Kisha kurabu kanren-shi* " (History Related to the Reporters' Club), *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô 1995 (1995 Annual Report of Japan's Newspaper Association Research Center),* (13), p. 59. After the Japan Newspaper League was established, the number of Japanese clubs attached to governmental offices was reduced to a ratio of one per government office, i.e. from 30 down to 18. The name of the reporters' clubs were also changed uniformly to the name of each ministry, with the phrase "*kisha kai*" (reporters' association) added. In addition, the club rules were also redesigned in ways that ensured the permeation of the ultra-nationalist governmental policies through whole newspaper industry. The Newspaper Business Ordinance (*Shimbun Jigyô Rei*) issued in December 1941, established regulations of *kisha kurabu* , or *kurabu kiyaku*. Within each club, there was also established reporters' rules or *kisha kitei*. The former association was initiated by the publishers and editors of the major national newspapers to work with government officials to bring the press clubs under joint control, and to undertake a key role in the paper rationing scheme; while, the latter replaced the former as a government backed organization which regulated the number of *kisha kurabu* by changing the basis of membership from individual to company basis, and limited membership to ten big news organizations.

regulations. These sanctions included warnings, suspension, expulsion, or removal from the reporters' list.[121] (Notably, similar types of sanctions still exist today, though they are generally imposed by either the source or the individual club.) By 1945, only clubs attached to the military sections were functioning because all the government news and announcements came straight from the Information Bureau.[122] Collectively suppressed by the purviews of both legal and extralegal control mechanisms, the Japanese press at the peak of the Pacific war could never question the course of events and could only serve as the government's tools, merely publishing official 'announcements', and 'directives' as a consequence.

2.4 Revocation of Censorship and the Re-emergence of Partisan Press

The political and economic development in both countries has had substantial effects on the development of the press and political journalism. In Thailand, the political factionalism that has characterized the Thai politics since 1932, and strong linkages between the press and certain powerful political parties or individuals set the stage for a vicious circle of extremely partisan journalism. This trend was highly predominant until the years of the economic boom in the late 1980s when the stock price and advertising revenue replaced private subsidies as a major source of revenue. For Japan, ideological differences in the press during the pre-war years were possible because, as mentioned previously, the Meiji Constitution guaranteed "freedom of speech". However, strict censorship imposed on the press, and vicious attacks on the left-wing press during the early war years suppressed all radical thoughts in Japanese journalism. After the repeal of all strict wartime censorship and guidelines imposed by the Occupation Force, the Japanese press became polarized. The leading national newspapers, in particular, outspokenly represented three ideological positions - left, middle, and right. Yet this extreme polarization was later weakened by the 'catch-all' characteristics of the Japanese press that were induced by excessive competition among the major newspapers.

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[121]   *Ibid*, p. 60.
[122]   *Ibid*.

Thailand during the late 1970s, the strict censorship decrees, the proliferation of political parties, and the growing number of newspapers strengthened the connections between owners of the private press and military figures and political parties. Indeed, newspapers were sporadically utilized for individual power struggles and survival.[123] When former General Chatichai Choonhavan became Thailand's first elected Prime Minister in 1988, the Thai economy grew at a double-digit rate for three consecutive years.[124] Newspapers flourished so much that the number of the dailies increased threefold. Within this booming democratic atmosphere, the three journalist associations went on a crusade to demand more press freedom and the abolition of Decree No. 42, the law that gave the government arbitrary power to close down newspapers without providing grounds for appeal.[125] A number of newspapers ran resolutions, statements, and highly critical editorials. While this campaign was being carried out, a number of local newspapers were reprimanded, and the importing of several foreign journals such as *South China Morning Post* and *The Asian Wall Street Journal* was forbidden.[126] The Chatichai administration threatened to have the audit office examine the books of strident newspapers, and proposed a new Press Act to replace the Press Act of

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[123]   Kamphon Watcharapon, the owner of *Thai Rath*, for example, reputedly utilized his linkages with military and other power centers to increase the popularity of his newspapers during this period. M.R. Kukrit Promoj continued to run his *Siam Rath* to air his royalist stance. Samak Sundaravej, who split from the Democrat Party to form the Prachakorn Thai Party in 1979, also ran a newspaper, the *Daily Mirror* as his political mouthpiece. Banharn Silapa-archa, a former Prime Minister and the leader of the Chat Thai Party, bought an interest in *Ban Muang*, a minor daily. A retired naval officer associated with powerful military figures, Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, owns a stake in *Naew Na*, a nationwide newspaper which is famous for its controversial headlines. The *Matichon* Group, established in the early 1980s, which runs a daily paper, a current affairs journal and a business paper, is also believed to have a direct link with the powerful Class Five military clique. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thailand Economy and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 371.

[124]   Michael Falkus, "Thai Industrialization: An Overview", Paper presented at the conference on The Making of the Fifth Tiger?: Thailand's Industrialization and Its Consequences, The Australian National University, December 7-9, 1992.

[125]   The three main press associations include the Press Association of Thailand, established in 1941, the Reporters' Association of Thailand, which was established in 1952, and the Journalists' Federation of Thailand, which was set up in 1965. In addition, there are about ten small affiliated professional associations, such as the Entertainment Reporters' Association, the Crime Reporters' Association, and so on, plus two provincial associations. All these associations fight for more freedom of expression and protect the journalists' welfare. However, the activities within have been limited to debate. Interview with Chutima Buranachada, The President of the Reporters' Association of Thailand, April 28, 1998.

[126]   In 1989, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* published an article suggesting that Thai Buddhism, the official religion, might be tainted with venality, and that its leaders might be engaging in questionable financial practices. In May 1990, the journal also published an article supporting the abolishment of Decree No. 42.

1941.[127] This proposed Act was, however, viewed by the press as being filled with a number of undemocratic provisions. One provision was to allow the establishment of a "Press Closure Committee".[128] It can be clearly seen that the Chatichai government relentlessly attempted to retain the state's power to close the newspaper. The three press associations of Thailand again launched vigorous campaigns, and finally blocked the launch of this new undemocratic Act.

The confrontation between the press and the government intensified when Decree No. 42 was used to close down *Naew Na* on the charge that its headline, "Diplomat Arrested for Murdering their Own", was "faulty, misleading and endangering the diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Thailand".[129] Yet Wassana has forcefully argued that *Naew-Na* was closed because of political reasons, particularly its oppositional stance against the government.[130] 'Extralegal control' was also used to threaten the paper in many ways, for example, by bombing the house of *Naew Na*'s famous columnist, and by forcing the advertisers to withdraw.[131] The closure of *Naew Na* was obviously a wrong step, as the publicity and news coverage about the closure in both domestic and international media directed public attention towards the continued existence of the authoritarian decree.[132] In this instance, the government lost the contest to control political information as it could not pass the new Press Act, and had to

127   Sarasin Viraphol, "Media and Politics in Thailand: Some Strictly Personal Observations on the Role of the Media in Political Development in Thailand", in C.G. Hernandez and E. Pfemming (eds.), Media and Politics in Asia: Trends, Problems, and Prospects (Manila: University of Philippines, 1991), p. 73.

128   Another provision stated that all columnists must state their real names in their articles. See Julsarn nak-khao (Reporter's Journal), 1990, p. 11, 14.

129   This unsolved murder case involved the mysterious killings of three Saudi Arabian diplomats. The authorities claimed that using the word "diplomat or *toot*" in the headline implicated the ambassador and this had strained diplomatic relations to the point where the Saudi Arabian embassy refused to issue visas to Thai contract workers. See details of the case and the closure of *Naew Na* in Wassana Nanuam, "*Por.Ror. 42 kab kan sung pid nungsuphim Naew Na*" (The Declaration No.42 and the Closure of *Naew Na*), Unpublished Bachelor Degree Sub-Thesis, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Thammasat University, 1990.

130   *Ibid.*, p.105.

131   Suphap Kleekajai's comments in The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wikrutakarn seumolchon Thai phrutsapakhom 2535 (The Crisis of the Thai Media May 1992)* (Bangkok: Khled Thai, 1992), p. 76.

132   Prime Minister Chatichai was frequently cornered by foreign reporters when visiting overseas countries, and asked questions regarding Declaration No.42. His fear for foreign journalists' questions was supposedly one reason why he hurriedly signed a bill to abolish Declaration No.42 just before he flew to meet then English Prime Minister, Magaret Thatcher. See Wassana, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 91.

finally revoke the Decree No. 42 in January 1991.[133]

However, the freedom that the press enjoyed was short lived, because a coup organized by a group of military generals called 'the National Peace Keeping Council', or NPKC, overthrew the Chatichai government only a month later. The NPKC immediately declared Announcement No. 14, which gave it authority to pre-censor any potentially subversive news, as well as temporarily or permanently close newspapers, which published uncensored items. Yet this Announcement was soon revoked because it seemed unlikely that all editors could submit their pages before publication. Furthermore, the press seemed to refrain from criticizing the coup organizers in the beginning because they were convinced that the Chatichai government was inept and corrupt, and that they should wait and see what the military would do to break the vicious cycle of corrupt politics.[134]

However, the press started criticizing the Council seriously, especially when the NPKC did not deliver on its promise of an elected Prime Minister from a 1992 general election, and General Suchinda Kraprayoon, one of the NPKC leaders, became Prime Minister.[135] The NPKC wanted to curb the obstreperous press by announcing changes to the libel laws in February 1992. A minimum penalty of two hundred thousand baht ($A 10,000) was replaced by four million baht ($A 200,000) for those convicted of defamatory charges.[136] Even so, the new law never materialized, as the press and intellectuals launched a campaign opposing it, and more importantly, the appointed

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[133] *Naew Na* returned to be published under its original name on December 5, 1990.

[134] The appointment as prime minister of the distinguished civilian diplomat, administrator, and businessman Anand Panyarachun, and his appointment of an interim cabinet consisting of outstanding technocrats, scholars, and senior officials, were signs that a new kind of coup d'état had occurred. Political parties were retained, and a national legislative assembly was established to arrange for a new constitution and elections. The only newspaper that disagreed and attacked the coup was *the Nation*. See Wassana, *op. cit.*

[135] Mr. Narong Wongwan who was a leader of a pro-military political party with the NPKC's support, *Samakkhi Tham*, and won an election on 23 March 1992 was alleged by the foreign press to have been involved in the illegal drug trade. The Thai press followed suite, which made Narong unacceptable for the post. See discussion on the 1992 election and the political situation which led to the May Crisis in Clark Neher, "Democratization in Thailand", Asian Affairs: An American Review, 1995, (21), p. 195.

[136] Manich Sooksomchitre, "*Seriphap: sing thi tong to-soo talod wela"*, (Freedom: Whatt We Always Have to Fight For), *Wan nak-khao 5 minakhom 2536 (The Reporter's Day March 5, 1993)* (Bangkok: The Reporters Association of Thailand, 1993), p. 66.

Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun declined to have the new legislation promulgated in the *Royal Gazette*.[137]

During the May crisis of 1992, in which the massive anti-Suchinda pro-democracy demonstrations were attacked and hundreds of civilians killed, the military regime used its 'extralegal' control to maintain self-censorship. A number of reporters were harassed, intimidated and attacked, or received death threats. Also the NPKC attempted to impose informal Martial Law by forewarning the press not to report attacks on 17 May 1992, and ordering newspapers not to publish any materials that might 'inflame the unrest'.[138] However, the warning came a little too late, as most of the local papers had already been printed, except the English language *Bangkok Post*, which left blank space on its front page for fear of reprisal. Later, three orders of closure were issued and separately sent out to *Phujadkarn Rai-wan*, *Naew Na*, and the *Nation* -- the three newspapers that gave full coverage to the crisis.[139] However, these orders were repealed on the same day following the appearance on television of King Bhumipol, who urged national reconciliation.

In the aftermath of the crisis, public discourse focused entirely on the difference in the accuracy of news reports between state-controlled broadcasting media and the private-owned press.[140] The print media in this case was seen as performing an essential watchdog role. They became information resources, increasing public participation in the political process, and inducing political change. In contrast, the broadcast media -- both television and radio -- were merely considered 'servants of the state'. Since then, the Thai press have gained much more freedom and credibility than before. The

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137   Duncan McCargo, "The Buds of May", <u>Index on Censorship</u>, 1993, 22(4), p. 3.

138   On the next morning, most of the Thai press covered the severe attacks on the demonstrators extensively, in contrast to the state-controlled broadcasting media in which news was mostly distorted and heavily censored. See detailed discussion in Reporters' Association of Thailand, "*Wikrutakan seumolchon Thai phrutsaphakhom 2535*" (<u>The Crisis of the Thai Media May 1992</u>) (Bangkok: Khled Thai, 1992); Also Duncan McCargo, "The Buds of May", <u>Index on Censorship</u>, 1993, 22(4), pp. 3-8.

139   *Ibid.*

140   Reporters' Association of Thailand, "*Seumolchon thai: nueng pi lung het kan phruthsaphatamil*" (The Thai Mass Media: One Year After the May Crisis), <u>Jod-mai khao (The Reporters' Association Newsletter)</u>, May 1993, pp. 2-4.

subsequent boom in the print media with its emphasis on politics, was characterized by launches of new publications such as *Siam Post*, a daily newspaper, which dedicated much of its columns on political issues, and three weekly political magazines - *Naew Na Sudsapda*, *Nation Sudsapda*, and *Khao Tai*. Daily newspapers with large circulations such as *Matichon* and *Khao Sod* also began printing evening issues.[141]

It can be argued that market forces emerging in the late 1980s in Thailand were an impetus behind a shift away from a partisan press and a demand for more freedom of the press. Increased competition did turn the newspaper market into 'a marketplace of ideas', in which buyers and sellers of news and information bargained and competed. Yet newspapers with high circulation such as *Thai Rath*, and *Daily News* are still family businesses that are owned and operated by ten to fifteen shareholders.[142] However, the boom in the economy motivated capital-driven large publishing groups such as the *Bangkok Post* group, the *Nation* group, the *Manager group*, the *Watachak* group and the *Matichon* group to go public by selling their shares in the Bangkok stock exchange in the late 1980s. As a result of the unprecedented boom in stock trades and high advertising revenue which comprised about ninety per cent of the total of newspaper revenue, newspaper publishing businesses became a very high growth industry, and were expanded extensively by a large amount of borrowed liquid capital. The collapse of the baht following the economic crisis in 1997 led to immediate closures among some of these publishing groups.[143] Further deficits in cash flows and substantial decreases in advertising revenue also forced other publishing groups to lay off reporters or face foreign takeovers. The *Bangkok Post*, for example, closed down its comic section and

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141   *Ibid.*
142   Watcharapol family still owns and manages *Thai Rath*, and the Hetrakul family maintains its ownership and management of *Daily News*.
143   The *Manager* group owned by Sondhi Limthongkul is a good case in point. In 1983, Sondhi started *Manager Monthly*, a business magazine to capture urban market readers. By 1986, the group launched a weekly, and a daily newspaper, called the *Manager Daily*. In the early 1990s, Sondhi launched *Asia Inc*, a glossy business magazine reminiscent of *Forbes* covering the Asia-Pacific market. He also published *Asia Times*, a daily newspaper covering Asia, somewhat akin to Robert Maxwell's *European*. Sondhi's long vision in expanding his lucrative media business from his Bangkok-based publication to a regional level has earned him a title of 'Mister Globalization'. However, the 1997 economic turmoil starting made Sondhi's dream fallen apart. Since he relied heavily on the capital and revenue derived from the stock exchange and overseas borrowings, the drastic plunge in the share prices and the baht value left Sondhi no choice but to close his *Asia Times*, and *Financial Day*. See *Matichon Sudsapda*, July 1, 1997, pp. 68-9.

sold its Thai language daily, *Siam Post*. *The Nation* laid off some of its newly-recruited staff, and had to allow foreign investors to own a bigger stake in their companies for purely economic reasons.[144]

In comparison to the Thai case, in which the pressure to abolish the stringent press controls emerged from within the press industry, the eradication of restrictive press controls in Japan came from outside pressure -- the US Occupation Force.[145] Two months after Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, General Douglas MacArthur issued a series of policies concerning the press. These included the abolition of all pre-war and wartime restrictive press legislation,[146] particularly the 1909 Press Ordinance, and the deletion of Article 74 and 76 of the Criminal Code detailing punishment for the crime of *lèse majesté*. The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) also declared recognition of free speech and freedom of the press in the post-war Constitution.[147]

In contrast to the allied powers in Germany, who banned *all* media, the SCAP allowed the continuity of the media operations from the wartime years with the exception of the *Domei Tsûshinsha*, which was considered a major producer of propaganda machine. It was disbanded soon after the occupation, and replaced by two separate news agencies: the *Kyôdô* news service to serve general dailies, and the *Jiji* news agency to supply economic and financial news. SCAP also dismissed the

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144   Interview with Kavi Chongkitthavorn, Executive Editor, *The Nation*, April 28, 1998.

145   For useful materials see William J. Coughlin, Conquered Press: The MacArthur Era in Japanese Journalism (California: Pacific Books, 1952); Monica Braw, The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1991); Marlene J.Mayo, "Civil Censorship and Media Control in Early Occupied Japan: From Minimum to Stringent Surveillance" in R. Wolfe (ed.), American as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in Germany and Japan (Carbondale: Southern Ilinois University Press, 1984); Ariyama Teruo, *Senryôki medeia-shi kenkyû: jiyû to tôsei 1945 nen-* (History of Mass Media in the Allied Occupied Japan: Freedom and Control, 1945~) (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobô, 1996); and Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Senryôki medeia bunseki* (An Analysis of Media in the Allied Occupied Japan) (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1996).

146   There were altogether twelve press laws which were abolished by the SCAP. See details in Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Senryôki medeia bunseki* (An Analysis of Media in the Allied Occupied Japan) (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1996), pp. 355-6.

147   Article 21 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan stipulates that:
(1) Freedom of assembly and associations as well as speech, press, and all other forms of expression are guaranteed.
(2) No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated.

Information Bureau of the war years and assigned the Civil Censorship Department

(CCD) to take full responsibility for eliminating militaristic indoctrination in the

Japanese media, and the Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) to promote the

dissemination of democratic ideas.[148] One of the purposes of the Allied Occupied Force

in governing Japan was to promote democracy and free speech as implicated in the

repeated emphases of an imposition of "minimum control" in SCAP original press

policies.[149]

Yet both pre and post-publication censorship was extensively imposed on

newspapers,[150] with penalties ranging from warnings and the suspension of publication,

to jailing publishers and editors with years of hard labor.[151] On one occasion, *Asahi*

Shimbun was suspended for forty-eight hours for slanting news reports. According to

SCAP' claims, the publication had minimized Japan's war guilt and was critical of the

United States and of occupation authorities.[152] Another reason might have well been the

close connection between executives of *Asahi Shimbun* and the imperialist government

during the war, when the Vice President of the paper was made a cabinet minister

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148   SCAP later established another unit called the "Civil Information and Education Section" or
CI&E (*Minkan Jôhô Kyôiku Kyoku*) to undertake and plan media policy which would promote
democracy and propagate the Occupied Forces' messages. Marlene Mayo further argues that
SCAP's media policy was an essential part of the larger "Cultural Foreign Policy, in which
media, particularly short wave radio broadcasting, were used to promote a favorable image
abroad of American life and institutions". See Ariyama Teruo, *Senryôki medeia-shi kenkyû: jiyû
to tôsei 1945 Nen- (History of Mass Media in the Allied Occupied Japan: Freedom and
Control, 1945~)* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobô, 1996), pp. 56-60; Marlene J. Mayo, "Civil
Censorship and Media Control in Early Occupied Japan: From Minimum to Stringent
Surveillance" in R. Wolfe (ed.), *American as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in
Germany and Japan* (Carbondale: Southern Ilinois University Press, 1984), p. 264 ; See also
Monica Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: An American Censorship in Occupied Japan*
(New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), pp. 34-6.

149   Phrases like "hitsuyô na saijô-gen no hani" (range of the necessarily minimum control) became
MacArthur's rhetoric in his media policy. See Ariyama Teruo, *Senryôki medeia-shi kenkyû:
jiyû to tôsei 1945 nen- (History of Mass Media in the Allied Occupied Japan: Freedom and
Control, 1945~)* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobô, 1996), p. 35.

150   The CCD emphasized the importance of pre-censorship: two copies had to be presented to the
Censor Board, and one would be returned to the publisher for printing. If parts of the copy
had been deleted, the publisher had to reformat their copy to make the deletions invisible.
Notably, this was totally different from previous pre-censorship practices, in which publications
were allowed to publish articles with white space, or with cross marks. Uchigawa and Arai have
noted that between March 1946 and February 1947 there were as many as 20 articles
disapproved and 64 articles deleted from the *Asahi Shimbun* by way of pre-censorship. See
Uchigawa and Arai, *Nihon no Jaanarizumu (Japanese Journalism),* p. 100.

151   Thirteen cases were trialed during the occupation. Some of these trials passed sentences to
journalists, or editors of newspapers, whereas some were punished by being put into hard
labour. Monica Braw, *op. cit.,* pp. 86-7.

152   Marlene Mayo, *op. cit.,* pp. 296-7.

heading the Information Bureau just before the end of the war.

In response to the attacks from the press, SCAP designed a ten-point Press Code prohibiting the criticism of US authorities, as well as prohibition of confidential information regarding the atomic bomb and its effects on the victims.[153] SCAP, however, did not eliminate the wartime controls over paper allocation. Rather, the scheme was seen as an effective way to control the obstinate old-establishment press.[154] SCAP also had an essential role in restructuring the internal organization of such elite publications as *Asahi* and *Yomiuri*. When strikes and confrontations erupted between the press union and publishers, the union demanded that those who represented the merger between the imperialist government and the Japanese news industry during the wartime years should be ousted. The Allied Force supported the union by banning the following individuals from working in the media industry: Furuno Inosuke, President of *Domei Tsûshinsha*; Shôriki Matsutarô, owner of *Yomiuri-Hôchi*; and Ogata Taketora, Vice-President of *Asahi Shimbun*, who had been head of the Information Bureau in 1944.[155] A famous Japanese press historian, Yamamoto Taketoshi, claimed that the US occupation brought a revolution to the Japanese press industry, whereby eighty per cent of the whole industry changed, particularly in the area of structure and administration.[156]

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[153]   Monica Braw, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
        These ten points were:
        1) News must adhere strictly to the truth
        2) Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb public tranquility
        3) There shall be no false or destructive criticism of the Allied Powers
        4) There shall be no destructive criticism of the Allied Forces of Occupation and nothing which might invite mistrust or resentment of these troops.
        5) There shall be no mention or discussion of Allied troops movements unless such movements have been officially released.
        6) News stories must be factually written and completely devoid of editorial opinion.
        7) New stories shall not be colored to conform with any propaganda line.
        8) Minor details of any news stories must not be overemphasized.
        9) News stories must not stress or develop any propaganda line.
        10) In the makeup of the newspaper, no news story shall be given undue prominence for the purpose of establishing or developing any propaganda line.
[154]   Monica Braw, _The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan_ (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 83.
[155]   Ariyama Teruo, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[156]   Yamamoto Taketoshi, _Senryôki medeia bunseki (An Analysis of Media in the Allied Occupied Japan)_ (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1996), pp. 358-9.

One of the most important activities of the Occupied Allied Force in Japan was the purge of persons regarded as being in association with the militarists. This purge continued until 1952 when the occupation ended, and extended to cover journalists, editors, as well as media owners who previously promoted imperialistic views. However, with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 -- a development which indicated the present threat of communism -- the CCD diverted its attention to publications linked to communism. The CCD suspended and closed down communist publications and expelled communists from positions in the media industry.[157] In particular, SCAP ordered a thirty-day suspension on *Akahata* (Red Flag), a newspaper of the Japanese Communist Party, on the day after the outbreak of Korean War. The grounds for suspension were that its articles instigated subversive feelings, and injured public tranquility, safety, and welfare.[158]

Despite its attempt to control political information by applying legal controls to some extent, the Occupation Force seemed to have slowly recognized the extent to which the successive extralegal controls, such as the system of *kisha kurabu*, encouraged the practice of self-censorship and blocked the free flow of political information.[159] A report on the *kisha kurabu* completed by the CI&E in the early years of the occupation revealed that the reporters' club was having a negative influence on the fairness of the Japanese news reports.[160] Reforms of the *kisha kurabu* were then imposed by the CI&E. These included reforms imposed immediately after an incident involving the Diet Club banning of the entire crew from *Yomiuri-Hôchi* newspaper.[161]

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[157]   Marlene Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

[158]   Yamamoto Taketoshi, <u>Senryôki medeia bunseki (An Analysis of Media in the Allied Occupied Japan)</u> (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1996), pp. 439.

[159]   As well reflected in a statement made by Major Imboden, a CI&E officer: "Any action by anybody, official, or non-official, which denies access by any legitimate newspaper to governmental news sources cannot be reconciled with the democratic concept of the press...It is a disappointment to the Press and Publication division that the Japanese press...has failed to use its power to make impossible of any such restriction...". William J. Coughlin, <u>Conquered Press: The MacArthur Era in Japanese Journalism</u> (California: Pacific Books, 1952), p. 85.

[160]   Yamamoto Taketoshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-1.

[161]   In May 1946, a Vice-President of the newspaper joined a hunger strike embarked upon by Japan's Communist Party by pitching a tent in the courtyard of the Prime Minister's official residence, and demanding that the Prime Minister feed them. Although the strike was over within 3 days, the Vice-President and his entire crews from *Yomiuri-Hôchi* were expelled from the Diet club on the ground that their action impaired the dignity and the honour of the club. See William Coughlin, *op. cit.*

One such reform involved refocusing the reporters' club so that it merely promoted friendship and professional competency (*shimboku dantai to nari*) and abolished its exclusiveness (*haita teki seikaku o shômetsu*).[162] Another major reform was the establishment in July 1946 of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (*Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai no Henshû Iinkai*, NSK), which was aimed at "elevating ethical standards in reporting and protecting and promoting the media's common interests."[163]

Underlying these reforms was the intention of the Occupation Force to counteract the increasing conflicts and movements between union-dominated newspaper employees and publishers with regards to editorial rights. In 1948, the NSK adopted 'the Statement on Assurance on Editorial Rights', which identified that the editorial rights of a newspaper rested with its manager and managing editor.[164] The NSK was also expected to further restructure the reporters' clubs by repealing such rules as not allowing non-members to attend press conferences, the unjustified dismissal of members, and the suspension of attendance at press conferences. The Occupation Forces demonstrated a real interest in changing the *status quo* by renaming the *kisha kai* attached to the Diet, or the so-called "*naikaku kisha-kai*" (Cabinet's reporter association), the *Nagata kurabu* in accordance with its location, and designing a new rule that opened the club to non-members.[165] In response to the Occupation Force's push for change, the NSK announced in 1949 that the principles of *kisha kurabu* would be, first and foremost, organs for mutual friendship, and they would not be involved in news-gathering activities.

These principles, however, were not strictly followed. Yamamoto has argued

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[162] Yamamoto Taketoshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 372-3.

[163] *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* (Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), NSK Leaflet (Tokyo: NSK, 1998).

[164] The stand down of *Yomiuri-Hôchi* employees protesting against their unfair dismissal of a managing editor and his team, who were pro-communism, led to a violent riot between the staff and the publishers. This battle was of great concerns for SCAP. See William Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[165] Within the same year, all *kisha kai* attached to important ministries and governmental agencies were dissolved and new *kisha kurabu* were formed. Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Senryôki medeia bunseki (An Analysis of Media in the Allied Occupied Japan)* (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1996), p. 372.

that all of these reforms were largely ignored by the new *kisha kurabu* and the NSK, as exemplified by a case in 1949. An *Asahi Shimbun* reporter was dismissed by a club in Hokkaido simply because he conducted his own newsgathering.[166] Had the US Occupation Force emphasized the abolition of extralegal control mechanisms, particularly the close consultation between the government sources and the reporters and the monopolization of news through the *kisha kurabu* system, then the goals of reforming the press industry might have been fully achieved. This was mainly because the system of *kisha kurabu* was subtly maintained, and not structurally transformed. As Mizuno observed, "a crucial reason behind this failure has been a gap between the principles and the practices of the reporters' club in reality which has been largely left open since the occupation period".[167] Indeed, this gap survived the occupation and persists in Japan today because it has been nurtured by the government's reward strategy maneuvered within the protective triangles of the established sources in the government, the elite newspapers, and the Japanese reporters by the system of the *kisha kurabu*.

Considering the lifting of repressive wartime controls imposed by the military states, the Japanese and Thai cases, however, were distinctively different. The degree of contestation between the state and the media in the struggle for control of information was heightened in Thailand, where the state and the media forcefully struggled over political information. The local press confronted with the state at many crucial political junctures, such as the press's crusade to abolish Decree No. 42 during the Chatichai administration, and its mobilization of public opposition against strict martial laws issued by the Suchinda regime. The Reporter's Association of Thailand also played a crucial role in campaigning for press freedom. In Japan, on the contrary, the lifting of controls of the wartime years was imposed from foreign agents at the top, and not by a struggle from below. However, the establishment of the NSK for the purpose of elevating media ethics backfired, as the NSK has turned out to be a major factor in

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[166]   *Ibid.*, p. 373.

[167]   Mizuno Takeya, "*Kisha kurabu kanren-shi* " (History Related to the Reporters' Club), *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô 1995 (1995 Annual Report of Japan's Newspaper Association Research Center)*, (13), p. 60.

gatekeeping and monopolizing political information through the system of *kisha kurabu*. Moreover, with the widespread practice of extralegal controls, the Japanese press at the end of the Occupation was well on its way to serve as the government's tool despite the repeal of legal controls.

Greater political pluralism in both countries in the following periods, however, seemed to encourage the press to perform a more active role. Since the May Crisis of 1992, Thailand has had four elected coalition governments. As the military withdrew from the political stage after the crisis, parliamentary discontinuity weakened the power of the state to contest the control of political information with the private press. The press indeed became an independent political actor. For example, it acted as a 'watchdog' by bringing about the downfall of the Chuan Leekpai's administration in 1995, because of its coverage of corruption allegations in Phuket's land reform scandals widely known as *Sor-Por-Kor 4-01*[168], and by exposing several corruption cases and alleging bribery in the purchase of the Swedish submarine during Banham's government (1995-6).[169] The press, through a higher level of engagement with the general public than ever before, also acted as an agenda-setter by advocating political reform at the top of national agenda. This paved the way for the drafting of a new Constitution.[170]

In the case of Japan, the political pluralism involving mass protests around the country following the end of the US Occupation promoted pluralism in the press. This

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[168]   Chuan's scheme was designed to give nontransferable land deeds to poor villagers who had long occupied and cultivated the land; however, it was first reported in *Thai Rath* that several businessmen, some with family ties with minister overseeing the scheme, could secure parts of the land which had high potential for tourism. *Thai Rath* traced the story every day for several months before other newspapers followed. Chuan government dissolved after its loss in the no-confidence debate on the issue in May 1995. Further detailed discussion see Bookhaaree Yeema, *Chuan Leekpai nai kham mue nungsuphim thai (Chuan Leekpai in the whims of the Thai press)* (Nonthaburi: Tang Duen, 1998); and Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, Thailand's Boom and Bust (Chiengmai: Silkworm Books, 1998), pp. 255-56.

[169]   The allegations were first made by a Swedish journalist who claimed that Banham's Chart Thai Party received money from a Swedish submarine manufacturers called Kockums. A number of Thai newspapers picked up the story; however, only a few of them investigated further. Most of them continued publishing comments on the original stories to keep the issue alive. One paper which paid a number of space on the issue, in particular, was *Siam Post*, which was sued a libel lawsuit by the Chart Thai Party. See details of the Kockums case in Duncan McCargo, "The International Media and the domestic political coverage of the Thai Press", Modern Asian Studies, 1999, 33(3), pp. 551-579.

[170]   This role of the press will be discussed as a case study in Chapter Five.

was exemplified in the split in ideological positions among the national dailies and the re-emergence of the right-wing and left-wing press. The right-wing press aligned itself with the LDP, big corporations, and farmers, whereas, the left-wing newspapers serve organized workers, students, progressive intellectuals, as well as Socialist and Communist Parties' members. The right-wing press included *Sankei* and *Yomiuri*, which tended to carry conservative and pro-establishment views. The left-wing press, such as *Asahi*, was critical of the government. *Asahi* successfully mobilized public opposition against the ruling Liberal Democratic Party at several political junctures: for instance, the Security Treaty Crisis in 1960, whereby the press mobilized a popular force in rallying against the government's security policies.[171] A similar role of the press in setting agenda, moulding public opinion, and influencing policy-making decision was also seen in the anti-pollution movements in 1970,[172] the anti-*shinkansen* (bullet train) movements in 1980-2,[173] and the exposure of the Recruit Scandal in 1988 and 1989.[174] However, the sharp ideological differences among the major press have increasingly been

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[171] See Edward D. Whittemore, <u>The Press in Japan Today...A Case Study</u> (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1961); and Chapter 5: The Press and the US-Japan Security Treaty Crisis in Jung Bock Lee, <u>The Political Character of the Japanese Press</u> (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1985).

[172] Magaret McKean, for example, forcefully argued that the press played a vital role in publicizing the mercury poisoning incidents in Minamata, Kumamoto prefecture, and cadmium poisoning in Toyama prefecture. The coverage of those pollution incidents was so extensive that it hastened the usually lengthy and time-consuming policy-making process, and the Environmental Bill was passed within an unprecedentedly short period of time. See Magaret McKean, "Pollution and Policymaking", in T.J. Pempel (ed.), <u>Policymaking in Contemporary Japan</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 201-38; See also Chapter nine: The Drive for Citizenship in N. Huddle and M. Reich (eds.), <u>Island of Dreams: Environmental Crisis in Japan</u> (Vermont: Schenleman Books, 1991).

[173] Shikansen's citizen movement emerged in Nagoya prefecture and Kita Ward in Saitama prefecture because of citizen concerns about two problems: noise and vibration pollution caused by the train, and compensation for residents evicted for the project. In this case, although the media, in particular the local press, was significant in mobilising the campaign participants, the media also brought about undesirable results such as exacerbating internal conflicts among the movement organizers. See details in David Earl Groth, "Media and Political Protest : The Bullet Train Movements", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds), <u>Media and Politics in Japan</u> (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 213-41.

[174] The Recruit Scandal started when an *Asahi* reporter at the Yokohama branch started an independent investigation on stories alleging that the Information Services and Real Estate Conglomerate Recruit Company and a subsidiary bought influence in government by giving cash and discounted stock to top political figures in the ruling LDP, high ranking bureaucrats and prominent businessmen. Scholars, however, think that the media over-sensationalized the issues, though the intention of disclosing the corruption is considered as those of the 'watchdog' at the beginning. See Chapter 1: "*Rikuruuto hôdô no meian*" (The Black and White of the reports on the Recruit Scandal) in Katsura Keiichi, <u>Gendai no shimbun (Newspapers at Present)</u>, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997); Also Yayama Tarô, "The Recruit Scandal: Learning from the Causes of Corruption", <u>Journal of Japanese Studies,</u> (1990), 16(1), pp. 93-114.

sidelined by the extreme competitiveness in the newspaper market, which has drawn the press away from strident polarization and moved it towards a central position of comparative inoffensiveness. The highly efficient and strong selling system of major newspapers based on home-delivery system carried out by sub-contractors[175] and the price-fixing system that allows readers to buy the same paper at the same price everywhere in Japan has prevented newspapers from holding a distinctive political stance or carrying investigative scoops.[176]

2.5 Democracy and the Return of Regulation

Despite the repeal of repressive controls, the elected governments in Thailand and Japan have continued to struggle for maintaining its level of political information control. The development of full-fledged democracies in both countries, which promised more freedom of speech, has however brought with it new forms of legal and extralegal controls. In Thailand, new coercive measures, which are widely used to curb the press, include the libel law and media-monitoring centers. The continued existence of the Thai Press Act of 1941 and the linkages between the press and individual politicians remain legal and extralegal factors that constrain the press' progressive watchdog role. In Japan, the imposition of legislation protecting sensitive state information and the systematic sanctions within *kisha kurabu* combine forces to create an environment most conducive for the press to confine itself to a role of governmental tool.

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[175]   These sub-contractors are sale and delivery agents, which are independent from the companies. Most are sole-agent shops handling a single company's publication. Their revenue come from delivery fees and inserting fees of leaflets and pamphlets into newspapers. As these shops are very competitive in getting subscribers, they induce subscribers by using incentives and discounts so much in a volume that these practices have ignited incentive war among the agents. By October 1997, 93.1 per cent of newspapers in Japan were home-delivered, 6.3 per cent were sold on stands, and 0.5 per cent were sold by other means. The industrial revenue breakdowns also show the heavy reliance on subscription sale. In 1996, 50.7 per cent of newspaper revenue come from sale, 36.2 per cent from advertising fees, and 13.1 per cent from other sources. See NSK, The Japanese Press 1998 (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 70, 83.

[176]   Since 1953, price-fixing for copyright works has been exempted from the Antimonopoly Act. This has allowed newspapers which were considered as a carrier of information necessary for everyday life to be sold at the same price anywhere in Japan. The concerns regarding the effects of this system on the quality of the paper reflected in the review conducted by the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) in 1992. However, the NSK argued that the price-fixing system is necessary to the maintenance of the home-delivery system which the sale of newspapers heavily relies on. The FTC, as a result, has not yet cancelled the exemption of the sale of newspapers from the Antimonopoly Act. See Kôno Ichiro, "Role of the Pricing System for Copyright Works", The Japanese Press 1997 (Tokyo: NSK, 1997), pp. 43-4; and Kôno Ichiro, "Newspaper Sales and The Price-fixing System in Japan", The Japanese Press 1998 (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), pp. 23-5.

In the 1990s, Thailand saw the continued existence of partisan press. Most Thai newspapers maintained or rebuilt direct or indirect linkages with powerful politicians. These linkages indicate that the continuing watchdog role of the press, one which must disseminate a non-partisan view, has proven problematic to realize. These pervasive linkages can be seen, for example, in the appointment of Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, an editor of *Naew Na*, to the post of security adviser to Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1997-2001).[177] From then on, *Naew Na* has been consistently supportive of Chuan's Democrat Party. The secretary of this party, General Sanan Krajornprasart, also owned *Chao Thai Rai Wan*, a national daily. Banharn Silpa-acha, the leader of Chart Thai party, held an important stake in *Ban Muang Daily*. In mid-1999, his paper began printing a one-page exclusive report on education after his daughter, a local MP, was appointed to the post of Deputy Minister of Education after the cabinet reshuffle.[178]

Moreover, the Thai press is still biased and opinionated, with stories based on insubstantial rumors and allegations. As observed by Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker,

> the press (after the May Crisis) carried a torch for urban interests, campaigned for reforms, monitored the politicians' performance, and exposed corruption and malpractice. But a section of the press was itself susceptible to money. The line between legitimate revelation and interested rumour-mongering was so fine as to be invisible. The press surrounded parliament with a swirl of rumour, allegation, and scandal.[179]

The frequent mishaps of the Thai press in filtering and disseminating inaccurate political information based on rumours and unsubstantial allegations has made libel lawsuits common. For example, Chuan Leekpai and Banharn Silpa-archa were involved

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[177]   In February 2000, Prasong was appointed as an adviser to all important intelligence agencies, controlling the flow of news in and out of the National Intelligence Agency, the intelligence sections of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, as well as the National Security Council. See *"Prasong Soonsiri come back yued amnach kankhao arwutlubsudyod khong prachathipat"* (Prasong came back to exert authority in news - Democrat's lethal weapon), *Siamrath Sapdawijarn*, February 13-19, 2000, p. 13.

[178]   *"Ban Muang chak chang - koranee perd na kansuksa rongrab 'Nu Na - Tue' "* (*Ban Maung* defends allegations against the launch of an educational page especially for Nu Na and Tue), *Matichon Sudsapda*, August 3, 1999, p. 70.

[179]   Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, Thailand's Boom and Bust, p. 250.

in libel lawsuits with a *Thai Rath* columnist[180] and a *Siam Post* editor[181], whilst serving as Prime Minister. Four ministers of the Banham Government, including the Finance Minister, the Minister to the Office of the Prime Minister, the Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister, and the Deputy Interior Minister have lodged separate lawsuits against a number of newspapers in regard to alleged bribery and related practices.[182] The Minister of Interior under the first Chuan administration, Major General Sanan Khajornprasart, also took legal action against the three daily newspapers - *Matichon, Naew Na*, and *Siam Post* for bribery allegations involving a pawnshop concessionaire.[183]

Although most of the newspapers facing lawsuits were acquitted after trials, the relatively high likelihood of facing lawsuits has created three distinctive characteristics in the Thai press.[184] Firstly, since the penalty for libel is usually a suspended jail term or fine for an editor, Thai newspapers generally hire so-called "dummy editors", who specialize in dealing with legal battles or even serving jail sentences so that the newspaper can continue publication without major disruption.[185] Secondly, in order to avoid lawsuits, the popular use of abbreviations or nicknames in the news when referring to newsworthy persons, such as "*Big Jiw*", "*Madam P.K.*", "*Dr. S*", "*Mr.Mee*", and so forth, is common. Lastly, and most importantly, libel lawsuits discourage the full-blown disclosure of investigative reporting, because newspapers are likely to be sued for any of the leading stories that they are pursuing.

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[180] In 1993, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai sued a columnist with the pen name of "*Tai Phoon*" who writes regularly for *Thai Rath* on the grounds that the columnist called Chuan 'authoritarian' and alleged that Chuan used excessive force to resolve the farmers' demonstration. See Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Jod-mai khao (Reporters' Association Newsletter)*, July 1993.

[181] In 1995, the Chart Thai Party sued the *Siam Post* on defamatory charges in relation to the newspaper's publication of the Kockums'case. Prime Minister Banham also personally sued the newspaper's editor, Arun Lanlhua, on the same charge. The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2539 (The Reporters' Day March 5, 1996)* (Bangkok: RAT, 1996).

[182] "Government Wages War With the Media", Bangkok Post, June 2, 1996 (on-line edition).

[183] The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak-khao 5 minakhom 2540 (The Reporters' Day 5 March 1997)* (Bangkok: RAT, 1997), p.42.

[184] In cases where the plaintiff was obviously defamed, the newspapers have rarely gone to the Supreme Court. Most of these cases ended in out of court settlements

[185] There is a popular saying that being an editor in the Thai press is similar to putting one foot into jail. Interview with Kietchai Pongpanich, Executive Editor and Publisher, *Khao Sod Daily* on April 23, 1998.

As a result, breaking news or any unconfirmed report does not first appear as leading news on the first page of the newspaper. Rather, it is printed on the social page (usually page four) as a tidbit to gauge the reaction of the individuals involved. This has sometimes coincided with the use of underground leaflets by the press, or certain individuals disseminating breaking stories, which should they be published in a newspaper, would invite either lawsuits or severe extralegal measures, or both. News stories written in leaflets are highly controversial, but are often alluded to by the press. Such provocative stories have included an alleged plot linking the class five military clique with the assassination of Khlaeo Thanikun, the powerful Bangkok godfather,[186] and an attack on the Master's degree credentials of the Crown Prince's minor wife.[187]

Libel lawsuits are not the only way that Thai government officials have responded to attacks by the press. Thai journalists continue to be intimidated, attacked, or even killed by corrupt officials.[188] During the coalition government of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (1996-7), the press focused on the growing public discontent with the economic crisis, and on Chavalit's ill-mangaged administrative teams. The Chavalit government blamed media misreporting for the lack of confidence in the economy among investors and the public, and reacted by imposing controls.[189]

Accordingly, Minister of Interior, Sanoh Thienthong, and his deputy, Pol. Capt. Chalerm Yoobamrung, whose relationship with the media had always been sour,[190] set

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[186]   This story was written by 'a reporter who knew the inside story'. He claimed that Khlaeo Thankikun had been a major source of finance for the class five until its *coup* in 1991, but was killed before he could reveal his connection with the new government. See James Ockey, "Capital Accumulation by Other Means: Provincial Crime, Corruption, and the Bureaucratic Polity". Paper presented at 5th International Conference on Thai Studies, SOAS, London, 1993

[187]   These leaflets were claimed to be circulated by a group of 'Thai Patriots'. See Craig J. Reynolds, "Sedition in Thai History: A Nineteenth Century Poem and Its Politics", in M. Chitakasem and Andrew Turton (eds.), Thai Construction of Knowledge (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991), p. 15.

[188]   As recently as January 1998, Sayomchai Vijitwittayapong, a rural stringer for *Matichon*, and *Khao Sod* was shot dead after he turned down a bribe of 150,000 baht to stop investigations into allegations of corruption related to a building project. "*Rookkart kamnan Neow bongkan gang phuyai- Nuey khasungharn nakkhao yong sia-Au chao pho phichit*" (Hunt Neow, a village headman, who ordered Phuyai-Neoy's gangster to kill a reporter. This also linked with "Au", Phicit's Godfather), *Matichon Sudsapda*, January 20, 1998, pp. 88-90.

[189]   "It's not my fault, it's global - PM", Bangkok Post, October 30, 1997 (on-line edition).

[190]   Pol. Capt. Chalerm Yoobamroong was a Minister of Office of the Prime Minister during the Chatchai's cabinet. He was also in charge of overseeing the Mass Communications Organization

up a 'media-monitoring center' or *'Kana kammakan klan-krong khao-san lae seumolchon'* on 3 June 1997. Its members were mainly police officers,[191] and it was aimed at combating "media attacks" which created "public confusion" and "scared away foreign investors".[192] Although the committee was not authorized to order the shutdown of any newspapers or broadcasting stations, it could use its independent judgement to censor news reports, and could issue two warnings before undertaking legal proceedings.[193] Sanoh's establishment of this organization was reminiscent of the actions of former military governments, which often justified their undertakings on the pretext of national security. This was reflected in his comment that, "I will resort to any measure that will help to ensure national stability. I will use it against anyone who destabilized the country".[194] His ill intentions became clear when he mentioned that he would invoke Article 116 of the Criminal Law, which directly deals with the issue of national security, in order to curb the aggressive press.

According to the 1995 addition to the Press Act of 1941, newspapers cannot be ordered closed by any government without a court order, except under a state of emergency. However, the media-monitoring committee could bypass normal lengthy procedures by seeking a court decision to halt the sale of issues carrying defamatory stories, or permanently closing a publication within a day.[195] Indeed, the 'media-monitoring center'[196] could be construed as the government's relentless attempt to control the flow of the information in order to compensate for its relative inability to control the political environment.

After the government's announcement of the flotation of the baht in July 1997,

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of Thailand which owns Channel 9 and Channel 3. It was evident that Pol. Capt.Chalerm influenced the content of the news programs of Channel 9 and used it to attack the press.

[191] Bangkok Post, July 21, 1997 (on-line edition).

[192] "Panel toMonitor Media", The Nation, June 4, 1997 (on-line edition); "Ministry Shoots the Media Messenger", Sydney Morning Herald, June 6, 1997 (on-line edition).

[193] "Watchdog Represents 'Threat to Press Freedom' ", The Nation, June 6, 1997 (on-line edition).

[194] "Thai Government Threatens Media", The Age, September 15, 1997 (on-line edition).

[195] "Pradit Offers Courts' Help to Police Media", The Nation, 9 June 1997 (on-line edition).

[196] The 'media-monitoring center' had to be closed down within five months because of its ineffective admistration, and its failure in fulfilling its aim of 'combating press attacks'. "Monitoring Center Calls It a Day", Bangkok Post, November 6, 1997 (on-line edition).

public confidence in Chavalit's cabinet as reflected in the media sank to its lowest level. The media-monitoring committee promptly rebuked the press by issuing forty-two warnings immediately after the flotation of the baht.[197] Newspapers such as *Naew Na* and *Thai Post* were targeted by the media-monitoring center and by those who held extralegal power in the government, because of the publications' catchy headlines and severe scrutiny of the government. *Naew Na* received twenty-four warnings, while *Thai Post* received twenty-nine warnings from a total of eighty-eight warnings issued by the printing officers in 1997.[198] Moreover, a *Naew Na* director and columnist, Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, who long had a good relationship with the then opposition Democrat Party, had a grenade thrown into his house after he sharply criticized the government.[199] In a similar vein, *Thai Post* 's editorial office was also the target of a bomb threat.[200]

The media-monitoring center ceased operating only a few weeks before the Chavalit government collapsed, partly because of protests from the media, and partly because of budget constraints.[201] However, in response to the government's allegations against newspaper reports, the journalists and several press organizations of Thailand decided to establish the 'Press Council of Thailand' as an independent self-regulatory body in July 1997. The main task of the Press Council is to control and check the ethics of daily newspapers with an aim to boost liberty, to heighten the sense of liberty, and to upgrade professional and journalistic stature of the press.[202] The council was, and remains, the first of its kind in Thailand, and its manifesto overtly states the intention to move away from political and legal constraints, and make a claim to autonomy. Previous attempts to create such an independent, self-regulatory body failed because the

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[197]   "Sanoh to Get Tough With Media: Press Blamed for Causing Economic Ills", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, September 14, 1997 (on-line edition).
[198]   The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *"Nai rob pi seumolchon Thai"* (The Thai Mass Media in a Year Round), in <u>*Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2542 (The Reporters' Day, March 5, 1999)*</u> (Bangkok: RAT, 1999), p. 46.
[199]   "Prasong's House in Bomb Attack", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, August 14, 1997 (on-line edition).
[200]   "Crash Healine Lands 'Thai Post' in Trouble", <u>The Nation</u>, September 23, 1997 (on-line edition).
[201]   *"Soon Pikart Sue Woon .."* (Turmoils in Media-Monitoring Center), *Naew Na*, October 12, 1997, p. 1; "Chalerm Turns Off the News", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, October 29, 1997 (on-line edition).
[202]   <u>Bangkok Post</u>, August 11, 1997 (on-line edition).

newspapers did not appreciate the importance of establishing such a body, and the state tried to intervene with a list of legislation.[203] Indeed, Thai journalists believe that allowing state intervention through any form of legislation could be a loophole that leads to overt control and manipulation, and this would be disastrous for the freedom of the press.[204] As reflected in Suthichai's comments:

> Some people believe that professional ethics can be legislated.
> But the Thai experience have proven time and again that when
> one invites the state to set ethical standards for a certain profession,
> it will inevitably ends with misguided government control, stifling
> regulations and political manipulation.[205]

Therefore, a self-governing Press Council of Thailand emerged as a defensive mechanism against further attempts by the state to impose controls on press reports deemed unethical or biased.

However, the outdated Press Act of 1941, which is still in use today, has also been a regulatory loophole through which the government can prevent strong press criticism. For example, the Banharn coalition government issued warnings to six national dailies and weeklies that mentioned the public disapproval of the premature termination of a no-confidence debate in May 1995, in which the Premier and two government ministers were at the center of corruption revelations.[206] The authority who issued these warnings simply claimed that the newspapers interfered with the public peace and order, which was in violation of the Press Act of 1941. Despite many press and journalists' association campaigns to overhaul the Act, it remains unchanged. Yet some

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[203]   The idea of establishing a Press Council of Thailand had been discussed as far back as in the 1950s when Police General Phao Sriyanondh was in power. The council was again about to materialize during Kukrit Pramoj's administration in 1973. During that time, the new Press Act was written with an aim to set up a committee whose independent members could exercise their power by imposing moral sanctions in form of fines and other means on journalists who violated the Press Act. However, the legislation never passed the parliamentary vote. Ironically, the majority of the MPs were within the coalition government led by Kukrit Pramoj, an ex-journalist who once fought for press freedom. Another attempt in 1990 by the Chatichai Government also failed because representatives from government agencies refused to stop sitting in a committee panel of the Press Council. See The Journalists' Association of Thailand, *"Sapakan nungsuphim hang chart: 30 pi hang karn tor-su pua khum kan eng"* (The PressCouncil of Thailand: 30 Years of Fighting for Self-Control), Amazing Thai Journalists 1998 (Bangkok: The Journalists' Association of Thailand, 1998), pp. 47-53.

[204]   Interview with Mr. Manich Sooksomchitre, Senior Editor of *Thai Rath*, President of the Press Council of Thailand, April 20, 1998.

[205]   Suthichai Yoon, "Towards a Less Influential Press", The Nation, April 24, 1998, p. A4.

[206]   "Govt Wages War with the Media", Bangkok Post, June 2, 1996 (on-line edition).

provisions in this Press Act are incompatible with Article 39 of the newly promulgated Constitution of 1997, which specifically prohibits the shutdown of any press, radio station, or television station.[207] Some provisions of the Press Act of 1941 which directly contradict with Article 39 of the 1997 Constitution of Thailand are:

- Section 34: To enforce law and order when necessary, the Director General of the Police Department may temporarily prohibit the publishing of articles on military affairs or in international politics.

- Section 35: In wartime or state of emergency, the Director General of the Police Department may impose censorship on the press.

- Section 36-40: If a story which is offensive or indecent is published, the press officers in charge can: warn the publisher, editor, or owner of that newspaper; or impose censorship; or suspend and withdraw the publishers' license. An appeal against these measures to the Minister of Interior is possible.

A recent attempt by representatives of Press Officers[208] within the Special Branch of the Bangkok Police Department to rewrite the Press Act of 1941 also failed, as the Thai press associations disapproved the final drafted Act and called it "more draconian" than the current Press Act. This was because some draft provisions gave the Press Authority unilateral powers to curb the press, such as requiring the publishers to

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[207] Article 39 of the 1997 Constitution stipulates that:
"People have the right of liberty of expression, speech, writing, printing, publicity, and communication by other means.
The restriction of any freedom and liberty guaranteed by paragraph 1 is unconstitutional except when imposed under authority of a law specifically enacted for the purpose of preserving national security, protecting rights, liberties, honour, family rights, or the privacy of others, for the keeping of peace and order, for the maintenance of public morals, for the protection or stemming from the deterioration of the moral or physical well-being of the public.
It is unconstitutional for the government to order a shutdown of the press, of a radio station, of a television station with a view to undermine such freedom.
It is unconstitutional for the government to impose a ban on printing newspaper publishing, radio or television station broadcasts except if it is imposed by a court judge whose sentence is handed down under the authority of law.
State censorship is prohibited unless during time of war and through laws in accordance with paragraph 2.
Owner of media organizations must be Thai.
The state is not allowed to financially support privately-owned media organizations".

[208] The Press Officers (*Chao phanak-ngan kan-phim*) in Bangkok include the Director-General of the Police Department, the Deputy Director-General of the Police Department, the Commander of the Special Branch of the Police Department, and the Police Inspector of the Fifth Section of the Third Precinct of the Special Branch. In addition, provincial mayors also have the same authority as the press officers in their respective areas. *Prakart krasuang mahatthai wanti 15 phrusaphakhom 2516 (Ministry of Interior's Gazette May 15, 1976).*

renew their licenses every year, demanding that all journalists' and columnists' register their pseudonyms, and holding not only the editors but also the owners of newspapers accountable for criminal and civil offenses. By using court orders, the authority was also to be empowered to confiscate the published materials as well as the printing equipment, which is tantamount to forcing a closure.[209] Clearly the authority to close down newspapers is an absolute guarantee of control over political information that the Thai state wants to hold on to as long as it possibly can.

Although Article 39 of the current Constitution prohibits the shutdown of the press and broadcasting stations, the restriction of freedom of expression, such as banning and censorship by a court order is, in accordance with the Constitution, possible only for the purpose of "preserving national security...for the keeping of peace and order, for the maintenance of public morals...", and newspapers are automatically closed after receiving three official warnings. As a matter of fact, the Press Act contradicts the Constitution for practical reasons, in the sense that it is the police rather than the courts that have the power to censor newspapers within the current structure. Further, censorship administration, as well as almost all other so-called 'government functions', are not subject to being reviewed by the court. The lack of judicial power over media censorship seems to have allowed an unusually high degree of bureaucratic discretion in interpreting such concepts as 'national security', and 'public peace and order'.

Manich Sooksomchitre, the President of the Press Council of Thailand, contends that the 1941 Press Act gives the officials "unrealistically high power", and that "they can decide we (journalists) are wrong just for thinking, let alone acting".[210] Since 1997, the press organizations, media and public intellectuals, and civil activists have campaigned for the abolition of the Press Act of 1941, and the drafting of a more democratic law. Without a new law, the Thai press' ability to disseminate political

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[209]   Tawatchai Jaranai, "*Manich Sooksomchitre chae rang por.ror.bor chabab 'santiban' lauk Egypt pad phoon phadejkarn*" (Manich Sooksomchitre disclosed the new Drafted Act: Authoritarian and Copied from Egypt), *Matichon Sudsapda*, September 8, 1998, pp. 68-9.

[210]   Interview with Mr. Manich Sooksomchitre on April 20, 1998.

information will continue to be blocked by the Press Officers under the supervision of the Minister of Interior, and the courts under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Justice.[211] The existence of the 1952 Act for the Prevention of the Communist Activities and the 1985 National (News) Intelligence Act, which allow the authority to monitor and suppress news detrimental to national security, further lessens the ability of the Thai press to gain access to and disseminate political information. This degree of accessibility depends largely on how the government and its bureaucrats, as well as the courts, interpret concepts like 'national security' or 'public peace and order', and how they apply the related laws and regulations as well as other severe extralegal controls on the Thai press. Without the abrogation of the existing press laws, the Thai press can be an active agent in the Thai political communication system only to a limited extent.

Compared to the Thai press, which is still affected by a tough press law, the Japanese press looks relatively more free. Since the censorship imposed by the Occupation Force ended in 1949, there has not been any other kind of legal censorship directly imposed on the Japanese press, except the Subversive Activities Prevention Act of 1952 (*Hakaikatsudô Bôshihô*), which was promulgated as a part of the US Cold War strategy to prevent Japan from the rising threats of communism. One section of this Act specifically prohibits the press from being involved in "instigation", "incitement", and the "crime of propaganda".[212] The press industry strongly opposed this Act from the outset saying that it was opposed to the virtue of the freedom of expression guaranteed in the 1947 Constitution. However, the government passed the

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211   At present there are six main pieces of legislation directly concerning the press: the
       Press Act of 1941 which allows the closure of newspapers; Martial Law, which has a
       disastrous flaw in that an army officer in only a minimum rank of sub-lieutenant, may impose
       censorship or prohibit selling of a newspaper in time of war or during state of emergency;
       the Youth and Family Court Procedure Law which disallows the taping of voice, the
       publication of names, photograph, or address of under-aged convicts; Criminal Law which deals
       with publications deemed detrimental to the royal family, national security, diplomatic relations
       and individual's reputation; the Civil and Commercial Code which imposes heavy fine and jail
       terms to those convicted in the libel lawsuits; and the Civil Court Procedure Law which
       monitors news reports concerning court cases or trials. See Pisith Shawalathawat, _Kodmai
       seusanmolchon (Mass Media Law)_, *op. cit.*
212   In particular, Article 5 of this Act stipulates that the publications of any organization involved
       in subversive activities can face suspension for a period of six months, and according to Article
       38, a person involved in such activities faces up to seven years imprisonment. *Nihon
       Shimbun Kyokai* (The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), _Press Laws in
       Japan (Commentary and Abstracts)_ (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), pp. 13-15.

bill due to US pressure. Yet this Act exists today and has never been applied to the press.

Another piece of legislation that restricts freedom of the press is the Public Offices Election Law of 1950, which was revised in 1975. This law was designed to ensure strict neutrality in election campaign coverage. For example, it contains provisions prohibiting the publication of news designed to influence an election (Article 148-2), and the publication of results of popularity polls prior to elections (Article 148-3).[213] However, it is generally known that papers have often ignored these regulations. Politicians and political parties have consequently laid charges against newspapers on the grounds of "impairing the fairness of elections".[214] Nonetheless, courts have always ruled out such charges. This has led to the development of a political information contest between political parties and the media, in which the parties try to exert control over political information, and the media respond by blocking such moves. For instance, the ruling LDP drafted the bill in 1993 to restrict any publication of election result forecasts, to coincide with the proposed reform of Japan's electoral system. The NSK strongly opposed the ideas, and the bill did not even reach the Diet floor, due to the early dissolution of the LDP government in July 1993.[215] Yet the LDP did not discard the idea of restricting media coverage, particularly with regards to elections and associated polls. In particular, after the LDP faced a substantial loss in the Upper House election in July 1998, the party set up its own 2,000 press monitor centers

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[213]   Japan has some of the strictest election campaign regulations in existence. One regulation, for instance, prohibits political candidates from buying space in newspapers or other print media, as well as airtime on broadcasting media on an individual basis other than government's provision. Some campaign advertisements on mass media for each candidate are allowed and provided by the government. Television advertisements only allow the candidate to speak to the audience, and do not allow the presentation of a professionally produced campaign advertisement. Candidates for the House of Representatives are allowed to make three radio broadcast of five minutes each, three television appearances of four and one-half minutes each, and five newspaper advertisements of a determined length. Although political parties are allowed to buy advertising time freely on a party basis, the advertising campaign must not be geared towards promoting a specific candidate. See, for example, Ray Christensen, "Putting New Wine into Old Bottles: The Effect of Electoral Reforms on Campaign Practices in Japan", Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Asscociation of Asian Studies, Washington DC, March 26, 1998. See also Lawrence W. Beer, Freedom of Expression in Japan (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984).

[214]   *Nihon Shimbun Kyokai* (The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts) (Tokyo: JNPEA, 1995), pp. 17-19.

[215]   *Ibid.*

around the country. These centers are designed to check media coverage related to the parties which appears to be inaccurate or biased, and to report such coverage to the party's headquarters. Then, the party decides whether to write letters of protest, or take other measures, such as party sanctions.[216]

Although the Japanese Diet passed its first National Public Information Act in May 1999, it has long had three sets of legislation that directly complicate and limit the process of accessing political information. The first set includes the Criminal Law and the Civil Law, which concern the non-disclosure of news sources (*Shuzai gen no hitoku*). This set of laws states that journalists have, to some extent, a right to refuse to testify about a news source (*kisha no shôgen kyozetsu-ken*), but that right can be waived for the sake of conducting a fair trial.[217] The second set includes the National Public Service Law (*Kokka Kômuin-hô*), the Local Public Service Law (*Chihô Komuin-hô)*, and the Self-Defense Force Law (*Jieitai-hô)* which disallow national and local public service officers, as well as Defence Force officers, to disclose official secrets whether still on active duty or retired. Those reporters who divulge such secrets are subjected to criminal charge.[218] The third set of laws imposes criminal charges on those who disclose security information about US-Japan Security Cooperation.[219] There was a relevant case when a *Mainichi Shimbun* reporter, Nichiyama Takichi, leaked sensitive information to a member of the Opposition. Nichiyama divulged information obtained from his lover, a foreign affairs officer, regarding the contents of secret cables sent during

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216   "LDP Sets Up Press Monitoring System", NSK News Bulletin, December 1998, 21 (4), p. 9.
217   See section on "*Shuzai,hôdô no jiyû*" (Freedom of Newsgathering and Reporting) at the NSK's website: http://www.pressnet.or.jp; and examples of famous court cases in Horibe Masao, "Press Law in Japan", in P. Lahav (ed.), Press Law in Modern Democracies: A Comparative Study (New York: Longman, 1985), pp. 324-327.
218   Article 100 of the National Public Service Law stipulates that government employees shall not leak secrets that become known to them through their official duties. Article 111 makes it a criminal offense to induce a public servant to disclose the secrets. Nihon Shimbun Kyokai (The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts) (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), p. 9.
219   There are three pieces of legislation governing the protection of information regarding the US-Japan Security Cooperation: firstly, Special Criminal Law to Implement the Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Forces in Japan; secondly, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between Japan and the United States of America; and lastly, the Secrets Protection Law Pursuant to the Japan-US Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

the US-Japan negotiations for the 1972 reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty. The information revealed that Japan had made a 'deal' with the US before the reversion, and this deal had not been made known to public.[220] After the story was exposed, the Foreign Affairs officer was charged with secrecy violations, and the reporter was convicted of inducing a public servant to commit a crime. However, the penalty for severe crimes such as secrecy violations is rather small. The maximum sentence is only one-year imprisonment and a small fine.[221]

There are other laws with provisions relating to the moral nature of publication.[222] These laws and regulations, however, contain vaguely worded provisions, and the range of penalties is rather minimal. In fact, there have been relatively few cases of individuals convicted of violations being sent to prison. Both Criminal and Civil Codes in Japan do prescribe punishment for defamation.[223] Yet few defamation lawsuits are filed in Japan because potential litigants wish to avoid conflict and publicity, and the award for punitive damage in civil cases is normally small whilst

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[220]   This deal involved the payment of four million US dollars by the Japanese government.

[221]   Lawrence W. Beer, "Freedom of Expression: The Continuing Revolution in Japan's Legal Culture", Occasional Papers in Contemporary Asian Studies No. 3 (Maryland: School of Law University of Maryland, 1991), pp. 19-20; See also Hara Toshio, *Jaanarizumu no shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997), p. 79.

[222]   These include the Libel and Defamation Acts which require compensation for intentional or negligent violation of another's rights, the Juvenile Law which does not allow the publication of details pertaining to a juvenile delinquent under 20 (exception is made in cases of a suspect is expected to commit further vicious crimes, or for the purpose of searching the suspect), the Penal Code against the publication of obscene materials, the Criminal Procedure Law which concerns the courtroom coverage, the Customs Standards Law, which prohibits imports of "written materials and pictures harmful of public order and public morals", and the Securities and Exchange Law which contains provisions on controlling insider trading. For more details, see *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* (The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts) (Tokyo: *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* , 1995), pp. 5-26.
In 1999, the Japanese Diet attempted to push through new anti-crime legislation, the so-called 'wiretapping bill', to legalize the interception of communications by law enforcement authorities during criminal investigations. The bill first listed several professions to be exempted, such as medical practitioners, and legal attorneys, but not including the media profession. As this law, if enacted, would violate the freedom of the press by hampering the non-disclosure nature of news sources, media organizations heavily criticized the bill, and finally pressured the Ministry of Justice, which initially drafted the bill, to exempt the media profession from wiretapping. See "Japanese Ministry to Exempt Media from Wiretaps", Japan Times, August 3, 1999 (on-line edition); "Controversial Wiretapping Bill Clears Diet", NSK News Bulletin, September 1999, 22(3), p. 2.

[223]   In particular, the Japanese Criminal Code distinguishes between the crime of ordinary defamation and defamation concerning public interest. Article 230 of the Criminal Code suggests no punishment should be laid on those convicted on defamation charge on matters of public concern, or promoting public interest. See Horibe Masao, "Press Law in Japan", in Pnina Lahav (ed.), Press Law in Modern Democracies (New York: Longman, 1985), pp. 315-338.

undertaking a legal process is very costly. Final resolution for legal disputes is thus often sought through informal settlements.[224] Japanese law has a considerably important role in channeling and facilitating these informal dispute-settlement procedures, and the dispute is always negotiable. As Beer, a scholar of the Japanese legal system puts it "if one has the proper social position, or skill in human relations with those implementing a legalism affecting freedom, impractical formalism sometimes softens with reasons and humanism".[225]

While the degree to which legal censorship imposed on the post-war Japanese press has been limited, the pervasive practice of extralegal censorship within the Japanese press structure is a different story. The juxtaposition between the absence of effective laws and regulations and the unwritten rules restraining the practice of self-imposed censorship well reflects the clear distinction between 'tatemae' (stated principles) and 'honne' (real intention). A good illustration here is a comparison between the role General Douglas MacArthur designated to the kisha kurabu, as a socializing organization that promoted friendship and professionalism without resort to newsgathering functions, and the actual practices.

In Japan today there are about 800 reporters' clubs attached to most of the important state bureaus, organizations, and agencies, as well as large private enterprises around the country, each of which has between 2 to 361 member organizations.[226] The clubs are dominated by the five Japanese national daily newspapers, bloc newspapers, local newspapers with circulation of more than 10,000 copies, two wire services and five broadcasting networks.[227] In contrast to the articulated principle of the kisha

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[224] One of the solutions is that newspapers agree to publish message of apology, or issue corrections. For instance, *Asahi Shimbun*, the left-oriented paper, published ninety messages of apology and a total of 1,359 news corrections between 1990 and 1995. See Yamazaki Shigeo, *"Shimbun no Shinrui-do to Seikaku-sei no kankei nitsuite"* (The Relationship between the trustworthiness and Correctness of the Press), Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô, 1998, (16), p. 37.

[225] Lawrence W. Beer, Freedom of Expression in Japan : A Study in Comparative Law, Politics and Society (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), p. 150.

[226] For national lists of clubs, numbers of member organizations, and details on average annual income and expenditures, see Iwase Tatsuya, *Shimbun ga omoshirokunai Riyû (The Reasons why newspapers are not interesting)* (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1998), pp. 295-325.

[227] In 1997, the NSK had 163 member organizations, including 112 newspaper organizations, and

kurabu as a social club, the most important function of the press club is, in reality, to hold press conferences for top policy makers on a regular basis, mostly at the reporters' requests. The government agencies and municipal offices provide a press' room for reporters to undertake their newsgathering work. Most press clubs require reporters to attend on a daily basis. Relationships between the sources and reporters at the club are easily established and accumulated over years through formal and informal press conferences and personal entertainment. As a result, these Japanese *kisha kirabu* have long been famous for their inclination toward collusive relations with news sources and uniformity in news reporting, as well as for their exclusionist character *vis-à-vis* outside media agents, such as non-members of the NSK.[228] The club rules and sanctions create an atmosphere in which reporters from competing companies, but belonging to the same press club, do not compete for news, do not attempt to deviate from the shared views, and ultimately work against the nature of investigative reporting.

Each press club has informal rules that govern both formal press conferences and informal, though systematized briefings known as *kondan* (chatting), commonly offered to reporters. The press conferences and *kondan* are comparable to the front (*omote*), and back (*ura*) of the political world. While press conferences are formal opportunities in which reporters can gather and report news which they can report, informal briefings or *kondan* provide reporters with opportunities to have a chat with important news sources about inside stories on a wide range of topics including current political ideas and situations, which are often not made public.[229] However, there are differences between rules governing formal press conferences and rules governing informal briefings.

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51 news agencies and broadcasting networks. The qualification requirements for NSK membership in the case of newspapers, are guaranteed reporting of current affairs, or sports in general, the maintenance of newspaper ethics, publication for more than six days per week; and a circulation more than 10, 000 copies. See the NSK web site at http: //www.pressnet.or.jp.

[228] Hotta Yoshihiko, "*Kisha kurabu wa mukashi kara shuzai kyoten deshita...*" (*Kisha* Club has been a principal base for newsgathering since the old days) *Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû*, 1998, (164), pp. 24-8.

[229] Hirose Hidehiko, "The Press Club System in Japan: Its Past, Present, and Future", <u>Keio Communication Review</u>, 1994, (16), pp. 63-75. Hirose suggests that on average, press conferences at the press clubs of government ministries are held twice a week by ministers, once a week by vice ministers, and less often by bureau directors. Whereas *kondan* are held more frequently by these officials.

The NSK's guidelines on press conferences state that "press clubs and newspaper organizations are not permitted to place any restrictions on individual journalists or reporters attending press conferences".[230] Yet in practice, non-member reporters and media organizations are not allowed to attend formal press conferences. Before 1968, foreign journalists had not been allowed to attend press conferences which were generally held under the auspices of the press clubs and not public institutions, and from attending *kondan*.[231] Many forceful protests from the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Japan led to some compromises. In 1972, foreign reporters were given 'observer status' in certain clubs and allowed to ask questions, though questions had to be submitted in advance in Japanese. However, they were still excluded from being a full member of the Japan National Press Clubs (*Nippon Kisha Kurabu*).[232] Not only foreign journalists in Japan but also Japanese journalists, such as those of weekly magazines and party papers like *Akahata*, are not allowed to attend the clubs' press conferences.[233] Japanese press clubs overseas have a similar reputation for exclusivity.[234] A typical reason for the rejection of permission to attend press conferences was that the press club was a social club, and any decisions regarding admission of new members was at the club's discretion, and even the NSK could not influence the decision.

In 1993, the bar on foreign reporters attending formal press conferences in Japan was lifted due to the US pressure. This came in the wake of increasingly frequent and outrageous barring of foreign reporters from major stories, particularly those related with trade issues.[235] Since 1993, an increasing number of foreign media organizations

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[230] *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* (Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association), <u>NSK Leaflet</u> (Tokyo: NSK, 1998).

[231] Ôiwa Yuri, "*Kurabu to kondan no takai kokusai shôheki*" (The High International Barriers of Press Clubs and Informal Briefings), <u>Asahi Shimbun Weekly Aera</u>, (October 1, 1991), p. 20.

[232] Ôiwa Yuri, "*Gaikokujin kisha no kaiken shusseki jôken*" (Conditions to Attend Press Conferences for Foreign Reporters), <u>Asahi Shimbun Weekly Aera</u>, (October 1, 1991), p. 28.

[233] Interview with Mr. Kawamura Shigemitsu, Editor-in-Chief, *Akahata Shimbun* on October 20, 1998.

[234] For example, the Manila Press Club's members relentlessly blocked the non-members from attending press conferences. They also spent "all their time trying to safeguard their privileges against the newcomers". See Katô Hiroshi, "Exposé: A Cancer on the Japanese Press Abroad", <u>Japan Echo</u>, 1988, 15(2), pp. 56-60.

[235] Ivan P. Hall, <u>Cartels of the Mind: Japan's Intellectual Closed Shop</u> (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), pp.60-4. ; See also Mizuno Takeya, "*Kisha kurabu kanren-shi*" (History Related to the Reporters' Club), <u>Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûsho Nenpô 1995 (1995 Annual Report of Japan's Newspaper Association Research Center)</u>, (13), p. 63.

have been granted membership of various press clubs, but some remain closed to foreign reporters. These include clubs that are attached to the courts and the Ministry of Justice (*Hômushô*). Moreover, the number of foreign journalists attending press conferences is restricted by each club. Foreign reporters are also not allowed to attend the cosy *kondan*. Thus, the exclusive character of the Japanese *kisha kurabu* is maintained, and the NSK, the media organizations, and their reporters avoid taking any responsibility regarding the problem. The NSK always denies any influence over the *kisha kurabu*, citing their voluntary and autonomous character; whereas the media organizations and reporters blame the problems on their sources, and the lack of language proficiency and non-conformist characters of their foreign counterparts.[236]It is interesting to note that the restrictions against foreign journalists in Japan is not totally unique, as foreign reporters in Thailand are also required to obtain a special permission to enter government offices.[237]

Within press clubs there are embargo agreements, known as blackboard agreements or *kokuban kyôtei*,[238] that determine which news items are suitable for release. In most cases, a joint agreement of club members is needed to release the news involving kidnapping or other serious crimes, or the Imperial family.[239] Those who break these agreements are subjected to club sanctions, ranging from suspension to expulsion from the club. Similar penalties apply to rules governing *kondan*. Information given by sources through *kondan* are often kept off-the-record, or not directly cited,

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[236]   Ôiwa Yuri, *op. cit.*

[237]   "Foreign Press Seeks Improvements", The Nation, June 27, 1998 (on-line edition).

[238]   The agreements were called 'blackboard agreements' because they were usually written on the old-style blackboard in the club's meeting room. Putting news on hold is known as to 'hang' (*shibari*) the news. It is estimated that the news items which are put on hold per year account around one-third of the total number of news items announced at press conferences at the reporters' clubs. For instance, the Ministry of Construction (*Kensetsushô*) released around 600 news items for media dissemination per year. The reporters' club attached to the Ministry hung about 200 news items a year. Most of these news items dealt with budgeting on construction projects, and bidding processes. See "*Kisha Kurabu*" (Reporters' Club), Asahi Shimbun, December 22, 1998, p. 29.

[239]   News attributed to royal matters was put on hold based on 'voluntarily restraint agreements'. For example, the news blackouts on the Crown Prince Naruhito's search for the bride as according to unilateral agreements among the NSK members, arranged by the Imperial Household News Agency and the NSK, and the way in which the Japanese media were asked to hold off publicizing Emperor Hirohito death until the Imperial Household could make the announcement. This subject of the Imperial coverage will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

unless approved otherwise.[240] Reporters who leak or expose off-the-record information can face sanctions from either the source or the club by being prohibited to enter the press rooms, or attend press conferences and *kondan,* for a certain period. Some government department and agencies also apply different rules governing *kondan.* For example, Directors and senior members of the MITI, Self-Defence Force Agency, Environmental Agency, and the Ministry of Finance do not allow reporters to take memos or directly use their names as references. Most are referred to in news stories as 'a leading member', or 'a senior member', or 'a high-ranking official'. Directors and senior members at the Ministry of State, on the other hand, do not allow taking memos or newspaper reports about what being discussed in *kondan.*[241]

If reporters break these rules, then there are sanctions from sources which are generally known as '*deiri kinshi*'. These include prohibitions the whole team of reporters from interviewing sources, gathering information, and attending press conferences and *kondan.*[242] This type of sanction is exemplified by the case of a popular politician, Ozawa Ichirô. In August 1993, Mr. Ozawa Ichirô, Secretary-General of *Shinseitô* (Japan Renewal Party) at that time, abolished his *bankisha*[243] and *kondan* as a backlash to the leak of his off-the-record comments to the weekly magazine '*Shûkan Bunshun'*. The article in question published his complete off-the-record comments (*kan ofu*), including his strong criticisms against other political parties and their leaders.[244] In response to the publication, Ozawa imposed a series of sanctions on reporters by

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240   Off-the-record comments are not attributed directly by name, but sometimes are allowed to be cited vaguely as given by such positions as 'party leader', 'secretary of the faction', or 'ministerial executives'. In most cases, reporters are not allowed to take notes, or take photos. Yet this depends on regulations set up by individual ministries, or the government offices to which the clubs are attached. For example, reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are allowed to take notes and memos at *kondan* briefings and also write articles on it. Their counterparts at the Ministry of State, on the contrary, are not allowed to take any notes at the *kondan* briefings, and they cannot write reports about them. For more details see "[*Kondankai haishi*] *kanchô demo*" (Kondan briefings also discontinued at governmental offices), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 31, 1993, p. 25.

241   "*Kawaru seiji hôdô*" (Changes in political reports), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 31, 1993, p. 25.

242   Kosuge Hiroto, "*Ozawaryû masukomi taioujutsu no kenkyû*" (A Research on Ozawa's style in dealing with the mass media), *Ushio* , 1993, (12), p. 106.

243   In Japan, political journalists are assigned to cover individual politicians. Known as 'bankisha', these journalists frequently follow a politician from early morning until very late night, often following them to their homes. See Chapter four for further details.

244   "*Ozawa Ichirô odoroku beki ofureko hatsugen zenkôkai* "(Ozawa Ichirô must be surprised: All off-the-record comments are made public), *Shûkan Bunshun*, 1993, July 29, pp. 34-7.

stopping the *bankisha* from following him, cancelling his routinely *kondan*, and giving only a weekly formal press conference.[245] He expressed his opinion that "giving a press conference was not his duty, rather it was his service".[246] Two months later he imposed '*deiri kinshi*' on reporters from *Sankei* and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* on the grounds that their news reports about his comments on the rice problem and electoral reform were taken out of context. Before one of his press conferences, reporters were warned that questions regarding his alleged involvement in the *Zenekon* corruption scandal should not be asked.[247] Ozawa's case clearly illustrates the ability of the source to block reporters' access to political information at their will. Ozawa's explanation for his actions also confirms that such disincentive strategies can pressure the press to practise self-censorship on issues which in fact should be made public. It also points to the relationship between reporters and politicians in Japan, which is so solid that politicians can place comments off-the-record after making them. This Japanese practice is quite contrary to the Thai case, as well as universal practice, in which the source must specify the confidential nature of his or her comments in advance.[248]

Sanctions within the clubs themselves are known as *tôin teishi*, which means prohibitions to enter. One recent case involved the disclosure of off-the-record comments (*ofureko hatsugen*) made by Etô Takami, the Director General of the Management and Coordination Agency. In a *kondan* meeting with reporters, Etô made sensitive remarks regarding Japanese annexation of Korea. He said that "during Japan's colonial rule of Korea, Japan did some good things" (*shokuminchi jidai nihon wa ii koto mo shita*).[249] Despite the fact that his comment was made before a planned bilateral summit between South Korea and Japan on the occasion of the APEC Meeting in

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245   However, Ozawa also allowed foreign reporters and weekly magazine reporters whose organizations are not members of the NSK to participate in his press conference. Personal interview was also allowed on a case by case basis. See Kosuge Hiroto, *op.cit.*, pp.102-9; "*Bankisha kondan kieta*" (Informal briefings disappeared), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1993, p. 25.

246   Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyûjo, "*Kishakurabu 'dekigoto' shi, 90 nendai*"(The Review of the Incidents at the Press Club in the 1990s), *Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû* 1998, (164), p. 17.

247   *Ibid.*

248   Somchai Boonluea, "*Perd jai naiyok nak khao Kavi Chongkittavorn koranee Suwat off-the-record*" (Kavi Chongkittavorn disclosed his view in relation to the case of Suwat's off-the-record), *Matichon Sudsapda* , April 6, 1999, p. 68.

249   Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyûjo, *op. cit.*, pp.17-8.

Osaka, it was neither published nor broadcast. Only the November 1995 issue of a Japanese monthly magazine called *'Sentaku'* published a part of the story without mentioning the source. A South Korean newspaper later received an anonymous three-page transcription of Etô's off-the-record comments and published the story. Two Japanese newspapers, *Mainichi* and *Tôkyô Shimbun*, printed the story after the Korean daily. The story caused diplomatic strain to the extent that Korea rejected a visit by the Japanese foreign minister. Etô was forced to withdraw his remarks and ultimately resigned. Reporters from *Mainichi* and *Tôkyô Shimbun* received *"tôin teishi"* for a month.[250]

The question that needs to be addressed here is why the news media, which exposed such off-the-record remarks, were actually sanctioned by the press club. In this case, the NSK board made unilateral decisions that reporters involved should be deemed guilty of the leak.[251] Kanise Seiichi points out that the punishment was extended beyond the usual verbal warnings because the actions severely broke the common beliefs among a great portion of Japanese journalists about off-the-record remarks. These common beliefs are that in order to keep the politicians' faith in them, journalists automatically give them promises to keep silent, and that politicians will reveal the real practices (*honne*) of the political world based on their trust in journalists' promises.[252] Most Japanese journalists believe that this 'trusting relationship' (*shinrai kankei*) is the

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[250]   Chamoto Shigemasa, *"Seijika ga rekishi ninshiki wo ofureko de shika kataranai nihon no ijô"* (Japan's abnormality: Politicians only tell their historical understanding at off-the-record meetings", *Hôsô Repooto*, January 1996, (138), pp. 52-55; *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, The Japanese Press 1996, (Tokyo: NSK, 1996), p. 14; Kanise Seiichi, " *(Ofureko bôgen)* to kisha no shokugyô rinri " (Off-Record Remarks and Reporters' Professional Ethics), *Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû* 1996, (155), pp. 8-9. Another case in point here involved a Director General of DefenseFacilities Administration Agency (DFAA), Hôshuyama Noboru, who held a *kondan* in which he criticized the government's renewal of a land lease with the citizens of Okinawa prefecture for stationing the US military base in 1996. In his criticism, he made a remark that the Okinawan problem rose because the Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi was not very smart in the first place (*"Shushô ga atama ga warui kara"*). Hôshuyama allowed reporters to quote a great portion of his comments under the credit of 'a high rank official of DFAA. The TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting System) *News 23* reported in the program that a high rank official of the DFAA criticized that he could not help questioning the credibility of government leaders. The TBS reporters also presented the *kondan* notes to some top LDP officials. As a result, Hoshuyama resigned and the Defence Press Club sanctioned TBS by disallowing its reporters to enter the club rooms, press briefings or conferences for one month.

[251]   "Leaking of Off-the-Record Remarks Stirs Controversy", NSK News Bulletin, March 1996, 19(1), p. 2.

[252]   Kanise Seiichi, *op. cit.*

most important license to gain access to sensitive political information, even though they know that the public will never get to know the facts.[253] Two prominent journalists from political desks of elite newspapers -- *Sankei*, and *Yomiuri* -- share a similar view that *kondan* is important in their newsgathering process because "the more opportunity the reporters are in contact with the sources the better".[254] An NSK survey conducted in 1992, in which nearly forty per cent of reporters in four prefectures believe that *kondan* were very important to their newsgathering process and provided easy access to sensitive information, confirms this point.[255]

However, this 'trusting relationship' between the journalists and their sources easily results in journalists identifying with the sources and enforcing a form of self-censorship. Consequently, alleged political corruption and scandal stories are often published not by national newspapers but by the weekly news magazines which are generally not club members, and thus having no direct contact with the sources.[256] Those reporters who have direct contact with sources generally maintain their trusting relationship (*shinrai kankei*), and avoid causing any tense relationships (*kinchô kankei*) which could mean the end of their career. As the press reporters are coopted and their

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253   See, for example, Yoshida Shinichi, "*Ofureko shuzai to shirukenri: fudan no kenshô ga fukaketsu*" (Off-the-record Newsgathering and the Rights to Know: Ceaseless Investigation is Essential", *Asahi Shimbun*; November 10, 1995; Maki Tarô, "*Happyôsarenai nyuusu o otte*" (Go after the news that is not allowed to be published), *Nihon Kisha Kurabu Kaihô* (Japan's Press Club Bulletin), June 10, 1997, p. 2. Maki argues that there are few journalists in Japan who go after sanctioned news topic. He said that he was accused of being a socialist after printing an important record which contradicted a government announcement.

254   "*Medeia Gawa wa Hyôka to Keikai*" (Judgement and Caution from the Media), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1993, p. 25.

255   The survey was conducted on 203 reporters in four prefectures in Central Japan - Okayama-ken, Hiroshima-ken, Shimane-ken, and Tottori-ken. See Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo, "*Shiryô 6: shimbunkisha ankeeto kekka*" (Materials 6: NSK Results of Newspaper Reporters' Survey), *Shimbun Hôdô (Kenshô) Series* (Inspection Series of Newspaper Reports), October 1996, 1(1), pp. 128-30.

256   For example, reports of the Lockheed Scandal which led to the 1974 downfall of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei first appeared in a weekly magazine, "*Bungei Shunjû*", which had a circulation in the 1970s around 700,000. Their targets were urban educated readers. The stories were published under a title "*Tanaka Kakuei kenkyû: sono kinmyaku to jimmyaku*" (An Anatomy of Tanaka Kakuei: His Money and His Men) and written by a freelance writer, who exposed how Tanaka' benefited from raising and dispensing public funds. However, not until after the story was mentioned by the reporters from *Los Angeles Times* at the Foreign Correspondents' Club did the Japanese press start taking up the issue seriously. See, for instance, Kyogoku Junichi, "The Common Sense of the Public and Political Establishment", *Japan Echo*, 1975, 11(1), pp. 13-24; and Maggie Farley, "Japanese Press and the Politics of Scandal", in S.J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), *Media and Politics in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 133-64.

world views are shaped by sources such as politicians and the bureaucratic elite, the function of Japanese press in this case will hardly go beyond a mere conduit of information, that is to let the public know only what the state wants them to know.

Kisha kurabu has increasingly been criticized as a form of organization that promotes monopolization and conformity in news. There have been several attempts at the local government level to break away from the system. For instance, Takeuchi Ken, an ex-journalist who became a mayor of Kamagura city, successfully set up a 'media center' at the city hall to replace kisha kurabu.[257] Yet, other attempts have not been so successful.[258] Only a few solutions have been recently put forward by the NSK to improve the system. In December 1997, the NSK revised its guidelines for kisha kurabu. These new guidelines (shinkenkai) were aimed at establishing a new recognition of the clubs as "venues for newsgathering and news reporting activities", in accordance with its actuality in a turnaround from the conventional definition of "organizations for promoting friendship and socialization among reporters".[259] Although the revised guidelines include the principal of free newsgathering activities, embargo agreements such as kokuban kyôtei on certain news items and the clubs' rules governing informal briefings still pertain.[260]

Comments from Japanese senior editors declare both the pros and the cons of abolishing kisha kurabu. For instance, Iwamura Tatsurô of Asahi suggests that the kisha kurabu system is useful in systematically gathering and managing an abundance of

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[257] See for example, Takeuchi Ken, "Kisha kurabu tono waga tôsô" (My Own Struggle with the reporters' club), Bungei Shunjû, June 1996, pp. 202-9. Three basic rules of this media center are: firstly, it is recognized as a place for newsgathering and will not be attached to public offices; secondly, the media center is open to all kinds of media, such as newspapers, magazines, radios, specialized media, local, foreign media, as well as the public; and lastly, the center is a window of opportunity for both reporters and the public to exert their right to know.

[258] When the governor of Nagano prefecture tried to create a new press center to replace the traditional press club at the prefectural government building, his attempt was blocked by both the prefectural assembly and the media. See "Tanaka loses bid to set up media center", The Asahi Shimbun, July 9, 2001 (on-line edition).

[259] "Revised Guidelines on Operations of Kisha Clubs Adopted", NSK News Bulletin, March 1998, 21(1), pp. 1-2.

[260] Ôte Tsutomu, "Kisha kurabu kaikaku ni mukete" (Towards Reforming Kisha Kurabu), Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû, 1998, (164), p. 9; Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Henshû Iinkai,"Kisha kurabu ni kansuru shinkenkai" (The New Guidelines on the Press Clubs), Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû, 1998, (164), pp. 11-4.

information that flows in and out of state ministries and agencies on a daily basis.[261] The Editor-in-Chief of *Akahata*, however, argues that the closed nature of *kondan* and the unnecessarily over-detailed information given at the press conference can combine and work to eschew reporting other important news to the public.[262] Despite the introduction of this revised set of guidelines, the main characteristics of *kisha kurabu* such as exclusiveness seem to prevail.[263] Without a total eradication of the exclusive nature of the press clubs, as well as an abolition of the *kondan* briefings, incentives and sanctions will continue to nurture the collusive relationship between sources and reporters in Japan. This close co-operation limits the role of the press to a servant of the state, and inhibits a shift to a more active role.

2.6 Comparative Remarks

One Thai media scholar has summed up one prominent feature of the Thai press throughout its history: "the Thai press could be a responsible 'watchdog' press which watched for the government's wrongdoings and provided the public with a space for rational discourse and intellectual guidance on one day, and could become very sensationalized, or turned into a state propaganda machine on the next".[264] This erratic role of the Thai press was indeed a direct response to swift changes in the Thai political environment which previously often happened by means of a *coup d'état*. Controlling the access and outflow of political information by imposing strict censorship has been a traditional means of seizing control employed by the military. As a result, press laws in Thailand consist of two major components: one set of laws enacted by the government

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261 Interview with Mr. Iwamura Tatsurô, Deputy Chairman Editorial Board, *Asahi Shimbun* on November 18, 1998.

262 Interview with Mr. Kawamura Shigemitsu, the Editor-in-Chief, *Akahata Shimbun* on October 20, 1998.

263 After the introduction of the new set of guidelines in December 1997, *Shûkan Gendai*, a weekly magazine, wrote letters of application to six *kisha kurabu* attached to six major government ministries and agencies asking for membership. Beside one club that did not reply to the magazine's application, the rest denied the membership applications based on the interpretation of the new guidelines that the club system should be open to foreign media and did not mention anything about the local media. "*Kisha kurabu [shinkenkai] de naniga kawatta no ka?*" (What have been changed by the reporters' clubs' 'New Views'), *Shûkan Gendai*, July 1998, (18), pp. 180- 81.

264 Wilasinee Pinpithkul, "*Khwam plien plang tang-kan-muang ti mee pholkatob kab nungsuphim*" (Effects of the Changes in Political Environment on the Press), *Seu-molchon Parithat*, March 7, 1987, pp. 11-19.

of the day, and the other by the revolutionary group that took control of those governments. However, the latter has had the most influence.

In Japan, the notion of freedom of the press as a tool of democratic self-government, although guaranteed under the 1947 constitution, does not have deep historical roots. Despite the rapid progress in the development of regulatory techniques, freedom of expression in the early period of press development was not appreciated as an inviolable right secured to an individual. Rather, freedom of the Japanese press extended only as far as the outer limits of government regulations. The Japanese press was subservient to the state for the first half of the twentieth century, because it was heavily controlled by means of state censorship and sponsorship. The censorship system in Japan prior to the end of the Second World War was distinctly similar to the censorship system in Thailand, in that both states heavily imposed both legal controls, such as pre and post-publication censorship, and extralegal controls, such as the use of threats, and pressure. However, the extralegal controls, which involved subtle persuasion in inducing editors and publishers to voluntarily carry out self-censorship, have been more typical in the Japanese case. These extralegal control mechanisms included the system of consultation, administrative guidance, warnings, and the system of reporters' club or *kisha kurabu*. The system of *kisha kurabu*, in particular, continues to be a crucial factor, which inhibits the watchdog role of the Japanese press in the postwar period.

This discussion of the development of press censorship systems in Thailand and Japan has juxtaposed descriptions of different settings of power relations between the state and the media. In Thailand, the state's endorsement of coercive measures was evident in strict press regulations, legislative measures, and violent extralegal controls. Yet the linkage of interest and ownership connections reflected the reward strategies used by Thai politicians and military officials to elicit support and patronage from the press, and vice versa. In the case of Japan, the extensive network of reward subsidies that has been built up since the Meiji years has encouraged the shift from a serious

political press to a commercialized press, and inhibited the spread of diversity in political opinions through the monopolization of news and self-censorship. Although coercive instruments were extensively applied in the early days through the imposition of a multitude of press laws and regulations, reward strategies that have permeated through a number of subtle extralegal mechanisms, such as the system of consultation and *kisha kurabu*, are very influential in the current practices of self-censorship in the Japanese press.

Legal and extralegal controls are coercive and reward instruments employed by the Thai and Japanese states in their quest for control of political information. Clearly, legal control remains a key device for the Thai state to maintain control of political information, whereas the exchange of rewards and punishments via the system of the reporters' club helps the Japanese state and the press to maintain the status quo, and inhibits any challenge to the official discourse of political reality. As such, the Thai press is more likely to contest for control of political information by trying to gain access to and disseminate sensitive information, and fight against the existence of harsh press laws. In contrast, the Japanese press is compromised and too tightly restrained by structural limitations to actively disseminate their readily gathered political information to the public.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND

TELEVISION BROADCASTING REGULATIONS

*The 'Mong Tang Moom' program long existed in this society
due to its own success. It was impossible for anyone to
influence sponsors to stop funding the program because the
program was non-commercial. The only way to eliminate it
was to intervene by having the minister in charge of broadcasting
cancel the program.*

Chermsak Pinthong[1]

*Most commercial stations are submissive to the government
demands. For example, I believe some compromises have been made
when the stations have tried to obtain shares in the new BS-4 satellites.[2]
In general, however, these political pressures don't come in the form of
direct intervention, as they do in the case of NHK.*

Adachi Hisao[3]

In this chapter, power relations and political information contests between the
state and television broadcasting are discussed. Particular emphasis is given to an
examination of the dynamics of coercion as well as the reward and incentive strategies
that the state has applied to gain and maintain control over the political information
accessed and disseminated by television medium. Equal emphasis is also given to factors
that can bring about change in these power relations, and change in the political role of
television broadcasting, such as the state's ability to control the flow of information

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[1] Interview on 25 August 1998, Thammasat University, Bangkok. Chermsak Pinthong was a
producer of *Mong Tang Moom* (Different Perspective) (1990-1995), one of the pioneers of
current affairs programmes in Thailand. In 1998, he hosted three popular political discussion
programmes including *Phar-tang-ton* (Running through end road), *Khor-khid-duey-khon* (Let
me think), and *Lan-ban Lan-muang* (House's grounds - City's grounds).

[2] The BSAT-1b (BS-4 satellite) was launched in 2000 to begin digital broadcasting for
satellite channels. This new satellite carries four transponders. Each transponder can
accommodate four channels. One channel will be used for analog broadcasting, and three for
digital broadcasting. The five key commercial stations in Japan set up new companies to have
their shares on these transponders to start digital broadcasting in December 2000. See
Kaifu Kazuo, "Japan's Broadcasting Digitization Enters the Second Stage: Its Present State and
Prospects", NHK Broadcasting Culture and Research, New Year 2000, (11), pp. 5-11.

[3] Interview with Adachi Hisao, Editor, News Program, Nippon Television Network Corporation,
on October 29, 1998.

disseminated on television, the state's ability to mobilize broadcasting elite support, and its responses to changes in the political environment. Four areas of television broadcasting regulations in Thailand and Japan are examined: firstly, licensing systems and restrictions to entry into the broadcasting industry; secondly, the relationship between broadcasting and political elite on the basis of the licensing systems; thirdly, control of programming standards, particularly news and current affairs programs; and lastly, regulatory and technological changes and their effects on power relations between state and television broadcasting.

3.1 Licensing Systems, Limits of Ownership, and Restrictions to Entry

The contest over control of frequencies, and over what particular information or pictures can be broadcast to air in Thailand and Japan came much later than that of the press. This was due to the fact that the advent of television came a century after that of the press. In Thailand, since television was a technologically advanced medium and expensive to run, early broadcasting fell under state ownership. As soon as television broadcasting was begun, regulations were imposed. In Japan, on the contrary, regulations had been well put in place two years before broadcasting commenced. However, these regulations were similarly imposed on the premises that television broadcasting frequencies are restricted to a narrow band of nationally available frequencies, which should be efficiently managed and used for the collective good of the society, and that television is a powerful source of information that can greatly influence public opinion and attitudes. Therefore, it must be regulated to ensure the integrity of information and of those who control what is broadcast.[4]

Both Thai and Japanese governments in the past assumed the roles of regulators, of broadcasters, and of spectrum allocators. In order to maintain their level of control,

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[4]   Eric Barendt, however, argues that these reasons are no longer plausible due to the advent of new broadcasting technologies such as cable television and satellite broadcasting which brought about multiple broadcasting channels. The argument of scarcity of public resources, in particular, has become thus less tenable than before. See Eric Barendt, Broadcasting Law: A Comparative Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); See also Hasebe Yasuo, "The Characteristics and Ideas of Japan's Broadcasting System", Studies of Broadcasting, March 1989, (25), pp. 117-140.

access to broadcasting licenses were limited to the hands of political and broadcasting elite. In particular, public participation in the allocation of the spectrum, as could be allowed via an independent commission like the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in the US, has been absent in both countries. Indeed, the large financial investment required to run a television broadcasting service in itself narrows the field of potential recipients of operating licenses. Both governments gave licenses only to the elite whose economic positions enabled them to make such acquisitions. The purpose of licensing has thus been subverted, insofar as both governments have been protecting the economic benefits of the few broadcasting elite by limiting competition through restrictions imposed against new entrants. Therefore, there has been a concentration of influence in terms of ownership, and an emphasis on profit-oriented programs with content, which only serves the interests of the government and the broadcasting elite. These features of television broadcasting in Thailand and Japan have been shaped and forged by coercive and reward relations exchanged between the state and television medium, which center around the licensing system.

3.1.1 State-run Stations, Licensed Stations, and the first Independent Station in Thailand

From its inception, television broadcasting in Thailand was subject to the Broadcasting Act of 1955, which favored a state monopoly. Clause 5 of this Act limited private operators by specifically stating that "no person shall provide sound broadcasting or radio broadcasting without licensing from the licensing official".[5] Regulations prescribed in the subsequent laws and decrees also limited legal ownership of television transmissions to state agencies, such as the Public Relations Department (PRD) and the Army. The first channel, Channel 4 (presently Channel 9), was established in 1955 and operated by a state agency, but was known as a limited company, namely the Thai Television Company. Fifty-five per cent of this company was owned by the PRD. The rest of the shareholders included the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Police Department, and four state enterprises including the Thai tobacco monopoly, the Thai

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[5]   Broadcasting Directing Board Division, Public Relations Department, Broadcasting Act 1995, 1987 & Regulation on Broadcasting 1992 (Bangkok: PRD, 1995), p. 5.

sugar organization, the state liquor factory, and the state lottery bureau.[6] The Thai Television Company received government funding largely through the PRD, and collected receivers' fees based on the number of cathode ray tubes within a television set.[7] Unlike the public television systems in Japan and Britain, which rely entirely on receivers' fees and do not allow advertising, the Thai Television Company came to largely rely on advertising revenue after three years of operation.[8]

The PRD is concerned with government public relations, and is attached to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which ensures close prime ministerial supervision of broadcasting matters. One of the main purposes of the state's introduction of television was to use it as an effective means of conveying state propaganda, attacking communist ideology, and rebutting the highly critical adversarial press.[9] After the Second World War, the Phibul government co-operated with the United States to launch an anti-communism campaign. The government, which had already been successful in using radio to propagate state ideology, was motivated and assisted by the US to introduce television in the country.[10] Phibul also ensured that he could use television to serve his political purposes by appointing his close aide, General Phao Sriyanon, to the chairmanship of the Thai Television Company. Phao's tasks were to supervise and ensure that the station's programs would be completely under the government's direction. Yet this overt control of a television station by a government dominated by a political faction created an environment conducive to the development of a broadcasting system that quickly became a tool in the power struggle among political factions. The second channel, Channel 7 (presently Channel 5), was established in 1958 by the leader

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[6]   Guy B. Scandlen, "Thailand", in J. A. Lent (ed.), <u>Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific: A Continental Survey of Radio and Television</u> (Philadephia: Temple U.P., 1978), p. 126.

[7]   The fees varied according to the number of the cathode ray tubes within each set.
For example, between one to four tubes cost 25 baht. From five to eight cost 50 baht and any owners of television set with more than nine tubes had to pay 100 baht. The Thai Television Company also collected viewing fees costing 400 baht per set. See Sinith Sitthirak, <u>*Kamnerd thorathat thai (2493-2500)* (Inception of Thai Television (1950-1957))</u> (Bangkok: Khled Thai, 1992), p. 119.

[8]   *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[9]   *Ibid.* , pp. 57-66.

[10]   *Ibid.*, p. 19. The Radio Corporation of America, in particular, assisted in establishing the first TV broadcasting station and developing television technology in Thailand.

of the Si Sao Theves clique and the head of the Army, Field Marshal Sarit.[11] The Thai Television Company, which operated Channel 4 (presently Channel 9), was, however, dissolved and replaced in 1977 by a public enterprise, namely the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) after running at a loss.[12] Yet, the Royal Decree maximized the overt control of government over MCOT and its stations. It stated, for example, that the Prime Minister and the Minister who oversaw MCOT had a right to appoint or cancel its director.[13]

In 1987, Channel 5 and Channel 9 were joined by another government owned station, Channel 11. Established by the PRD with financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and technical assistance from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, or *Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai (NHK)*, the main purpose of Channel 11 was to educate the public.[14] Despite the fact that Channel 11 was modeled after the NHK, the key station and its eight regional network stations do not collect receiving fees. Without advertising, they have relied solely on the government budgets through the PRD and the OPM.[15] As a result, Channel 11 has been subjected to domination by and interference from those who are in control of the government. Therefore, program content has not been as responsible to the public audience as it should have been. Rather, it has become more responsible to the state, insomuch as there are often state-produced documentaries to promote three orchestrated symbols of the Thai identity -- the Thai Royal family, Buddhism and the Nation.[16] Indeed, the Thai

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[11] It is known as Channel 5 at present. This Army channel was established as a result of an ongoing rivalry between factions within the military- particularly between those of Phibul and Sarit. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

[12] Krikkiet Phanphiphat and Panadda Thanasathit, *"Thorathat thai: Chak bangkhunphrom thung rabob daothiem"* (Thai Television: From Bangkhunprom to Satellite Broadcasting System), *Wiwatthankan seumolchon Thai (Evolution of the Thai Mass Media)*, Paper presented at the seminar on the occasion of the year of the World's Communication, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok: Buddha Bhucha Publishing, 1983), p. 147.

[13] Khamjorn Lhuiyapong, *"Ruam chalong 20 pi khong Or.Sor.Mor.Thor "* (Join in to Celebrate 20th Years Anniversary of MCOT), *Lok khong seu lem 2 (Media's World Vol.2)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1998), pp. 191-202.

[14] JICA gave a non-loan subsidy to Channel 11 worth approximately 2,062 million yen or 300 million baht.

[15] The PRD's eight regional network stations include two stations in the North - Channel 7 Pitsanulok and Channel 8 Lam Pang, two stations in the Northeast - Channel 5 Khon Kan and Channel 4 Ubon Ratchatani, and four stations in the South - Channel 5 Phuket, Channel 5 Nakorn Srithammarat, Channel 10 Had Yai, and Channel 12 Surat Thani.

[16] Annette Hamilton, "Mass Media and National Identity in Thailand", in C. Reynolds (ed.), *National Identity and Its Defenders* (Chiengmai: Silkworm Books, 1991), pp. 341-81.

official concept of a public broadcasting service is quite different from those of the British or the Canadian, which has been described as concerned with reinforcing the notion of citizenship and elevating the level of information and cultural rights of people.[17] Strictly speaking, the term 'public service broadcasting' should thus be translated into Thai as '*seu barikan satharana*', or the media that should be totally dedicated to serving the public. However, the Thai official translated version of 'public service broadcasting' is '*seu khong chart*'[18] or 'the national media', which, in reality, often deprives the people of information and their cultural rights.

Licenses to operate were not given to private enterprises until the late 1960s when the extension of regional networks was necessary in the face of communist threats. In 1967, the military granted a license to operate Channel 7 to Krungthep Wittayu Thorathat Ltd. (later changed to Bangkok Broadcasting Co.,Ltd.), while the Thai Television Company gave the Bangkok Entertainment Co.,Ltd. (later changed to BEC World Ltd.) a license to operate Channel 3 in 1968.[19] These stations were seen by the government as complementary to, rather than competitive with, the existing state-run channels for these private broadcasters, and they were only supposed to engage in entertainment and the dissemination of state propaganda. The state authorities could demand to preview programs and enforce special on-air schedules, such as news and special broadcasting programs provided by the TV Pool of Thailand.[20]

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[17] Graham Murdock, "Corporate Dynamics and Broadcasting Futures", in H. Mckay and T. O'Sullivan (eds.), The Media Reader: Continuity and Transformation (London: Sage, 1999), p. 30.

[18] Interview with Tuenchai Sinthuwanick, Director of Program Production at Channel 11 on July 18, 2000.

[19] Channel 7 began broadcasting from November 1967, while Channel 3 started broadcasting in March 1970. See brief details of Channel 7 at http://www.tv7.com, and Channel 3 at http://www.tv3.co.th.

[20] The TV Pool of Thailand was set up in December 1968, to co-ordinate a simultaneous, all-channel broadcast. It was then chaired by an army officer, General Prasith Chuenbun. Programs broadcast have included live-broadcasts of royal ceremonies, official annoucements, and special satellite-relay services. Since April 20, 1980, the state has required all evening news programs to be broadcast at 8 pm. An order issued by the Public Relations Department on December 31, 1994, however, cancelled this requirement and several other orders particularly the Revolutionary Orders No.15 and No.17. Flexible broadcasting times for news programs were also allowed more than before, although news on royal matters were still broadcast by all stations at 8 pm. See Pisith Chawalathawach, *Kodmai seusan molchon (Mass Media Law)*, 6th ed. (Bangkok: Dok Ya, 1995), pp. 323-326.

However, it was not until 1975 when Channels 3 and 7 really became commercially viable with higher audience ratings than the state-run stations and the government upgraded a radio broadcasting regulator to become the National Broadcasting Executive Board (NBEB). This event clearly reflected the government's intention to secure control of broadcasting frequencies insomuch as the Board was used to oversee legal, administrative, and programming aspects of both radio and television broadcasting. Moreover, the regulating committee comprised only representatives from government agencies such as the PRD, the Post and Telegraph Department (PTD), the Police Department, and representatives from the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.[21] The NBEB authority was reinforced by stringent rules prescribed in Revolutionary Orders No.15 and No.17 that were imposed after the coup in October 1976. These regulations strictly prohibited any broadcasting content that could be detrimental to public morality, peace, and national security. In 1980 the NBEB issued additional rules that required all televisions stations to broadcast evening news at 8 pm and the national anthem twice daily. Only 10 minutes of advertising were allowed in every hour.[22] The means of the NBEB monitoring was direct, as four delegations visited stations daily to preview programs. In the case that a station violated the prescribed rules and orders, the NBEB had the authority to give a warning in writing, cancel the program, or withdraw a license.[23] During the military administrations in particular, the NBEB was the governments' main apparatus for bestowing rewards, imposing penalties, and pre-censoring the news content broadcast on the commercial stations.[24]

Another organization that was involved in the granting of broadcasting licenses was the National Radio Frequency Management Board (NRFMB), which operated under the supervision of the Post and Telegraph Department (PTD) in accordance with

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[21]   Wilawan Wiwatthanakantang et.al, "*Perd seriphap TV-witthayu 'ntarai?*" (Is liberalization of television and radio dangerous?), *Phujadkarn Rai Duen* , June 1992, p. 142.

[22]   The National Broadcasting Executive Board, *Kodmai lae rabieb kiewkab witthayu krachaisieng lae witthayu thorathat haeng prathet Thai (Laws and Orders on Radio and Television Broadcasting in Thailand)* (Bangkok: Preecha Kanphim, 1981).

[23]   Saitip Sukatipan, "Broadcast Media and the Politics of Thailand", in C.G. Hernandez and W. Pflemming (eds.), *Media and Politics in Asia: Trends, Problems and Prospects* (Manila: University of Philippines, 1991), p. 79.

[24]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak et al., *Bothbath khong rath nai thang dan seusanmolchon (The Role of the State Concerning the Mass Media)* (Bangkok: Nititham, 1996), p. 22.

the National Radio Frequency Management Regulations B.E. 2518 (1975).[25] To obtain a broadcasting license, an applicant must submit applications to both the NBEB and the NRFMB. In principle, if there was a channel available, the application would be approved and sent to the Cabinet for final considerations, as demonstrated in Appendix 3. However, the evidence showed that neither the NBEB nor the NRFMB typically awarded licenses to the limits of spectrum availability. Often, they rejected every application outright, and claimed that all the nationally available VHF (Very High Frequencies) were fully in use, despite their full knowledge of a vast availability of alternative UHF (Ultra High Frequencies).[26] The rejection was made without concern for the fact that only a small portion of the provincial public in Thailand had access to all broadcast channels.[27] In contrast to the Japanese government which foresaw the benefits of using UHF to broadcast in rural areas and commenced broadcasting on UHF in 1967,[28] the Thai state's wish to retain control of spectrum, and bureaucratic incompetence, were the underlying reasons why the first UHF broadcast in Thailand did not begin until 1996.

Indeed, the closed nature of this licensing system has maintained the duopolistic structure of television broadcasting in Thailand for nearly three decades. This type of licensing system has been subject to criticism, both for its secrecy and arbitrariness in preserving the status-quo. Ubonrat, for example, called this type of licensing system "*sampathan bab aphisit*", or privileged concession, arguing that the logic underlying the awarding of licenses has been entirely based on personal relationships and profits rather

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[25] The PTD is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The Ministry directly supervises the allocation of spectrum. However, issues of satellite broadcasting and telecommunications, however, are overseen by the Communication Authority of Thailand (CAT) which is a state-owned enterprise. It also works in conjunction with another state-owned enterprise -- the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) -- on telecommunication issues.

[26] Ultra High Frequency, or UHF for TV, means extremely high frequency between 510-790 MHz that can only travel a short distance. Very High Frequency , or VHF for TV, refers to frequency between 47 to 230 MHz, thus can reach a greater distance, and cover a bigger area than UHF. See Sukran Rojpaiwong et al, "*Pua hen kae chart dai prodthue hai ekkachon pen jaokhong sathanee TV-witthayu diewnee*" (Please let the private sectors own television and radio frequencies for the sake of the nation), *Phujadkarn Rai Duen*, July 1992, pp. 162-185.

[27] Channel 3, for example, could cover only around 20.64 % of the whole country when it started in 1970. It was not until 1987 that Channel 3 started to build its 22 relay stations, which allowed it to cover about 80.7 per cent of the country. By 1999, the coverage became nationwide. See http://www.tv3.co.th/.

[28] Shiga Nobuo, *Shôwa terebi hôsô-shi (ge) (The History of Shôwa Television II)* (Tokyo: Hayagawa Shobô, 1990), pp. 23-24.

than benefits to the nation.[29] In the cases of Channel 7 and Channel 3, licenses were not initially sold to the highest bidder or to those who offered more quality programs, but to those who had personal relationships or financial close ties with influential groups and decision-makers. Indeed, both the Kannasutra family and the Maleenont family, which have been the sole licensees of Channel 7 and Channel 3 respectively, had very strong connections with military governments in the past.[30] The Kannasutra family, on the one hand, had a strong association with Field Marshal Praphas Charusathien, who was the supreme commander of the Army when the concession was granted. The owner of the Krungsriayuddhaya Bank, a close friend of the family, also gave a financial guarantee to Channel 7. The head of the Maleenont family which operates Channel 3 was, on the other hand, a close friend of Field Marshal Sarit's brother. That friendship was passed on to Sarit's successor - Field Marshal Thanom, who later became the Prime Minister and granted the family a privileged concession. When Channel 3 was in financial trouble and had a little chance of getting its license renewed, the Maleenont family pulled strings to gain financial support from the biggest bank in Thailand - the Bangkok Bank - and subsequently had its license renewed.[31] The alliances between Channel 7 and Krungsriayuddhaya Bank, and Channel 3 and the Bangkok Bank ensured that connections between banking institutions and television stations became absolutely necessary. The military-run Channel 5 developed an intricate link with the Military Bank[32], whereas the MCOT's Channel 9 allied with the Ministry of Finance's Krung Thai Bank.

Clearly, this type of privileged concession reflects the patron-client relationships of Thai society.[33] The moral basis of these relationships is the exchange of

[29]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "Television and the Emergence of 'Civil Society' in Thailand", in D. French and M. Richards (eds.), Contemporary Television: Eastern Perspectives (New Delhi: Sage, 1996), p. 185

[30]   "*Song trakul sudyod thurakit TV: Kannasutra-Maleenont*" (The Top Two Families in TV Business: Kannasutra - Maleenont), *Prachachart Thurakit*, January 20-23, 1991, p. 31.

[31]   *Ibid.*

[32]   The Thai Military Bank was founded when the military was in power in the 1960s. The Bank monopolized the financing of the arms trade and was a source of profit and patronage for the generals who took the positions as board members of the Bank and its subsidiary companies.

[33]   See Amara Pongsapich and Preecha Khuvinpanth (eds.), *Rabob-upatham (Patron-Client System)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996).

incentives and rewards between patrons and clients. Mulder observes that this exchange is class-based, and thus always unequal because of the difference in the economic and political hierarchy of the patron and the client. The term 'patron' denotes "the higher people" (*phu yai*), and the term 'client' refers to "the lower people" (*phu noi*).[34] Neher and Marlay have also emphasized the importance of moral bonds between *phu yai* and *phu noi*, suggesting that they "can evolve into lifelong relationships as strong as blood ties".[35] In the television industry, 'patrons' refer to the military, which have enjoyed the financial support of, and guarantees from, the licensees and the banks. The 'clients' include the chosen few of corporate broadcasters, who have been allowed to make excessive profits from their long-term control of the airwaves by paying minimum license fees and holding their licenses for extremely long periods.[36]

Indeed, these privileges became the linchpin of the regulatory structure for awarding licenses by interlocking the political, the military, and the broadcasting elite into an embrace of mutual patronage. The broadcasting elite dissuaded the state agencies that administered the frequencies from promoting new-entry competition in many ways. In exchange for protection from entry by new competitors and guarantees of license renewal, they submitted to the state agencies' demands to control, or even change, program content, particularly of programs that disseminated political information. The broadcasting elite in turn persuasively argued for broadcasting policies that ignored public interests and promoted their own ends. Consultations, personal contacts, and the exchanges of rewards and incentives were seen as important instruments to facilitate this process.

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[34]   Niels Mulder, Thai Image: The Culture and the Public World (Chieng Mai: Silkworm Books, 1997), p. 159.

[35]   Clark D. Neher, and Ross Marlay, Democracy and Development in Southeast Asia: The Winds of Change (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 15-16.

[36]   For example, the license to operate Channel 7 was granted for fifteen years in 1967, then was renewed for the second time for twelve years in 1983 for 151 million baht. In 1995, it was renewed for eleven years. This contract was, however, secretly extended by the Army to twenty-five years in 1998 for 4.6 billion baht. In the case of Channel 3, the Bangkok Entertainment Company received a ten-year license in 1970 for 54 million baht. In 1980, it renewed the license for ten years, which was worth 148.2 million baht. The most recent contract was renewed in 1990, which granted the company a thirty-year license by the MCOT for 3.4 billion baht. See "*Chong 7 thannanpuk khruakhaihnua-sunya'ua*" (Channel 7's Firm Grounds: More Networks, Beneficial Contracts", *Prachachart Thurakit*, October 22-25, 1998, pp. 17-18.

This patron-client style of relationship continued when MCOT gave a concession to operate cable television services to two private operators in the early 1990s. In this case only two large corporations, both of which had track records of ownership of other media and telecommunications, were permitted to gain access.[37] In a similar vein, the subsequent liberalization of the MCOT and the Army radio frequencies have not promoted real market competition and media liberalization. Instead, it has favored big corporations and promoted market monopolies across broadcasting sectors.[38] However, it can be argued that the 'patron-client' ties between the licensors and the licensees in the 1990s assumed a new form, which was different from the traditional conceptualization. The new 'patron-client' links had a temporary nature with weaker bonds of loyalty than before, and were more heavily based on the pursuits of self-interest, and thus responsive to changes in the society. The emergence of this 'modern' form of patron-client relationship in Thailand was largely due to the weakening of the military/bureaucracy alliance led by a withdrawal of the military from the political arena in 1992, frequent changes of government, the adoption of a profit-oriented corporate culture by broadcasting organizations, and rising public influence on national broadcasting policy.

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[37]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *Rabob witthayu lae thorathat thai: Krongsang thang setthakit kanmuang lae pholkrathob thor sitthi seriphap (Thai Radio and Television Systems: The Political and Economic Structures and Effects of Rights and Freedom)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1999), p. 44. The concessionaires included, firstly, International Broadcasting System (*IBC*) which was owned by the Thai politician and business entrepreneur, Thaksin Shinawatra, who also owns three Thai communication satellites. Secondly, Siam Communication and Broadcasting, which operated *Thai Sky TV* and was owned by the mega-media group, *Wattachak. IBC* aimed at Bangkok audiences, while *Thai Sky* targeted provincial markets and broadcast more Thai-language programming. *Thai Sky TV* was forced to cease its operations after the Shinawatra satellite cut a relay service in August 1997 for unpaid transponder rentals. TA Telecom Holdings gained a concession from the PRD to operate its *UTV* cable broadcast via fibre optic links in 1994. However, in 1997 it decided to merge with *IBC* to become *UBC* due to huge losses. In 1999, Shinawatra Corp. sold its share in UBC to TA Telecom Holdings, and a South-African Dutch Cable Company, MIH. In 2000, there was one national cable TV operator-United Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), and more than 30 operators who are servicing upcountry. See Glen Lewis and Peter Thompson, "Communication Policy in Thailand in the 1990s: Liberalization and Democratization", Media International Australia, August 2000, (96), pp. 121-135.

[38]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "Limited Competition Without Re-regulating the Media", Asian Journal of Communication, 1997, 7(2), pp. 57-75.

Members of the public, led by academics and the press, recognized the drawbacks of the licensing system operating within the traditional patron-client relationship framework. These drawbacks became particularly clear during the May Crisis in 1992 when the military-backed government imposed a black-out and manipulated news content. After the mass uprising brought an end to the military regime, the public pressured the subsequent interim government headed by Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun to liberalize ownership of television broadcasting and to abolish the NBEB, as well as the orders and decrees, which allowed direct interference of government agencies in programming content. The Anand government, as a result, promulgated the Regulation of Broadcasting of 1992, which assigned existing broadcasters and potential new entrants to a new regulatory body called the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). This regulatory body, for the first time, incorporated representatives from non-government sectors, including academics and representatives from NGOs, women's groups, and consumers' groups.[39] The new regulator was directly responsible for policy formulation, which had been previously lacking. It also carried the NBEB's responsibility in supervising franchise auctions and approving licenses, and applying when appropriate sanctions for the breach of license conditions. It also exercised this authority over cable and satellite services. However, the NBEB's previewing duties, as well as programming and scheduling authorities were returned to the station's executives. Yet, the NBC was not an independent body and was administered by the PRD. The 1992 Broadcasting Regulation also maintained that TV broadcasting operators must be officially licensed, as the state retained the legal ownership rights of frequencies. With these rights, the NBC was authorized to issue licenses to whomsoever it wished and to censor program content when it saw fit.[40]

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[39] Broadcasting Directing Board Division, Public Relations Department, Thailand: Broadcasting Act 1955, 1987 & Regulation on Broadcasting 1992 (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1995), p. 77.

[40] According to Clause 4 in the Regulation on Broadcasting B.E. 2535 (1992), " 'station' means the broadcasting station established by a government agency or State enterprise to provide sound broadcasting service or radio television broadcasting service permitted by the NBC and permitted to provide sound broadcasting service or radio broadcasting service from the Licensing Official under the law on broadcasting; provided that whether such government agency or State enterprise shall entrust other person to provide the service by any means". Broadcasting Directing Board Division, Public Relations Department, Broadcasting Act 1995, 1987 & Regulation on Broadcasting 1992 (Bangkok: PRD, 1995), p. 73.

Ownership of the means of production and dissemination of news was a formidable source of influence over which the state desperately needed to keep control. As long as the state had ownership rights, its ability to interfere in programming content was guaranteed to a certain degree, albeit this interference may be disguised in the form it takes.

The Anand government's liberalization policy further included permission for 24-hour television broadcasting, and a plan to create two new UHF channels via an open-bidding process.[41] The first bid was supervised by the Chuan government in May 1994. The bid was won by a consortium of twelve media and communication giants, such as Siam TV and Communications Ltd (a joint venture between Saha Cinema Holding and Management - a subsidiary of the Crown Property Bureau - and banking groups), Siam Commercial Bank, Broadcasting Network Thailand Ltd., The Daily News Group, The Nation Multimedia Group, Kantana Ltd, and so on.[42] This consortium later established a company called Siam Infotainment Ltd., to control and operate the new UHF channel, namely Independent Television, or *iTV*. Those who lost the bid also included consortiums of media-related and telecommunication groups.[43] The competition among these groups was so severe that some of those who lost the bid attacked the whole bidding process, claiming that it lacked transparency.[44] This claim was not without substance, as the President of Saha Cinema Holding and Management was a member of the MCOT committee, and was in charge of drafting the terms of reference for the bid.[45] Moreover, the presence of one of the biggest banks in Thailand and members of the committee must have secured the winning position. As discussed

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[41]   See, for example, Ubonrat Siriyuwasak, "Media reform: One year on after the May crisis", Thai Development Newsletter, 1993, (22), pp. 36-37.

[42]   *The Nation* replaced Dokbia Publishing Group which withdrew itself from the consortium after it had won the bid. See Panadda Chaisawat and Pairach Petlum, "*Patibatkan iTV*" (Operation *iTV*), *Khoo Kaeng Rai Wan* , July 16, 1997, p. 1, 14, 15.

[43]   These were such companies as Thai Rath, Telecom Holding Ltd, Bangkok Broadcasting Corporations, Samart Communications, Asia Vision, Media of Media, Amarin Printing, and so forth. *Ibid*.

[44]   For example, Pramut Sutabutra, an ex-MCOT director, now heads *Bangkok Broadcasting Corporations,* argued that there were people who benefited from this deal among the committees which selected the winner. *Khoo Kaeng Rai Wan,* January 12, 1996, p. A1, A11.

[45]   "*Banawit Bunyaratana: pla muek thi nuad kamlang phan tua'ng*" (Bannawit Bunyaratana: The octopus which is caught by its own tentacles), *Phujadkan Rai Duen,* August 1995, p. 162.

previously, the earlier alliances between television stations and banks had ensured that a partnership with banking institution was necessary to secure a license and guarantee the financial future of a TV station. Yet the bidding committee claimed that the winning bid entailed a 25 billion baht return to the government within thirty years, which was far higher than the minimum requirements and its competitors. Thus, one cannot simply point to a single factor, such as patron-client links, as a criterion for a license, as previously had been the case. Rather, the viability of license bids is now based on offers of highest return, track records of broadcasting expertise, access to an abundance of funds, and most importantly, strategic alliances with insiders who have mutual interests.

After the bidding, conflicts of interest among broadcasting elite, particularly between the winners and losers, caused the relationship between public and commercial broadcasting to become an uneasy one. Somkiet Onwimon, head of Asia Vision, who also lost his bid for the new channel, joined forces with the PRD's channel 11 to relaunch the station's news hours in 1996. Somkiet utilized his personal connection with Piyanat Watcharaporn, Minister of the Office of the Prime Minister overseeing the PRD and Channel 11 at that time, to gain a three-year concession to manage Channel 11's news programs and earn rights to sell advertising, notwithstanding the Channel's non-commercial policy.[46] Somkiet was also hired as a consultant to Channel 11.[47] Somkiet's alliance with Channel 11 indeed had advantages over the new channel, *iTV*, because Channel 11 had a national coverage, whereas *iTV*'s coverage was limited to Bangkok in 1996. Due to the relative decline in the government's financial support for the public broadcasting system, as well as the patron-client relations between state officials and broadcasting elite which pervaded the high level, Channel 11 was compelled to compete with private *iTV* without regard for its supposed obligations to the public. Since these business agreements were largely based on a personal relationship between

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[46]   Advertising is only allowed in supers running along the bottom of the TV screen, logos, or commercials with themes related to community or social services, or government commercials. The terms of the contract required Asia Vision to pay Channel 11 Bt. 70 million in the first year, Bt 3 million monthly in the second year, and Bt. 4 million monthly in the third year. See "*Perd kolayut iTV-channel 11 ching TV khaosan*" (Disclosure of ITV and Channel 11's strategies to lead in television news), *Krungthep Thurakit*, July 1, 1996, pp. 7-8.

[47]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

Piyanat and Somkiet, the contract between Asia Vision and Channel 11 was terminated following the resignation of Somkiet from Asia Vision and the company's failure to meet its financial commitments to the station.[48]

The application of free market principles to the existing television broadcasting system has indeed been put to the test in the auction of a license for what became *iTV*, and in the attempts to commercialize Channel 11. However, the current system dominated by a new form of patron-client relations still lacks transparency. This condition has created loopholes, which allow existing large media corporations to weave their webs of economic-based networks linking themselves, non-media related business investors, and state officials in the process of media liberalization.

The economic crisis that began in mid-1997 delayed the government's plan to offer another UHF channel to bidders, and also left the government no choice but to approve *iTV's* request to delay its first royalty payment for two years without interest.[49] Further, *iTV's* executives pushed the cabinet to revoke the share limit requirement of ten per cent allowing shareholders such as the Nation to increase its shareholdings, and extend its management responsibility within *iTV*.[50] *iTV's* current financial vulnerability and the withdrawal of its major shareholders such as the Crown Property Bureau, has attracted the investment interest of Thaksin Shinawatra, a telecom tycoon who owns three Thai satellites, several radio stations, mobile phone and computer companies.[51] Since there is no law that forbids cross-media ownership in Thailand, his investment in *iTV* inevitably means further concentration of ownership across various media.[52] The cabinet's lifting of the ten per cent shareholding limitation among *iTV's* shareholders paved way for Thaksin's domination in the ownership of *iTV*.

[48]   Chularat Saengpassa and Rattana Siripol, "Channel 11 Set for Major Change Soon", The Nation, January 26, 1997 (on-line edition).

[49]   The approval was given on the grounds that the PRD was found to be at fault in delaying the process of *iTV* installation of transmission equipment. See "*iTV* Can Delay Its First Fee Payment", The Nation, June 26, 1999 (on-line edition).

[50]   "Nation Group: We're firmly with iTV', The Nation, September 21, 1999 (on-line edition).

[51]   "Thaksin Plans iTV takeover", The Nation, February 2, 2000 (on-line edition); and "Two Blocs Fight for iTV Stake", Bangkok Post, February 3, 2000 (on-line edition).

[52]   *The Nation Multimedia Group* is the publisher of *the Nation, Krungthep Thurakit, Nation Junior,* and *Nation Sudsapda*. It produces regular programs for *iTV* and Channel 9, and runs

In May 2000, Thaksin reportedly bought forty percent of *iTV*'s shares, and by June 2001 he increased his holding to 100 per cent.[53] Thaksin is also the ambitious leader of a new broad-based, high-profile political party, *Thai Rak Thai* (Thais love Thais). His control of *iTV* means a direct control over the station's programming content, and *iTV* has become the party's propaganda machine. As Thaksin was working out the deal with *iTV* executives, the station quickly adopted self-censorship on the weekly program, *Sarakhan*, which usually ridicules politicians and current affairs. A section which parodied Thaksin's plan to buy *iTV*'s shares was pulled before it went to air.[54] The supposed reasoning behind *iTV*'s inception was the government's positive responses to public demand for an impartial TV news channel. Yet an alliance between *iTV* and any political party has defeated such a purpose.

Thaksin's takeover of *iTV* was reportedly based on his ambition to fill the gap in his telecommunication and satellite businesses. However, it could be seen as being prompted by his ambition in politics. The results of the 2000 upper house election also highlighted another level of association between broadcasting and politics. Thailand now has at least three broadcasters as senators,[55] whose direct access to television programs and influence on format and editorial content is the same as before the election. One of Channel 3's executives, Pracha Maleenont, also became a successful party-list candidate of the Thai-Rak-Thai Party in the 2001 election, and served as Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications under Thaksin. Remarkably, these alliances between broadcasting stations and political parties or individuals resemble the ties between powerful military individuals, their cliques, and broadcasting stations in the 1950s. In

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four radio stations including FM 89.5, FM 90.0, FM 90.5, and AM 1107. The group, holding a 10 per cent equity in *iTV*, was invited by *Siam Commercial Bank*, to join the consortium and produce news and current affairs program on *iTV*. The group also plans to launch another news channel on a cable television in mid 2000. It is proposed to be a 24-hour channel, providing news in both Thai and English. See "Nations set news slot on UBC", The Nation March 30, 2000 (on-line edition).

[53] "*iTV* approves 40% stake for Shin Corp.", Bangkok Post, May 31, 2000 (on-line edition).

[54] "Thaksin bid makes *iTV* muzzle itself", The Nation, May 29, 2000 (on-line edition).

[55] These include a magazine publisher and veteran senator, Damrong Phuttan, a first time-elected political debate showhost and university professor, Chermsak Pinthong, and a veteran news anchor and university professor, Somkiet Onwimon.

the 2000s, television in Thailand can again become a means of power struggle among political factions.

The current licensing system of television broadcasting in Thailand can be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one edge, the economic liberalization of the system promotes free competition and supports the move towards a watchdog role for television broadcasting. On the other edge, the culture of patronage between officials and the powerful broadcasting elite still prevails in this system, albeit it has taken a different form. This situation has limited new entrants to the industry, whilst allowing official interference with political information broadcast on television. Moreover, since regulation of cross-media ownership does not exist in Thailand, there are likely to be worrisome outcomes from the current licensing system. Firstly, all types of media might eventually be owned by a handful of big corporations. Secondly, small entrepreneurs and community operators may not have a chance to gain a concession. Thirdly, television broadcasting could limit itself to the role of a political guard dog -- only serving the interests of its masters, the political and broadcasting elite. The public and media academics together addressed these concerns when the new Constitution was drafted in 1997. An article to overhaul the whole television broadcasting system was included in the new Constitution. This article will be dealt with later in the chapter.

Table 2: National Broadcasters, their Operators and Licensors in Thailand and Japan

Country	Terrestrial Channel	Operator	Licensor
Thailand	3	Bangkok Entertainment Co.	MCOT
	5	Army	Army
	7	Bangkok Broadcasting Co.	Army
	9	MCOT	MCOT
	11	PRD	PRD
	ITV	Siam Infotainment Co.	OPM
Japan	NHK1, NHK2 DBS1, DBS2	NHK	MPT*
	NTV	Nippon Television Network Corporation	MPT
	TBS	Tokyo Broadcasting System, Inc.	MPT
	TV Asahi	Asahi National Broadcasting Co., Ltd.	MPT
	Fuji TV	Fuji Telecasting Co., Ltd.	MPT
	TV Tokyo	TV Tokyo Co., Ltd.	MPT

*Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT)
Source: Author compiled (1998)

3.1.2 NHK and the Commercial Network Cartel

The Japanese television broadcasting system has been dominated by a dual structure consisting of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation or *Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai* (NHK), and commercial broadcasting companies or *Minkan Hôsô*. NHK is a public service broadcasting enterprise that is guaranteed by law to receive fees from every broadcast-receiving household. Therefore, it carries no commercial advertisements. Commercial broadcasters, on the other hand, receive their main income from advertisements.

NHK was established in 1926 as a result of the merging of three temporary state-run radio stations in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya.[56] It was modelled after the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). Before the end of the Second World War, NHK was governed by the 1915 Wireless Telegraphy law, which gave the Ministry of Communications (presently the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) or

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[56]   Omori Yukio, "Broadcasting Legislation in Japan: Its Historical, Process, Current Status, and Future tasks", Studies of Broadcasting, March 1989, (25), p. 13.

yûsei-shô) full authority to govern and administer radio frequencies and programs. As a result, NHK's board members were mainly ex-officials of the Ministry of Communications. Representatives from the Army, the Navy, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also present in NHK's Program Council, where they were responsible for the planning and control of programs.[57] According to Article 2 of the Wireless Telegraphy law, NHK's main task was to "execute business for the government as an outpost agency of the Ministry of Communications".[58] This law, however, was repealed after the war by the SCAP, who did not see NHK as a governmental apparatus, but rather as a public broadcasting service. SCAP felt that NHK should have its own autonomy and be separated from the government. Shortly after the war, SCAP issued orders that NHK be directed by the Ministry only in areas such as the allocation and assignment of frequencies, and the prescription of procedures for the reporting and auditing of financial statements.[59]

The role of the U.S. Occupation authorities in shaping the Japanese broadcasting became prominent when a legislative proposal for a broadcast law was drafted by the Ministry of Communication and presented to the Diet. Due to strong opposition from the US authorities, the proposal eventually died without passage.[60] The Occupation authority decided to draft its own set of broadcasting laws and push them through the Diet in 1950. The legislative package included the Radio Law, which regulated the radio frequencies and awards licenses; the Broadcast Law, which guaranteed the uses of radio waves for the public benefit and laid down sets of guidelines for the NHK as a corporate body in charge of public service broadcasting as well as programming guidelines for commercial broadcasters[61]; and the Radio Regulatory Commission Establishment Law, which established the independent Spectrum Supervision Commission (*Denpa Kanri*

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[57]   *Ibid.*
[58]   *Ibid.*
[59]   Catherine A. Luther and Douglas A. Boyd, "American Occupation Control over Broadcasting in Japan, 1945-1952", Journal of Communication, Spring 1997, 47(2), p. 43.
[60]   *Ibid.*
[61]   These guidelines for commercial broadcasters included such principles as 1) the maximum availability and benefits of broadcasting to the people; 2) assurance of freedom of expression through broadcasting; and 3) making broadcasting contribute to the development of healthy democracy. See Hattori Takaaki, "The Administration of Radio Waves for Broadcasting in Japan", Studies of Broadcasting, March 1989, 25, p. 46.

Iinkai), similar to the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC), to oversee the allocation of radio frequencies.[62] In contrast to the Radio and Broadcast Law which remains in effect today, the Radio Regulatory Commission Establishment Law only lasted for two years. It was abolished two months after the end of the U.S. Occupation in April 1952, because the Yoshida government claimed that the Regulatory Commission was beyond the jurisdiction of the Cabinet,[63] and that the Commission should therefore be abolished to simplify the administration.[64] Beneath these claims, however, was the fact that neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of MPT could interfere with the Commission's rulings or its administration under the existing structure. The abolition of the Commission thus reflected the government's successful attempts to maintain a channel of influence over commercial broadcasters by assigning the MPT to reassume the role of regulator and allocator of broadcasting frequencies. Since then, any attempts to remove authority over frequency regulation and allocation from the MPT, such as those in 1953, 1959, and 1965, have met with strong resistance, and failed to succeed. More recently, a panel of the administrative reform council established by the Hashimoto government published an interim report in 1997 announcing a plan to establish an independent Telecommunication and Broadcasting Council (*Tsûshin Hôsô Iinkai*) to regulate and license frequencies. However, the plan folded within three months due to strong bureaucratic resistance.[65]

On the day before its abolition, the Radio Regulatory Commission had granted permission to Shoriki Matsutaro of Yomiuri to establish Nippon Television (NTV). Nevertheless, due to technical delays, NTV postponed its initial broadcast until the following year. On the other hand, NHK, which acquired its provisional license from the MPT in December 1952, went to air first in February 1953.[66] Its Osaka and Nagoya

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[62] Omori, *op. cit.*, pp.13-6; Luther and Boyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-3; Hattori Takaaki, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-8; Michael Tracey, "Japan: Broadcasting in a New Democracy", in R. Kuhn (ed.), The Politics of Broadcasting (Worcester, UK: Billing & Sons, 1985), pp. 274-5.
[63] Luther and Boyd, *op. cit.*
[64] Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[65] *Medeia Sôgô Kenkyûjo*, Hôsô wo shimin no te ni (Deliver broadcasting to the citizen's hands) (Tokyo: Kadensha, 1998), p. 48.
[66] NHK broadcasts two terrestrial channels, two satellite channels, and a HDTV Hi-Vision Channel. For terrestrial broadcasting, NHK1 broadcasts news, cultural programs and

stations began broadcasting in 1954, while Radio Tokyo (presently TBS) went to air in 1955.[67] Another TV station that grew from a radio network was Fuji TV, which was launched in 1959. It was initially owned by Bunka Hôsô Radio and Movie Co., Ltd. TV Asahi was started by Ôbunsha Publishing Company in 1959 as an educational channel, namely "Nippon Educational Channel" or "NET", as was Channel 12 Tokyo by the Foundation for Science and Technology in 1964.[68] These two stations received licenses to broadcast general programming in 1973, and subsequently changed their names from "NET" to "TV Asahi", and from "Channel 12 Tokyo" to "TV Tokyo".[69] The alliance between national newspapers and commercial stations was first seen in the case of NTV and Yomiuri. Other newspaper companies accumulated shares of commercial stations over the years. However, the strong affiliation between major newspapers and TV broadcasting stations did not solidify until 1973 as a result of private exchanges of shares between the 'Big Five'.[70]

After the Radio Regulatory Commission was abolished in 1952, the Radio Regulatory Council (*Denpa Kanri Shingikai*) was established to award licenses for both public and commercial uses. However, this Council was directly overseen and controlled by the MPT, which selected and appointed the candidates with the consent of both houses of the Diet (Article 85 of the Radio Law).[71] NHK, as well as the commercial stations, also had to apply for a license from the Council via the MPT when it desired to establish a local station (Article 4, 8 and 12 of the Radio Law).[72]

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entertainment, while NHK 2 broadcasts only educational programs. As for satellite channels, BS1 is focused on news and sports; whilst BS2 covers entertainment, art, and culture. In addition, NHK also has three nationwide radio services, and provides two international services: Radio Japan on shortwave, and NHK World TV. See Miyajima Hiroto, "What is NHK?", NHK Broadcasting Culture& Research 2000, (11), p. 3.

[67] Japan's Foreign Press Center, "Japan's Mass Media", About Japan Series No.7 (Tokyo: Japan's Foreign Press Center, 1997), pp. 51-72.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Nakasa Hideo, "Social vs. Responsibility: The Growing Criticism of Journalism in Japan", Studies of Broadcasting, March 1987, (23), pp. 27-50.

[70] For example, *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* transferred their holdings of *TBS* shares to *Mainichi*, whilst *Mainichi* and *Asahi* returned their shares of *NTV* to *Yomiuri*, and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* likewise returned its shares of *TV Asahi* to *Asahi Shimbun*. See Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Additionally, Japan also has an educational station exclusively established for broadcasting university education. This so-called "University of the Air" is run by a non-profit organization called the University of the Air Foundation, and governed by the University of the Air Law enacted in 1981. See Nakajima Iwao, "The Broadcasting Industry in Japan: Its

In addition to the Radio Law and Broadcast Law, ministerial notices and ordinances exist to fill in details left uncovered. As in many other policy areas in Japan, radio and broadcasting laws are vaguely written, and the relevant bureaucratic agency is left with the task of filling in the details through ministerial notices and ordinances. However, these ministerial notices and ordinances were not only written to complement the inadequacy of the provision in the laws, but were intended to benefit the MPT and the government of the day. Article 9 of the Ordinance for Essential Standards for Establishing a Broadcast Station, for example, was aimed at preventing the over-concentration of ownership of the mass media by prohibiting the control of more than ten per cent of the shares by an individual or entity in the three areas of media: television, radio, and newspaper.[73] Yet a provision in Article 9 exempted cases within the metropolitan areas such as Tokyo on the grounds that "such multiple operations would not constitute an information monopoly because of the existence of other influential mass communication media".[74] A case that benefited directly from this provision was the Fuji-Sankei Communications Group (FCG), one of the largest media and communication groups in Japan. The group has been allowed to have control over all three types of media through its control of a national newspaper (*Sankei Shimbun*), two radio networks (JOLF, JOQR), and a television network (FNN). On the local scene, however, alliances across two media sectors are common, particularly between

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Historical, Legal, and Economic Aspects", in H. Eguchi and H. Ichinohe (eds.), International Studies of Broadcasting (Tokyo: NHK Radio & TV Culture Research Institute, 1971), pp. 41-2; See also Japan's Foreign Press Center, "Japan's Mass Media", About Japan Series No.7 (Tokyo: Japan's Foreign Press Center, 1997), pp. 68-9.

[73]   Article 9 of the "the Ordinance for the Essential Standards for Establishing a Broadcasting Station" states that "opportunities for engaging in broadcasting activities should be made available to as many (organizations) as possible". In accordance with the Article, the MPT restricts one organization from owning or controlling more than two stations, and has prohibited, in principle, control by one person or an organization of television, radio, and newspapers in the same area. In this case, the term 'control' means to own more than ten per cent of voting rights (stocks) in another medium company, that the number of directors sent to the board of the mass communication medium in question exceeds 1/5 of the total number of the directors, and that a director of a mass communication medium with representative rights is concurrently appointed to a director with representative rights of a commercial broadcasting company. *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts) (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), p. 46.

[74]   *Ibid.*, p. 53.

local newspaper and broadcasting companies. One representative example is the alliance

between *Kôbe Shimbun* and *Radio Kansai* (AMK 558MHz) in Kôbe.[75]

As listed in the following table, each of Tokyo's key commercial stations not

only has a strong affiliation with one of the Japan's five nationwide daily newspapers,

but also serves as a hub of a nationwide television network. As such, it typically

provides news, entertainment programs, and national advertising for local stations

around the country. However, according to Article 53-2 of the Broadcast law of 1950,

Table 3: National Television Stations, their Links with Major Newspapers, and
Numbers of Local Affiliated Stations

Key Commercial Stations	Links with Major Newspapers	National Commercial Networks	No. of Affiliated Stations*
NTV	Yomiuri	NNN	30 (3)
TBS	Mainichi	JNN	28 (0)
Fuji TV	Sankei	FNN	28 (2)
TV Asahi	Asahi	ANN	26 (2)
TV Tokyo	Nihon Keizai	TXN	6 (0)

*As of April, 1998
The figures in parentheses represent the number of cross-net stations, i.e., stations with more than one network affiliation. Notably, the number of these cross-net stations has declined sharply over the last ten years.
Source: Adapted from *Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai Ron*, NHK Nenkan '98 (NHK Radio&Television Yearbook '98) (Tokyo: *Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai Ron*, 1998), p. 566.

commercial broadcasters are restricted from entering any contract that binds them to

receiving broadcast programs from one particular source, which would constitute the

formation of a network. Notwithstanding such legal restrictions, Japan's commercial

broadcasters have fully established 'quasi-networks' among themselves.[76] This is

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[75]   Interview with Mr.Hashida Mitsuo, Deputy Editor-in-chief, *Kobe Shimbun* on November 26, 1998.

[76]   Komatsubara Hisao, "New Broadcasting Technologies and the Press in Japan", Studies in Broadcasting, March 1989, (25), pp. 77-88.

primarily due to two interdependent reasons. Firstly, local stations are less resourceful than the key Tokyo stations in covering national news and in producing entertainment programs. Programs from key stations are therefore relayed to make up the core programs for local stations, which are thus able to broadcast nationally syndicated programs that attract both audiences and advertisers. Secondly, the key commercial stations require local stations to expand their coverage to attract national advertisers. Moreover, the key stations can cover their production costs when their programs are sold nationally. These commercial linkages and the exchange of benefits between key stations in Tokyo and local stations indicate that 'cartelism' has become a key organizing principle for commercial stations in Japan, similar to the alliances of networks and local stations in the U.S.

This alliance among the big newspaper companies and key commercial stations at the national level also indicates that the Japanese regulator, the MPT, has limited its license awards to entities that represent a coalition among the powerful elite. The slow introduction of CATV (cable Television) into the Japanese markets also serves to confirm that the powerful existing commercial broadcasters have been well protected by excessive regulatory measures.[77] As observed by Tracey, a deep-seated fear of the implications of changes in communication system "served to dispel any zealousness in making new policy to usher in the new age".[78]

Moreover, according to the Radio Law of 1950 (amended in 1988), a broadcast license is only valid for five years. There is no provision for the renewal of a license, but rather there is a process whereby the current holder re-applies and is re-issued with a license. Commercial broadcasters must therefore reapply for a new license every five

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[77] The Cable Television Broadcast Law was passed by the Diet in 1972. However, the Law stipulated that a cable station with more than 500 terminals required a license from the MPT. Moreover, the Law limited multiple operations and foreign ownership. It also required that the content of original programs broadcast via cable must also comply with the provisions of Broadcast Law which governs off-air broadcasting. For more details see Michael Tracey, The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 228.

[78] Ibid., p. 229.

years.[79] In comparative terms, licenses to operate commercial stations in Thailand generally last for a longer period. The current licenses to operate Channels 3, 7, and *iTV*, for instance, have been given for periods ranging from twenty-five to thirty years. This long period ensures that those in charge of licensing will receive large kickbacks from long-term licensing fees. The short-term licensing period in Japan, on the other hand, ensures that key commercial broadcasters are kept in line with the regulators' policies and the government's views in order to get a new license issued without a condition demanding changes in programming content.[80] In Japan, the reward relationship between the state regulator and the TV license holders is embedded within the licensing system which,

> artificially restricts the number of broadcast licensees, centralizes media power, encourages blandness in programming, and fosters political involvement in the licensing process. It places media power squarely within the establishment consensus of the socially and politically acceptable, diffusing it through shared authority within that class, and perpetuating communications power through negotiation among power structures.[81]

However, these characteristics of the Japanese licensing system are not the product of regulations or legislation. Rather, they are a product of the informal reward relationship between the state and commercial broadcasters that exists beyond the boundaries of the regulatory system. In other words, these conditions emerge out of a process of negotiation and bargaining. Indeed, broadcasting policy is similar to other administrative policies in Japan, as it revolves around the notion that the provision of extralegal administrative guidance to involved parties is preferable to rigidly established rules, and those who follow the administratively favored path are subsequently rewarded. The following discussion of the license-awarding process exemplifies this point.

[79]   Japan's Foreign Press Center, "Japan's Mass Media", About Japan Series No. 7 (Tokyo: Japan's Foreign Press Center, 1997), p. 57.

[80]   This condition is based on Article 104-2 of the Radio Law which states that "in granting a preliminary license, an ordinary license, or a permit, a condition or a term of a period can be attached thereto". Taking advantage of this Article, the MPT has set up the percentage of educational and cultural programs for the general television service by more than 30 hours per week. According to Article 76 of the same law, stations whose broadcasting matters have infringed this condition would be suspended from operating within a period of three months. See Nakajima Iwao, "The Broadcasting Industry in Japan: Its Historical, Legal, and Economic Aspects", in H. Eguchi and H. Ichinohe (eds.), International Studies of Broadcasting (Tokyo: NHK Radio & TV Culture Research Institute, 1971), p. 35.

[81]   Jonathan Weinberg, "Broadcasting and the Administrative Process in Japan and the United States", Buffalo Law Review, Fall 1991, 39(3), p. 624.

In awarding a license, the MPT prefers the traditional practice of *ipponka chôsei* or 'unification adjustment', as opposed to an open-bid system to select a single winner that will operate a frequency. The latter system is similar to those conducted in the U.S., the U.K., and more recently in Thailand.[82] In Japan, licensees are selected by the MPT through a process emphasizing a compromise between all influential applicants. This process involves the creation of a single joint venture, the stocks of which are shared--though not equally--by all of the financially or politically 'powerful' applicants. Most of these applicants include the licensees of local radio stations, local banks, and prefectural newspapers. National newspapers sometimes seek to participate in the process.[83] This *ipponka* process still allows for the dominance of coalitions between local entrepreneurs, owners of local newspapers, and those local members who have close relationships with powerful politicians in receiving new TV licenses. A license to operate a UHF station in Yamanashi prefecture in 1959 was given to TV Yamanashi -- a station in which Kanemaru Shin, then an LDP Diet member and a close associate to former Prime Minister Tanaka, was a major shareholder.[84]

Moreover, this *ipponka* process allows a few media groups to dominate the television broadcasting industry. In particular, the five commercial key stations have been the key players in the process of unification adjustment in the Japanese TV broadcasting scene.[85] When a new broadcasting license is available, these networks often hire their former employees or shareholders to file applications on their behalf. These applicants, however, only act as 'proxies' so that these networks can gain shares in the new license.[86] Regulators within the MPT favor partial ownership of local companies by large television networks because it guarantees financial success. The unification

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[82]   Hattori, *op. cit.*, p.64; See also Weinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 664. Weinberg translated '*ipponka chôsei*' into 'unification coordination'. However, the overall meaning of the term is similar to those previously given by Hattori.

[83]   Weinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 669-70.

[84]   Weinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 671.

[85]   *Ibid.*, p. 665; According to Westney, out of 111 broadcasting companies in 1980, *Asahi* (TV *Asahi*) had holdings in 36 companies, *Yomiuri* (*NTV*) in 29, *Mainichi* (*TBS*) in 13, *Sankei* (*Fuji TV*) in 16, and *Nikkei* (*TV Tokyo*) in 7. See D. Eleanor Westney, "Mass Media in Business Organizations", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 60.

[86]   *Ibid.*, p. 666.

process is also long because it involves multiple stages of consultation among applicants and leaders within the community who are invited to deliberate the shareholdings among applicants.[87] This slow process resulted in a minimal increase in the number of commercial stations during the 1960s and 1970s. Only with the revision of the Broadcast Law in 1988, in which the government embraced the policy of having four stations in one region, did a rapid increase in the number of commercial stations occur around the country.[88]

This *ipponka* process seems highly beneficial to both bureaucrats and politicians. On one hand, it helps create a consensus among all applicants, so support is easily mobilized and control over what to broadcast is mostly guaranteed. To maintain these supports and controls, the MPT bureaucrats are, in turn, required to protect business profits by limiting new entrants into the same market area, such as by delaying the awarding of new licenses. On the other hand, this unified process creates a situation in which the major stakeholders of a new broadcasting company may be indebted to politicians who might have influenced the *ipponka* process by accelerating it, or by dividing shares in a way more favorable to some applicants than others. Favored applicants, such as bankers and newspaper or radio station owners would then be obliged to offer a return in forms of political and financial support, or preferential access to television stations. Former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, for example, seemed to have gained preferential treatment and editorial support from a large number of local broadcasters through this process. While serving as Minister of MPT in 1957, he claimed to have overridden the bureaucratic red tape and hastened the *ipponka* process by approving forty-three new licenses over one weekend.[89]

To summarize the situation thus far, the nature of the Thai broadcasting system is in fact closer to those of neighboring developing countries in Southeast Asia such as

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[87]   Komatsubara, *op. cit.*, p. 80
[88]   By 1996, 89.8 per cent of the country (34 prefectures) have had a privilege of accessing to four regional stations. See Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, *Tsûshin hakusho heisei 9 nenhan (Communications White Paper 1997)* (Tokyo: Ôkurashô Insatsu Kyoku, 1997), p. 23.
[89]   Jacob M. Schlesinger, Shadow Shoguns: The Rise and Fall of Japan's Postwar Political Machine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), p. 56.

Indonesia.[90] The Thai system is highly dominated by two state-run television channels and two concessioned channels, whose operators had close relationship with the state in the past. Thailand has one public broadcasting channel -- Channel 11, which is wholly controlled by the state agency and highly dependent on state funding.[91] Thailand's new UHF channel, *iTV*, was financially unstable and has been taken over by an entrepreneur who also leads a political party. The Japanese broadcasting system, on the other hand, is a mixture of both the British and the American systems, insofar as it has a very important public broadcasting sector, and strong and competitive commercial networks.[92] Yet the Japanese and Thai broadcast licensing systems share a strikingly similar characteristic in that both states do not award licenses to broadcast to the limits of spectrum availability. The Thai state restricts licenses to broadcast because it wants neither to distribute its control of frequencies nor allow the frequencies to be operated beyond its reach. Moreover, the reward relationship based on an exchange between the state and the broadcasters has long preserved the status quo, thus restricting new entrants. The Japanese state has also been very slow and reluctant to award licenses to the limit of spectrum availability. This has been due largely to the nontransparent and slow consultation process of *ipponka chôsei*, the process whereby the Japanese broadcasting and political elite -- the broadcasters, the MPT bureaucrats, and the politicians - are satisfied and rewarded. The extent of the reward relationship between the broadcasting and political elite in the two countries, and their comparative experience shall now be addressed.

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[90]   Since 1962, the broadcasting system in Indonesia has been dominated by one state-owned network, Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI), and had five commercial broadcasting services: Rajawali Citra Televisi (RCTI), Cipta Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia (TPI), Indosiar Visual Mandiri, Cakrawala Andalas Televisi (ANTEVE), and Surya Cita Televisi (SCTV). The commercial licensees were exclusively selected by the government. Therefore, the owners of these commercial stations are those who have close links with the government. RCTI, in particular, is owned by the son of former President Soeharto. For details of linkages between each station and the Soeharto's clan, see Philip Kitley, Television, Nation, and Culture in Indonesia (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000).

[91]   Since 1998, the Thai government has planned to turn Channel 11 to an independent public organization which shall be run by a board appointed by the Minister in charge of broadcasting, and will manage its own budget. According to the PRD internal report No. 731/2542 (November 1999), the plan is still in the research period.

[92]   The British system is dominated by its public broadcaster, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), while the American system is dominated by its competitive commercial networks: the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

3.2 Broadcasting and Political Elite

The concept of an 'elite' is instrumental to making sense of the structural and personal relationships of the men who occupy the command posts in broadcasting. The relationship between broadcasting and the political elite in Thailand is largely based on a personal relationship between the patron (*phu yai*), and the client (*phu noi*), as already discussed. However, the established elite, as C. Wright Mills observed, only comes together at certain coinciding points and only on certain occasions of crisis, as there are always tensions and factions among them.[93] The political, military, and bureaucratic elite comprising the patron class is indeed not unified. In the Thai case, members of this elite are particularly different in ranks, and authorities. Some have an access to broadcasting policy, whilst others have full control of frequencies and budgets.

Due to the military and government ownership of TV broadcasting stations, the military and political elite has both political and financial control of the stations. For instance, the yearly budget of the government-run Channel 11 is received via the budget allocated for the PRD, which is set by the Minister in charge before being approved by the Cabinet.[94] The Director General of the PRD who runs Channel 11 is also appointed and dismissed by the same Minister. Although this Minister does not have similar financial control over MCOT, former ministers in this position have frequently contested their control via the appointment and dismissal of its directors and other high-ranking officers.

From the establishment of MCOT in 1977 to 1991, most MCOT directors were appointed based on their close relationships with the Minister in charge. As shown in Table 3, a new MCOT director is usually appointed after a new cabinet has been

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[93]   C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 277.
[94]   The budget of Channel 11 in 1999, for example, was 411,891,600 baht (A$1.8 million), which was about 38.6 per cent of the total budget received by the PRD in the same year. Channel 11 also receives financial support from the MCOT annually. *Samnak Ngobpramarn* (Budget Bureau), *Priebtieb raidai raichai ngobpramarn pi 2543 (Comparison of Revenue and Expenditure of Budget 2000)* (Bangkok: Budget Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister, 2000), p. 28.

formed. As a result, many MCOT directors have been sacked before the end of their terms due to sudden cabinet changes.

Table 4: List of MCOT Directors and Their Political Alliances

Cabinet Attached	Ministers of OPM	MCOT's Directors	Years Appointed/ Dismissed
Tanin Kraivichien	Dusit Siriwan	Pramut Sutabutra	Appointed 1977
General Kriengsak Chamanan	Lt.General Bunruean Buacharoon	Pramut Sutrabutra	Dismissed 1986
General Prem Tinsulanond	a) General Yos Tephasadin na Ayuddhaya b)Police Lt. Charn Manootham c)Jirayu Israngkoon na Ayuddhaya	Boonserm Wisakul Montri Chenwitthayakarn	Appointed 1986 Resigned 1987 Appointed 1987 Dismissed 1987
General Chatichai Choonhawan	Police Capt. Chalerm Yubamrung	Rachan Husen	Appointed 1988 Resigned 1991
Anand Panyarachun (Under NPKC's Control)	Meechai Veeravaithaya	Prasit Hitanon	Appointed 1991 Dismissed 1991
Chuan Leekpai	Tuedpong Chaiyanan	Saengchai Sunthornwat	Appointed 1993
Banharn Silpaacha	Piyanat Watcharaporn	Saengchai Sunthornwat	Murdered 1996
General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh	Piyanut Watcharaporn	Orasa Khunawat	Appointed 1996 Retired 1999
Chuan Leekpai	Khunying Supatra Masdit	Sorachak Kasemsuwan	Appointed via an open selection process 1999

Source: Adapted from Khamjorn Lhuiyapong, "*Ruam chalong 20 pi khong Or.Sor.Mor.Thor*" (Join to Celebrate 20th Anniversary of MCOT), *Lok khong seu lem 2* (Media's World Vol. 2) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1998), p. 194.

The ministers who were assigned to take charge of broadcasting in the past were generally close aides to the Prime Minister.[95] This close personal relationship was also an important factor in the appointment of MCOT directors by the Minister in charge of broadcasting. For instance, a former minister, Police Capt. Chalerm Yubamrung -- then

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[95] These included Lt. General Bunruean Buacharoon, who was a close friend of former Prime Minister General Kriengsak Chamanan. Three ministers during the eight-year period of General Prem administration were also selected for the same reason. See Khamjorn Lhuiyapong, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

the leader of Muanchon Party -- appointed Rachan Husen, who was the secretary and spokesperson of his own party, as a director of MCOT in 1988.[96] As a part of broadcast liberalization program, the Anand administration aimed at abolishing this practice by canceling the Royal Decree of 1977 that governed MCOT, and replacing it with the new decrees which cancelled the right of the Prime Minister and the Minister in charge to appoint the Director.[97] Instead, a panel including government representatives, appointed academics, and individuals would be set up to select the Director of MCOT. However, the government's attempts to defend its rights to directly intervene in MCOT administration were evident in the fourth Decree introduced by the Chuan government in 1994, which gave a right to the Minister overseeing MCOT to appoint or dismiss any members of the MCOT committee (Article 16), and required the committee to seek consent from the Minister in charge when appointing or dismissing the Director (Article 22).[98]

Furthermore, despite the establishment of the committee aimed at reducing direct political influence from the Minister in the appointment of the MCOT Director, the political connections of candidates continued to play an important role in the selection process. In 1993 Saengchai Sunthornwat, whose brother was an elected MP from the ruling Democrat Party, was appointed to the directorial position.[99] There have also been claims of unusually strong support from Khunying Supatra Masdit, a Minister overseeing the MCOT, for Sorachak Kasemsuwan, the MCOT Director who was elected in 1999.[100]

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[96]   *Ibid.*
[97]   Similar reforms were also undertaken simultaneously within the area of telecommunications, particularly in the TOT and the CAT. This owed very much to the fact that Anand Panyarachun accepted the premiership on the condition that he would have a high degree of autonomy from the military-led National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) which organized a coup earlier. The Anand government was thus able to pass as many as 270 pieces of legislation, many of which were implemented without military's interference. For further discussion see Sakkharin Niyomsilpa, "The Political Economy of Telecommunications Liberalization in Thailand", PhD Thesis, The Australian National University, 1995, pp. 140-46.
[98]   Khamjorn Lhuiyapong, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[99]   "*Saengchai Sunthornwat futfit forfai nai Or.Sor.Mor.Thor*" (Saengchai Sunthornwat speaks English in MCOT), *Phujadkarn Rai Duen*, May 1993, pp. 60-2.
[100]   "Sorachak rules out political links in his nomination", The Bangkok Post, September 30,1999 (on-line edition); "Probity check will clear Sorachak for media post, says official", The Nation, September 30,1999 (on-line edition); "*Check khluen khwamkhid phor.or. Or.Sor.Mor.Thor*

However, conflicts of policy and differences in ambition between the political and bureaucratic elite do exist, and they frequently introduce tension. A case of such contestation concerned a Director-General of the Public Relations Department, Chan Poonsombat and his minister, Piyanat Watcharaporn. Piyanat was a politician from the New Aspiration Party which has vast business connections and strong personal links, particularly with the telecommunications giant United Communication Group (UCOM).[101] After Piyanat became the Minister overseeing the PRD, he awarded this group the operation of forty AM radio stations for twenty years. This was the first time a radio license was approved for such a long period. Piyanat had also been suspected of private gain after allowing Asia Vision to operate Channel 11's news programs in 1996. Chan was doubtful about Piyanat's desire to privatize Channel 11, and his doubt was substantiated by UCOM overt expression of interests in moving into broadcasting business and supports for Piyanat's plan.[102] Chan thus rejected Piyanat's proposal to allow any private partners to hold a larger stake than the PRD in the proposed joint venture and obstructed Piyanat's plan to bypass the Cabinet's deliberation process over the proposal. As a result, Chan was dismissed as a director and transferred to an inactive post within the OPM.[103]

Conflicts of interest between the political and bureaucratic elite over licensing can even set the two parties on a collision course. In 1996, Saengchai Sunthornwat, a MCOT director (1993-1996), was shot dead by two gunmen reportedly hired by a Chiengrai MP, Thawee Puthchan. Thawee's conflict with Saengchai was based on the latter's rejection of requests to renew licenses to operate four MCOT radio stations in the Northeastern provinces that had been given to his mother-in-law, Ubon Bunyachalothon, a powerful former MP known locally as "*jaomae witthayu*" (the radio

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Sorachak Kasemsuwan..." (Checking the thinking frequency of the MCOT Director, Sorachak Kasemsuwan...), *Matichon Sudsapda*, October 19, 1999, pp. 70-1.

[101]   See Usanee Mongkolporn and Yingyord Manchuvisith, "UCOM signals in on broadcasting", The Nation, February 10, 1997 (on-line edition); "UCOM gains foothold in government", The Nation, October 30, 1997 (on-line edition).

[102]   "UCOM seeks partners to compete for TV Ventures", The Nation, February 21, 1997 (on-line edition).

[103]   "PRD Official transferred to inactive post", The Nation, May 29, 1997 (on-line edition).

godmother).[104] Ubon's radio business was badly damaged by Saengchai's rejection. Saengchai was also in conflict with other officials due to his disregard for compromise, but emphasis on transparency, impartiality, and quality in broadcasting. Upon conviction, Thawee received the death penalty from a lower court. His mother-in-law was subsequently shot dead by mysterious gunmen in 1999 following police attempts to charge her according to new evidence that could perhaps bring the reasons for Saengchai's death to light.[105] The mastermind behind Saengchai's death may never be known, as in countless other cases of political killings by 'unknown gunmen' commonly hired by local MPs to eliminate their political enemies and business rivals.[106]

The prevalence of threats resulting from conflict and increased competition have made it necessary for Thai corporate broadcasters to develop political affiliations to secure access to broadcasting licenses and protection. The case of Somkiet Onwimol, a broadcaster who was contracted to produce news programs for Channel 9 in 1985, exemplifies this point. When Police Capt. Chalerm Yubamrumg became Minister in charge of broadcasting, he demanded Somkiet only produce news promoting the government, but Somkiet denied this request. Chalerm then decided to launch his own news program by using internal staff and then MCOT director, Rachan Husen, to read the news. As a result, Channel 9 had two main news programs, the contents of which were sometimes in stark contrast. Finally, Somkiet was pressured to quit Channel 9 in January 1989, and later moved to produce news programs for Channels 7, and 5 respectively. At Channel 5, in particular, Somkiet built his political strength by

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[104]   For further discussion of this case and the rise to a "*jao mae*" position of Ubon see James Ockey, "God Mothers, Good Mothers, Good Lovers, Godmothers: Gender Images in Thailand", The Journal of Asian Studies, November 1999, 58(4), pp. 1033-1058.

[105]   "Death Sentence for the murder of Sangchai", The Nation, September 26, 1997 (on-line edition); Chaiyakorn Baingern, "Sangchai case may reopen", The Nation, December 7, 1997 (on-line edition); "Ubol to face fresh charges", The Nation, August 4, 1998 (on-line edition); Anucha Charoenpo, "Four Motives for Ubon's Killings", Bangkok Post, March 1, 1999 (on-line edition).

[106]   This kind of political killing began in the late 1980s, marking the emergence of Thai parliamentary democracy, and reached its heyday at the end of the 1990s when almost 80 per cent of MPs admitted that they wore bullet-proof vests at election time. See Chapter 8: Murder and Progress in Modern Siam in Bennedict Anderson, The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World (London: Verso, 1998); "Most MPs wear bullet-proof vests", The Nation, January 7, 2000 (on-line edition); "Politicians top buyers of bullet-proof vests", The Nation, February 27, 2000 (on-line edition).

developing close ties with the military, which later awarded him a license to pioneer 24-hour news and traffic reports channel on radio using a military frequency.[107] In response to an accusation of biased reports broadcast by his radio station in favor of the military during the May crisis in 1992, Somkiet adhered strongly to the traditional patron-client mindset, considering it his obligation to favor the military, which had granted him a license to operate:

> I don't think it's strange to feel obliged to persons who have helped us
> survive. We have been hurt many times by others' betrayal. Since the military
> helped us grow, it is not unusual if we side with the military.[108]

The recent liberalization in satellite broadcasting, cable television, and radio frequencies has increasingly drawn influential telecommunication groups such as UCOM and Shinawatra Group into the broadcasting business.[109] Further liberalization in television broadcasting in Thailand might lead to a prominent role played by these telecommunication groups, whose earlier success heavily relied on their connections with the military, politicians, and the bureaucrats.[110] These connections between telecom operators and political parties were different from the obligatory links between Somkiet and the military, as mentioned above. The patron-client links between these telecom operators, and the political and bureaucratic elite have coincided with economic interests, and have been both opportunistic and volatile. For instance, the success of Shinawatra Group in gaining telecommunication concessions seems to have been largely based on its connections with the Telephone Organization of Thailand, the Army, the Thai Military Bank, and the Chart Thai Party.[111] Thaksin Shinawatra, the owner of the

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[107] "*Mue Somkiet sadud kha tua eng*" (When Somkiet tumbled his own leg), *Phujadkarn Rai Duean*, October 1991, pp. 20-26; "*Pacific prub tua mai lung chong ha mai tor sunya*" (Pacific adjusted itself after Channel 5 decided not to renew the contract), *Phujadkarn Rai Duean*, December 1992, pp. 34-36.

[108] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[109] The big four of telecommunication companies in Thailand are the Shinawatra Group, the United Communication Group, Telecom Asia, and Jasmine Communications. However, only Shinawatra, UCOM, and Telecom Asia have substantially invested in broadcasting business. Further discussion see also Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *Rabob witthayu lae thorathat thai: Krongsang thang setthakit kanmuang lae pholkrathob thor sitthi seriphap (Thai Radio and Television System: The Potical and Economic Structure and Effects of Rights and Freedom)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-73.

[110] See Sakkarin Niyomsilpa, "The Political Economy of Telecommunications Liberalization in Thailand", Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Australian National University, 1995.

[111] *Ibid.* See particularly Chapter five: Telecommunications and Political Corruption.

group, has become a powerful politician himself, and received support from these alliances through various campaigns. In 1994, he was invited to be a deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in the Chuan administration. In spite of his short time as a minister, he secured the appointment of a close friend to the post of Minister of Communications to protect his telecommunication empire.[112] In 1998, he established his own political party, which thereafter gained substantial political and business supports and came to take charge of the government after he won a landslide victory in the 2001 election. Thaksin's success is the best example of how money and politics were mixed and utilized to monopolize the entire telecommunication markets.[113]

As for the UCOM Group, its connections with the Communication Authority of Thailand, the Ministry of Transport and Communication, and the New Aspiration Party were exploited to expand its telecom business.[114] Two former executives of the UCOM Group served as cabinet ministers during the Chavalit administration in 1997.[115] The application of this type of modern connection based on coinciding political and economic interests between the political and bureaucratic elite and the big telecommunication groups can certainly be expected in the future when these telecom groups move fully into broadcasting, as the trend suggests to be the case. Alliances between political, bureaucratic, military and broadcasting elite will thus become more necessary than ever for the sake of securing a broadcasting license.

Whilst the reward relationship between political and broadcasting elite in Thailand can now be characterized as a modern type of patron-client relationship, reward relationships between the broadcasting and political elite in Japan is, in contrast,

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[112]   Ukrist Pathamanand, "The Thaksin Shinawatra Group: A Study of the Relationship between Money and Politics in Thailand", The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies, 1998, (13), p. 70.
[113]   Ibid., pp. 60-82.
[114]   Ibid.
[115]   The leader of the New Aspiration Party, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, also has a strong relationship with UCOM Group. One of UCOM's former executives, Poosana Premanoch, who had been a campaigner for him and his party for many years, was appointed Minister of the Office of the Prime Minister during his administration. Another executive, Somphop Benjarongkul, was appointed as Deputy Minister of Health in the same cabinet. See Usanee Mongkolporn and Yingyord Manchuvisith, "UCOM signals in on broadcasting", The Nation, February 10, 1997 (on-line edition); "UCOM gains foothold in government", The Nation, October 30, 1997 (on-line edition).

more collective and systematic. The coordination-integration dynamic in Japanese politics indeed manifests itself clearly in this setting, as the thrust of this relationship is underpinned by the idea that rewards should be collective and reciprocal. This refers to a norm that all relevant parties give up something to achieve mutual goals. This norm of reciprocal consent is a basis of the "bargained nature" of the Japanese politics in which mutual accommodation is recognized as the most legitimate solution to political conflicts, such as in the case budgetary allocations.[116]

Yet similar to the case in Thailand, the relationship between the broadcasting and political elite in Japan was made and is strengthened through both formal and informal channels. On the one hand, the government's influence over public broadcasting is clearly written into the Broadcast Law of 1950, which allows for the government's appointment and dismissal of the NHK Board of Governors, the government's approval of NHK budget, funding of overseas broadcasting, as well as approvals in areas of research and maintenance (see Appendix 3). According to Articles 11 and 19 of the Broadcast Law, for example, NHK's Board of Governors are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister with the approval of the Diet. The Board of Governors consists of twelve private citizens who are appointed for three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment. The members elect from among themselves the chairman, who sits as the President of NHK.[117] In the appointment of the NHK Board of Governors and the President, there has been evidence of blatant favoritism. Experience has shown that the Prime Minister who elects the Board of Governors also influences the Board of Governors to appoint the President of his choice. When Tanaka Kakuei became Prime Minister in 1973, he had Ono Yoshio, who once served as his Deputy when Tanaka was a Minister of MPT, appointed as NHK President. The appointment of Ono, however, reflected the tradition of appointing an OB, or 'old boy' of the Ministry of Communications as NHK President.[118] This tradition proved useful for the government

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116   For example, Richardson argues that this 'bargained nature' has played an important role in decentralizing power in Japanese politics. See Bradley Richardson, Japanese Democracy: Power, Coordination and Performance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 258-59.

117   See Japan's Foreign Press Center, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62; and Michael Tracey, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-80.

118   Kawasaki Yasushi, *NHK to seiji (NHK and Politics)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1997), pp. 13-19.

during and after the war, enabling it to have full control over NHK activities and the content of its programs.

In a parallel to the appointment of the MCOT directorial position in Thailand, NHK Presidents with close relationships to Prime Ministers often had their terms cut short by cabinet changes or political pressure. For example, President Ono served only three years (1973-1976) during the Tanaka administration. He was pressured by the opposition and the public to resign after being seen using an official car to visit the house of former Prime Minister Tanaka, who had been convicted in the Lockheed scandal. President Ikeda Yoshisô (1988-1989) was known to be close to Prime Minister Takeshita. He resigned (after serving less than one year) following the resignation of the Takeshita's cabinet because of the recruit scandal. President Shima Keiji (1989-1991) was sacked by the Diet after lying about his whereabouts during the failed launch of an NHK satellite. His dismissal, on the one hand, was seen to result from conflict of interests between himself and LDP politicians who opposed his ambitious move to make NHK compete with the private sectors by using advanced and cheaper technology. On the other hand, most NHK staff viewed Shima's connections with the LDP as being 'too close'. Shima was regarded by many NHK staff with deep suspicion and unease as an 'LDP agent'.[119] This 'close' relationship might also have cost him his position. The close relationship between NHK executives and LDP politicians was undoubtedly strengthened by the long-term dominance of the LDP in the government. This relationship became a crucial factor that influenced and transformed the political role of NHK, from a political watchdog that confronted the state in the 1950s and 1960s to a servant of the state that legitimized its political master from the 1970s to the 1990s.[120]

Japan has an unwritten constitution whereby authority has been applied largely through the informal practices of procedure, bargaining, and dealing. In the broadcasting

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[119]   *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
[120]   For further discussion on each individual president, see Chapter 5: "Leadership and Politics" in Ellis S. Krauss, Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

scene, there is a 'fair share' norm between the broadcasting and the political elite. The Japanese government's influence over NHK has been largely exercised through informal channels and centered around an equal exchange of awards and incentives. The MPT internal training of NHK staff, and the appointment of the broadcasting elite to public advisory bodies (*shingikai*) are cases in point. Since 1987, NHK has dispatched its own talented staff to the MPT for the purpose of 'training'. These so-called '*haken shain*', or 'dispatched employees' are assigned to work full-time at the MPT for a period of two years to gain 'policy' knowledge, whilst receiving a full salary from NHK.[121] However, these employees are neither allowed to make contact with NHK nor to collect information that might benefit their company. On the contrary, they are given tasks similar to other public servants working within the same bureau to which they were assigned. This MPT training scheme was also expanded to cover talented staff at the commercial networks such as NTV and TV Asahi in the early 1990s.[122] The cost of paying these dispatched employees, which amounted to around 10 million yen (A$1.4 million), was solely borne by the TV stations.[123] The disclosure of such an amount of money has provoked public disquiet, especially with regards to NHK, whose revenue purely relies on the receivers' fees. The public claimed that such amount of money should not have been spent on fostering collusive relations between the MPT and NHK. Yet TV commercial executives saw the dispatch of employees to the MPT as a benefit, as their staff received training and the stations gained policy knowledge that would benefit them in the future. As reflected in the comments made by Itô Kunio, the President of *TV Asahi*: "Public Office is a treasure house of information. While we are in the multi-media age, it will be greatly beneficial if we know what the administration is thinking".[124] However, due to increased public criticism, NHK, NTV, and Fuji TV

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[121]   Sakamoto Mamori, "*Hôsô-kyoku no yuseishô jinzai haken*" (Dispatch of Talents from Broadcasting Stations to the MPT), *Hôsô Repooto*, November 1995, (137), pp. 2-5.

[122]   *Ibid.*

[123]   *Ibid.*

[124]   Cited in Sakamoto Mamori, "*Hôdô kikan wo otoshimete hajinai no wa dare ka?*" (Who shamelessly disdain reporting mechanism?), *Hôsô Repooto*, January 1996, (138), p. 5.

decided to cease sending their staff to the MPT in June 1997. TV Asahi and TBS only *suspended* sending their staff to the MPT.[125]

The benefit that the MPT bureaucrats received from this training scheme was a platform for their own post-retirement future.[126] In fact, an analogy with the training of employees from large corporations such as car companies, banks, and electrical appliance manufacturers by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) in the 1970s and 1980s can be drawn.[127] Those schemes were successful in building a systematic post-retirement career route for the MITI and the MOF bureaucrats. This practice of employing ex-bureaucrats is known as *amakudari*, or descent from heaven. In fact, the first case of MPT *amakudari* to the broadcasting industry took place in the 1950s.[128] Since then, private television and radio networks have regularly received MPT officials after their retirement. A number of new licenses for operating local TV and radio stations have been allocated on the basis of including MPT retirees on their boards. The practice has been so pervasive that, as Nakano has claimed, it has become "a condition in exchange for the MPT *license* approval".[129] This condition has become a major hindrance to the emergence of real competition for licenses, and has opened room for bureaucratic intervention in broadcasting content.

Furthermore, the relationship between MPT bureaucrats and NHK staff has been forged at another level, wherein the latter regularly hold party receptions or give

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125   Their announcement of suspension, instead of ceasing the program entirely, was perhaps made upon the MPT special request to maintain its closer supervision and work coordination with these two stations due to the incidents concerning *TV Asahi*'s alleged impartial election coverage in 1993, and TBS's video-previewing incident of 1996, which caused the murder of a family of a lawyer who had campaigned against the Aum Shinrikyō religious group.

126   "*NHK to minpô kiikyoku no [Yuseishô jinzai haken] no iiwake*" (Discussion on the dispatch of NHK and Key Stations' talents to the MPT), *Hôsô Repooto*, November 1997, (149), pp. 12-15.

127   *Ibid.*

128   Nakano Koichi, "Becoming a "Policy" Ministry: The Organization and *Amakudari* of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications", *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Winter 1998, 24(1), p. 109.

129   *Ibid. Italics* added. In 1981, one FM station and two TV stations were allowed to set up with MPT retirees among the founding directors. Japan Satellite Broadcasting (WOWOW) also had an MPT ex-Vice Minister as its founding president. Likewise, FM Japan (J-Wave) was also launched by former MPT officials.

party tickets to the former in order to build personal networks.[130] More importantly,

there has long been a practice of appointing NHK executives and senior editors to a

number of public advisory bodies (*shingikai*) that are sub-governmental institutions.[131]

NHK staff, as well as persons from outside the government, such as academics and

community representatives, are officially appointed to give their expert advice on

particular policy areas. Within *shingikai*, the NHK staff together with appointed

journalists from other media organizations, particularly from 'the Big Five', serve as

> free agents and delegates of their media organizations; sources and
> conveyors of information; purveyors of political evaluation, criticism,
> and new ideas; and go-betweens and legitimizers of government policy
> positions and compromises reached by representatives of conflicting
> views and interests.[132]

In these advisory bodies, the broadcasting elite and other media members are appointed

to gain access to policy-makers and are given the opportunity to comment or criticize

on policy issues.[133] This could offer tremendous benefits to the public and increased

public participation should the deliberations be made public. Instead, most deliberations

of public policies by these bodies have been kept secret until very recently.[134] The

shingikai thus became an informal channel for forging relationships between senior

journalists, the broadcasting elite, and policy-makers, and thus made it difficult for the

broadcasting elite and senior journalists to be critical of the appointing authorities, or

objectively comment on the policies they deliberated upon. In particular, NHK, which

has a large number of their staff on various advisory bodies, has devoted a high

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130   "*NHK no yûseishô shokuin settai seiji kenkingiwaku ni tsuite*" (Suspected political
       contributions and receptions between NHK and the MPT bureaucrats), *Hôsô Repooto*, July
       1998, (153), pp. 64-5.
131   The appointment of journalists to public advisory bodies has existed since the Meiji period.
       See Yamamoto Taketoshi, "The Press Clubs of Japan", *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 1989,
       15(2), p. 383.
132   Ehud Harari, "The Government-Media Connection in Japan: The Case of Public Advisory
       Bodies", *Japan Forum*, 1997, 9(1), p. 32.
133   The *shingikai* members are appointed for a two-year term. They are not usually reappointed, and
       but replaced by persons from the same occupational category, and often from the same
       organizations. Members from TV commercial networks are rarely appointed, except for
       shingikai attached to the MPT, which directly deal with media issues. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
134   A massive administrative reform of public advisory bodies implemented in 1998-99 increased
       the openness of these bodies. A substantial amount of information and minutes of the
       meetings of these bodies, though not all, is now available in print and online. This change can
       be observed at the MPT, particularly in meetings concerning the digitalization and a new
       multi-channeling system. Gregory W. Noble, "Freer Discussion of Predetermined Agendas:
       Reform and Continuity in Japan's *Shingikai* Deliberation Councils", *Unpublished paper*,
       Australian National University, 2000.

proportion of its news time to coverage of these bodies.[135] Yet this coverage of advisory

bodies is mainly factual and straightforward, lacking critical editorial assessments or

negative comments. The role of these media members thus seems to be limited only to

'legitimizing' policy proposals, as all negotiations and formal agreements have already

been reached elsewhere.[136]

An investigation into *shingikai* conducted by the Management and Coordination

Agency in 1992 found that the more than one-fourth of the total 139 media members at

various advisory bodies were from the NHK.[137] The reason why these NHK executives

and personnel decided to become members of *shingikai*, however, was not based on

publicity or money.[138] Rather, serving in *Shingikai* opens doors to attractive retirement

positions in semi-governmental organizations, such as research or administration

positions in policy-related public companies, research institutes, or think tanks.[139] As

proxy providers of such positions, *shingikai* became a forum where the broadcasting

elite and the appointing authorities formed their reward relationships. While members of

the media could secure their retirement future by participating in *shingikai*, the

bureaucrats and politicians of the relevant appointing authorities received policy

legitimation because the broadcasting and newspaper elite abstained from critically

commenting on the policies over which they have deliberated. These broadcasting and

newspaper members of *shingikai* thus earned merit, and could, over time, be considered

by the bureaucrats and politicians as part of their 'in-group'.[140] Indeed, this kind of

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135   Krauss' content analysis of 7.00 pm news on NHK in July 1983 found that 10 per cent of total
        news stories were on 'Advisory Councils'. See Ellis S. Krauss, "Portraying the State: NHK
        Television News and Politics", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in
        Japan (Honolulu: Univrsity of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 100.

136   For further discussion of *shingikai* see Frank Schwartz, "Of Fairy Cloaks and Familiar Talks:
        The Politics of Consultation", in G.D. Allinson, and Sone Yasunori (eds.), Political Dynamics
        and Contemporary Japan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 217-41; Gregory W.
        Noble, "Freer Discussion of Predetermined Agendas: Reform and Contiunity in Japan's
        Shingikai Deliberation Councils", Unpublished paper, Australian National University, 2000.

137   Amano Katsufumi, "*Seifu shingikai wa kisha no uba suteyama ka?*" (Is the government's
        public advisory body a dumping place for retired reporters?), Bungei Shunjū, November 1993,
        71(11), p. 296. See also "*Seifu shingikai no masukomi iin*" (Media Members of the
        Government's Public Advisory Bodies), Asahi Shimbun, August 4, 1994, p. 25.

138   The payments to *shingikai* members are quite low. Each usually receives only 20,000 yen
        ($A285) at the opening and the closing of a session. See Amano, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

139   Harari, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

140   'In-group' and 'out-group' distinctions are widely cited as a basis of Japanese culture, which
        reflects a tendency of dependent personality and collective behavior of Japanese people. See

reciprocal exchange of rewards within in-groups has contributed largely to the coordination and integration of the political and broadcasting elite in Japan, as it did for other groups in the Japanese political realm.[141] The integration between the broadcasting and political elite in Japan has contributed to a susceptibility to special requests to change or suppress politically-sensitive broadcasting content.

3.3 Contests and Controls in News and Current Affairs Programs

In Thailand, broadcasting content on television indeed reflects the interests of those who own the stations. Most Thai television stations, which have been owned and operated by the state for a long time, are submissive to the state's direction over what to report and how to report it. However, as Mcquail argues, "the line of influence from ownership is often indirect and complex - and it is rarely the only line of influence".[142] In the case the new private-run station, *iTV*, program content is supposedly free from direct state control, but hospitality to the governing party has been extended, and sponsorship has sometimes been sought. One of *iTV* producers of morning news program admitted that securing a government deferral of its license payment and the receipt of revenue from major sponsors during the economic crisis has had an influence on editorial decisions.[143] Since these commercial operators are concerned with staying in business and renewing their licenses, they impose implicit rules and conventions on their operations and news productions. Yet, contestation of, and resistance to, coercive controls imposed by the state on news programming are evident at both the administration and production levels of these commercial stations.

Befu Harumi, "The Group Model of Japanese Society and an Alternative", <u>Rice University Studies,</u> Winter 1980, 66(1), pp. 169-87.

[141]   Richardson, *op. cit.*

[142]   Denis McQuail, <u>Mass Communication Theory,</u> 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 1998), p. 162.

[143]   Anchaleeporn Kusum, newsreader and assistant to a political editor of *iTV*, observed that negative comments against the Democrat Party were deliberately withdrawn during the negotiation to defer the annual payments. During the peak of the economic crisis in 1997-98, in particular, negative comments against advertisers were also avoided. She cited an example of a suspension of a report concerned a company which released contaminated water into a river in a Northern province. However, *iTV* was reluctant to pursue this report further since the company is owned by a major soft-drink company, one of the biggest advertisers in Thailand. Interview on May 9, 1998.

Notwithstanding the revocation of the stringent Revolutionary Orders 15 and 17 in 1992 and the abolition of NBEB, the subsequently elected governments led by Chuan I (1994-1995), Banharn (1995-1996), and Chavalit (1996-1997) applied the coercive approach to directly and indirectly intervene in the administrative and programming areas of television stations. As demonstrated in Table 5, the stations administrations were often pressured to cancel or suspend programs, or move personnel who did not conform to the boundaries set by the stations and challenged official discourse of political reality.

Table 5 : Direct and Indirect State Intervention in the Administration and Programming of Thai Television Stations (1995-1997)

Year	Nature of Intervention	Reasons for Intervention
1995	- A current affairs program called, "*Tob Prachachon*" on Channel 11 was cancelled. - A close aid to the Prime Minister made a request to Channel 5 and Channel 9. - A political reporter from Channel 7 was suddenly reassigned from the government house beat to another beat.	- Program content upset people in high places. - The request was made for extra broadcasting time for government announcements. - The Prime Minister expressed his dislike of the reporter's interviewing style.

1996	- "Bun Ma", a song sung by *Carabao*, was banned on both radio and television.	- The lyric of the song ridiculed some cabinet ministers.
	- A close investigation of Channel 7's news tidbit program called "*Saketkhao*" was ordered. - *Carabao* was banned to play life-on-stage on Channel 5. - The Minister in charge of broadcasting pressured the producer of a popular current affairs program, *Mong Tang Moom*, to discontinue on Channel 11.	- The program made fun of the characters of certain cabinet ministers. - Lyrics in some songs ridiculed the government. - Some cabinet members considered the program highly partial.
	- A current affairs program called, "*Veti Chaoban*" (The Locals' Stage) on Channel 11 was suspended for a week. - A Channel 7 reporter on the Army beat was forced to resign.	- The program planned to broadcast an investigation on rural locals who have been unjustly dispersed from their land. Top Army leaders disliked the reporter's interviewing style and her questions about the Army's purchase of armored cars.
	- Channel 5 transferred its political news editor to the computer section.	- The editor authorized a report which was seen by the cabinet members as challenging the Prime Minister's leadership.
	- Channel 9 set up an internal committee to investigate a political reporter. - "*Nation News Talk*" program on Channel 9 was suspended.	- The reporter filed a news report on MPs who did not attend several parliamentary sessions. - The program was seen as 'pro-Opposition' by certain cabinet ministers.
1997	- A "Media-monitoring Center" was established to oversee news reported on radio, television, and newspapers.	- It was claimed to be a counter-attack plan by the government against misleading reports.
	- Channel 7 suspended a current affairs program called "*Khor kid duey khon*" (Let me think). - A request to filter all negative comments on the government in program content was directly made to Orasa Khunawat, the MCOT director, who oversaw Channel 3 and Channel 9.	- The producer planned to interview an important figure in a prostitution ring servicing people in high places. - Certain cabinet members viewed that several current affairs programs, particularly on Channel 9, propagated negative views on the government.

Source: *Khana kamakarn prasanngarn ongkorn sitthimanusayachon (Kor.Por.Sor)*, *Sathanakarn sitthimanusayachon pi 2539.2540 (Human Rights Situation in 1996-1997)* (Bangkok: *Kor.Por.Sor*, 1997), pp. 9-15 cited in Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *Rabob witthayu lae thorathat thai: Krongsang thang setthakit kanmuang lae pholkrathob tor sitthi seriphap (Thai Radio and Television Systems: The Political and Economic Structure and Its Effects on Rights and Freedoms)*, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1999), pp. 336-38; The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2541 (Reporters' Day March 5, 1998)* (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1998), pp. 38-44; The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2540 (Reporters' Day March 5,*

1997) (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1997), pp. 37-41; The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2539 (Reporters' Day March 5, 1996)* (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1996), pp. 30-40.

According to Ministerial Regulation No.14 of 1994, the suspension of a broadcasting program is only possible (clause 17) should the licensing official find that the program intentionally offends the royal family, insults the religion, the nation, the government or the officials of any State, or any group of people, or offends public morality, or incites crime (clause 16).[144] However, these regulations do not allow the licensing officials to directly cancel a program based on its political inclination. In an indirect attempt to do so, the Minister in charge of broadcasting can seek to put pressure on the program by revamping the whole programming schedule of the station, discontinuing a contract with the program producer, or forcing the producer to withdraw the program from the station. In 1995, for example, Chermsak Pinthong, a producer of the high-rating current affairs program *Mong Tang Moom*, interviewed Banharn Silapa-archa, then a candidate for Prime Minister about his plan to include two MPs infamous for drug dealings on future cabinet lineup -- a question that Banharn did not wish to address. After Banharn won an election and became the Prime Minister, Piyanat Watcharaporn, one of his cabinet ministers in charge of broadcasting, announced a revamp of programs on Channel 11, and hinted that *Mong Tang Moom* would lose its timeslot. However, due to a concern about possible public backlash, the Minister did not directly dismiss the program. Instead, he lobbied members of the Creative Media Foundation and the Bangchak Petroleum Refinery, which funded the program, to stop their sponsorship. General Prem Tinsulanond, an influential political figure, senior member of the Creative Media Foundation, and of the Board of the company that owned the office building Chermsak was renting, was reportedly lobbied heavily by the Banharn Government. Chermsak was later forced to vacate his office on the grounds that the building would be refurbished. Six radio programs under Chermsak's direction

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144   The Regulations also require that the stations shall arrange to have their broadcast program recorded and kept at the stations for at least fifteen days from the date of the broadcast for inspection (clause 18). See Broadcasting Directing Board Division, The Public Relations Department, *Thailand: Broadcasting Act 1955, 1987 and Regulation on Broadcasting 1992* (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1995), pp. 63-5.

were subsequently cancelled by the Army, which owned the frequency. Because of pressures from all sides, Chermsak finally decided to withdraw his program from Channel 11 in February 1996.[145] In August 2001, Chermsak had a similar clash with the premier and all of his programs on Channel 9 were cancelled. This incident followed his interview with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, which was later used as evidence against Thaksin in his assets-declaration concealment trial.[146]

The level of intervention by the government in programming content has been so pervasive that distinct organizational codes, practices and rituals have been developed within Thai broadcasting organizations and the boundary of organizational autonomy has also been drawn. Adisak Srisom, the former host of a current affairs debate program on Channel 11, *Krong Sathanakan* (Distillation of events), said after leaving the channel in 1999 that there were a lot of "battles for control", in which crossing the line would do him harm rather than good.[147] Adisak's production team has been dismissed after he tried to resist political interference. Adisak viewed political interference in programming such as special written 'orders' or 'requests' not as external constraints, but rather as essential parts of organizational 'culture':

> This is also part of the culture at channel 11. Bargaining happens all the
> time. It is normal for politicians to ask for this or that person to appear
> on TV. But we try to screen them. And we try to keep the program's
> integrity. I must say, however, that these requests have become rather ugly
> of late. One top bureaucrat even asked me to do a PR piece for the present
> administration. This is what we call 'interference'.[148]

While the Japanese Constitution does not contain any clauses related to the rights and liberties of media professionals and broadcasters, Article 41 of the 16th Constitution of Thailand specifically guarantees the rights and liberties of media workers.[149] However, a discrepancy between the spirit of the Article 41 and political reality has been so wide that indirect interference in the programming and administration of state-owned

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145   Interview with Dr.Chermsak Pinthong on August 25, 1998.

146   "War of Words Continues: It's punch and counter punch", The Nation, August 18, 2001
       (on-line edition).

147   "Messy over Meddling", The Nation, July 21, 1999 (on-line edition).

148   *Ibid.*

149   Article 41 of the 1997 Constitution of Thailand states that, "employees of media organizations
       have rights and liberties in accordance with the Constitution and must not be ideologically
       controled by the owners. This also applies to employees of stated-owned media organizations".

television broadcasting stations in particular, is still pervasive. Demands from senior bureaucrats and politicians that cannot be accommodated comfortably within the established programming format and institutional routine are often made. A recent case in point included the suspension of Channel 9's educational program "*Phasa Thai Nai Chor*" (Thai language on screen) in 1999, after it broadcast an episode explaining the term apology, and making a remark that "unlike some *phu yai* (senior people) who make a mistake but refuse to apologize". The program became a political target because the episode went to air when Prime Minister Chuan was under attack for refusing to apologize after his appointment of an ex-military junta member, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, to an honorary military post. The Minister in charge of broadcasting reportedly requested a personal pre-censorship of scripts before the program resumed its airing on a regular basis.[150]

Television news and current affairs programs in Japan are equally susceptible to political pressure. Article 3-2 of the Japanese Broadcast Law, for example, stipulates that programs shall not disturb public morality, shall be politically impartial, shall broadcast news without distorting facts, and shall clarify the points of issue from as many angles as possible.[151] However, penalty provisions imposed on those who violate these criteria are almost absent. The main penalty provisions cover the areas associated with receiving or demanding bribes (Article 54).[152] This vagueness was apparently intentional, and it has left the room for the state to intervene at will.

In the case of NHK, the Broadcast law stipulates that the organization must submit its budget plan, projected program schedule, and amount of receiver fees to the MPT every fiscal year (see Appendix 4). The Ministry's bureaucrats cannot make revisions, but can make certain suggestions and comments before sending the plan to the

[150] Sirikul Bunnag, "Cartoon caper upsets Supatra", Bangkok Post, September 2,1999 (on-line edition); "Supatra denies bid to pull plug on TV series", The Nation, September 9, 1999 (on-line edition).
[151] *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai, Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts)* (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), p. 44.
[152] Ki-Sung Kwak, "Structural and Cultural Aspects of the Regulations of Television Broadcasting in East Asia: A Comparative Study", Gazette, 1997, 59(6), pp. 429-443.

Diet for debate and approval. As a result, the content of news and current affairs programs broadcast by NHK has been inextricably bound up in the dependent nature of the organization itself. There have been cases where governments have used NHK's submission for its financial approval as a loophole to directly interfere with programming content. In 1979, for example, NHK requested that the Diet raise its receiver fees by twenty-four per cent. The ruling party, the LDP, directed its communication policy division to investigate the proposal. The LDP later put forward four criticisms for NHK to address before the Diet's approval of the proposal. These criticisms were: that NHK coverage of nuclear power plants was always negative; that NHK's coverage of KDD scandal was biased[153]; that the coverage of the gubernatorial election in Tokyo was biased, as NHK favored a particular candidate; and that NHK gave more time to the opposition than the LDP during its parliamentary coverage, and the LDP members were often portrayed unfavorably.[154] In response to these demands, the Chairman of NHK Board members, Sakamoto Chôichi, strongly argued that "NHK thus has to throw away its mission of public broadcasting, and instead, adhere strictly to fairness and non-problematic form of broadcasting".[155] The LDP issued an ultimatum that for budget approval NHK must promise "to make efforts to avoid political bias hereafter", and NHK eventually obliged.[156]

Direct interference by politicians and bureaucrats in NHK programs was evident not only at the executive meetings, but also at the production level. An American producer related of his experience while working for the NHK:

> When a political story is edited at NHK, the editing booth is always crowded by the ghosts of bureaucrats, ministers and ruling and opposition parties who may be offended.[157]

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[153]   The KDD scandal involved illegal imports of goods by custom officials. This scandal was first exposed by *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*.

[154]   Kawasaki Yasushi, *NHK to seiji (NHK and Politics* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1997), pp. 40-42.

[155]   *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[156]   *Ibid.*

[157]   Spencer Sherman, "NHK TV Japan: East meets West in the newsroom", Columbia Journalism Review, March/April 1994; also cited in Duncan McCargo, "The Political Role of the Japanese Media", The Pacific Review, 1996, 9(2), p. 260.

A classical case of direct political interference in programming at NHK involved a news program in 1981 on the fifth anniversary of the Lockheed scandal. The program had planned to focus on the increase in influence of former Prime Minister Tanaka on the LDP despite his earlier conviction in the Lockheed scandal. The producer of this popular news program, *News Center 9*, at that time had prepared several interviews with pro-Tanaka factional leaders as well as Tanaka's leading critics, such as former Prime Minister Miki Takeo. On the morning of the day when the program was due to be aired, a decision was made that a section of Miki's interview was to be deleted. This decision was made by the NHK President after he received phone calls from several LDP members.[158] The most recent case occurred in January 2001, in which a program on the Japanese military's sexual enslavement of women during wartime to be broadcast on the NHK education channel was heavily censored before airing due to threats of budget cuts.[159] Due to its susceptibility to this kind of political pressure, self-censorship has gradually developed as an organizational culture within NHK.

Commercial stations in Japan are also subject to parliament in the same manner as NHK, because they must undergo review by the Diet to obtain re-licensing every five years. Often, these periods of scrutiny have profound effects on all decision-making in programs, which avoid charges of political favoritism from any side of the political community. According to one TV journalist, the commercial stations produce their news programs based on four principles: *yasuku* (cheap to make), *hayaku* (quick to make), *takaku* (achieve high ratings), and most importantly, *mondai-naku* (no problem follows).[160] This view has been widely shared, particularly after the incident in which a former TV Asahi President was summoned to give evidence before the Diet. After the

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158   Kawasaki Yasushi, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-56.

159   In January 2001, NHK's education television channel (ETV) aired a four night series on "*Sensô o dô sabaku ka*" (How should we adjudicate wars?). The program, which aired on the second night titled "*Senji sei bôryoku*" (Wartime Sexual Violence), was largely altered from it had originally been planned. Particularly, the section on the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal which was held in Tokyo in December 2000, was heavily edited, and expert comments were also truncated and used in misleading context. See Takahashi Tetsuya, "*Nani ga chokuzen ni kesaretaka*" (What has been directly cut?), <u>*Sekai,*</u> May 2001, 688, pp. 209-219.

160   Namino Hajime, "*Minpô hôdô, Seisaku genba no nayami to kadai*" (News Reports on Commercial Stations: Troubles and Subjects at the Production Level", in Katsura Keiichi et al. (eds.), <u>*21 Seki no masukomi 02: Hôsô* (The 21st Century's Mass Communication No. 2: Broadcasting),</u> 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Daigetsu Shoten, 1998), pp. 120-59.

fall of the LDP in 1993, the President of TV Asahi, Tsubaki Sadayoshi, gave a speech at a private meeting held by the NABJ (National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan, or *Minpôren*), claiming that he had encouraged the news reporting team to work with a view to help establishing a non-LDP force in a coalition government in the 1993 election. The speech was leaked to the press, and Tsubaki was pressured to resign from the presidential position. Yet he and the replacement TV Asahi President, Itô Kunio, were both summoned to give their testimony to the Diet only a week before TV Asahi's license expired.[161]

In this case, TV Asahi was highly vulnerable to political pressure. The station had to comply with the Diet's demand for an external expert to conduct an investigation into the charge of biased election coverage in addition to its own investigation.[162] Although the investigation found no evidence of biased reports in TV Asahi's coverage, this case has set a precedent whereby the government's intervention and control of commercial broadcasting content as allowed by the Broadcast Law has been questioned, debated, and redefined.[163] The Chief of the Broadcasting Bureau of the MPT, in particular, announced after the Tsubaki incident at a Communication Policy Council meeting that "the final decision about whether the program is fair or not, is made by the MPT".[164] He based his argument on the grounds that since the MPT has jurisdiction over the Broadcast Law and the Radio Regulatory Law, it can also determine what is broadcast.[165] In 1995, the MPT also added to the Broadcast Law a requirement that made broadcasters keep copies of broadcast programs, and extended the period that they could be requested to change or correct broadcasting matters.[166] In 1996, the TBS

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[161]   Duncan McCargo, "The Political Role of the Japanese Media", The Pacific Review, 1996, 9(2), pp. 251-64; Kristin Kyoko Altman, "Television and Political Turmoil: Japan's Summer of 1993", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 165-86; Yokota Hajime, Terebi to seiji (Television and Politics) (Tokyo: Suzusawa Shoten, 1996), pp. 116-60.

[162]   Yokota, op. cit., p. 124.

[163]   Watanbe Kaoru, "Seiji hôdô to hôsô-hô no mondai" (Problems between political reporting and the Broadcast Law), Jôchi Daigaku Komyunikeshon Gakukai, 1995, (25), pp. 93-106.

[164]   Tsukamoto Miyuki, "Yuseishô to shimin no ronsô: hôsô-hô no kaishaku wo megutte" (The debate between the MPT and the public on the interpretation of the Broadcast Law), Hôsô Repooto, January 1999, (156), p. 56.

[165]   Ibid., p. 58.

[166]   Otsuka Hisashi, "The Legal Framework for Media and Channel Multiciplication in Japanese Broadcasting", Studies of Broadcasting, May 1996, (32), p. 199.

disclosure that it had allowed members of the *Aum Shinrikyô* group to preview a documentary which featured it caused an MPT uproar. This had led to the disappearances and deaths of family members of a lawyer who made a case against the group and gave an interview on the program.[167] The incident forced the TBS President to resign and set off another controversy about the MPT reinterpretation of the Broadcast Law.[168] The following table summarizes the conditions of the Broadcast Law as interpreted by the MPT before and after the Tsubaki incident, and after the TBS incident.

Table 6: Summary of Points Related to Programming Content Interpreted by the MPT Before and After the Tsubaki's (1993) and the TBS' (1996) Incidents

	The government's ability to interfere as allowed by the Broadcast Law before both incidents (as interpreted by the MPT)	The government's ability to interfere as allowed by the Broadcast Law after the Tsubaki (1993) and the TBS Incidents (1996) (as interpreted by the MPT)
Content	• The government does not control or oversee the program (1950) • The government does not have the authority to regulate programming content (1958). • Broadcasters should have a high sense of social responsibility (1985).	• The political fairness of broadcasting content is judged by the MPT (1993) • The MPT can give broadcasters guidance on programming standards (1997).
Standards	• Standards of broadcasting programs are established by broadcasters (1977).	• The MPT can give broadcasters guidance on programming standards (1997).

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167   Sebastian Moffett, "Slipping Standards: Furore over Interview Highlights Problems with TV News", Far Eastern Economic Review, April 25, 1996, 159(17), pp. 26-27.

168   Tajima Yasuhiko, "*Naiyô kisei ni mukau hôsô gyôsei*" (The broadcasting admistrators head for content control), Sekai, July 1996, (624), pp. 151-54.

Judging Decision	• The MPT does not have authority to judge whether a program has violated the Broadcast Law. Such authority belongs to the Broadcast Review Council and other related committees as well as the broadcasters themselves (1985). • The MPT should not criticize broadcasting programs (1985).	• The political fairness of the program is decided by the MPT(1993). • The MPT has an authority to oversee and administer the Article 3-2 of the Broadcast Law (1997).

The figures in parentheses represent the year in which the Broadcast Law was promulgated (1950), revised (1958, 1977, 1985), and reinterpreted (1993, 1997).

Source: Tsukamoto Miyuki, "*Yūseishō to shimin to no ronsō: hōsō-hō no kaishaku wo megutte*" (Debate between the MPT and the Public on the interpretation of the Broadcast Law), *Hōsō Repooto*, January 1999, (156), p. 63.

The increased political interference in broadcasting content by the authorities led to a sharp decline in the number of current affairs programs. NHK, for example, cancelled '*Machi no koe*', which had voiced local concerns on politics and other public issues.[169] Existing programs, such as NHK's *Nichiyō tōron,* or TV Asahi's *Sunday Project,* which usually invited commentary from one representative of each political party, were also pressured to take extreme caution to allocate equal time to each politician in the interviews. However, the LDP Party Secretary in 1998, Mori Yoshirō, circumvented meeting with the opposition in these kinds of programs. He commented provocatively that an LDP politician would not go to these programs alone, since one voice from the LDP could not possibly contradict any allegations made by a team of the opposition's representatives. LDP politicians would therefore be seen as bad guys in the public's view.[170] Such remarks have brought about a substantial change in existing current affairs programs. Programs such as NHK's *Nichiyō tōron,* and TV Asahi's *Sunday Project* responded to Mori's comments without strong resistance. They gradually decreased the number of the opposition members, and invited more LDP politicians.[171] Apparently, the MPT does not see these changes as 'political bias'. The establishment of a 'News Monitoring Center' by the LDP in 1998 was directly aimed at

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[169]   Tsukamoto Miyuki, "*Obasan sannin yūseishō ni iku: Seni obasan hodo osoroshii mono wa nai!* " (Three Aunties go to the MPT: There is nothing in this world as fearful as them!), *Hōsō Repooto*, November 1998, (155), p. 63.

[170]   *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[171]   *Ibid.*, pp. 62-7.

monitoring 'biased' comments of TV newscasters. The LDP organ paper, '*Jiyû Shimpô*', launched a new column called '*Terebi haiken*' (See TV) in the same year to monitor and criticize TV news and current affairs programs deemed biased by the LDP standards.[172] Mori's hypersensitivity to criticism led to the LDP establishment of a 'Committee to Study Broadcast Revitalization' to ensure impartial political coverage on TV, when his party came under a constant attack by TV newscasters and commentators for recurring scandals and his ineptitude as a Prime Minister in early 2001.[173]

"It is difficult for us to be a watchdog", claims Adachi Hisao, a news editor at NTV, "since there is always political pressure from one way or another".[174] Political pressure often permeates as far as the administration of commercial broadcasting stations. In the past, a newsreader at TV Asahi was fired immediately after giving a hard-hitting commentary on the construction of the Narita Airport that had been pursued by the ruling LDP. A TBS newscaster was also sacked because he had critically commented on American policies towards Vietnam.[175] In 1991, a journalist at the same channel, Kawabe Katsurô, conducted a series of investigations on the fast-rising trucking company *Sagawa kyûbin*, and its shady financial dealings with politicians and gangsters. The broadcast of his investigation led a team of prosecutors to commence its own investigation, and to arrest Kanemaru Shin, a powerful LDP power broker, on a charge of tax evasion in March 1993.[176] However, instead of getting a promotion, Kawabe was transferred to the accounts department, and immediately after there was an indication

172 Maruyama Noboru, "*Jimintô [Hôdô monitaa seido] no keihaku*" (The thoughtlessness of the LDP News Monitoring System), *Hôsô Repooto*, January 1999, (156), pp. 12-15.

173 "Fossils who lead LDP still try to stifle criticism from within", The Asahi Shimbun (on-line edition), February 9, 2001.

174 Interview with Mr.Adachi Hisao, Editor, News Program, Nippon Television Network Corporation on October 29, 1998.

175 In the late 1960s, TBS was particularly targeted by the Japanese government for its alleged "misconduct" on three counts. First, Den Hideo, a newscaster of a popular program, "News Cup" called the US's policies in Vietnam "foolish". Second, TBS's documentary on the national flag was considered 'negative'. As a result, two producers of this program were transferred. Third, TBS provided its microbuses to transport demonstrators against the construction of Narita Airport. See Shiga Nobuo, *Shôwa terebi hôsô-shi (ge)* (The History of Television Broadcasing in the *Shôwa* Period) (Tokyo: Hayagawa Shobô, 1990), pp. 35-40.

176 Kanemaru admitted publicly that he had taken $US 4 million from *Sagawa kyûbin*. However, he was only fined for less than $US 2,000 and let off by the prosecutors. Due to the increased media's criticism on his conduct, he later resigned from the cabinet. Further details see Maggie Farley, "Japan's Press and Politics of Scandal", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 133-64.

that the LDP would make a strong comeback to lead a coalition in the 1996 election. Kawabe quit to become a freelancer.[177]

Due to this increased state interference and control over broadcasting content, the definition of television broadcasting in Japan as an independent medium has become untenable. Particularly, the way in which the state intensified its coercive and reward strategies with the broadcasters after the Tsubaki incident caused a shift in the political role of television broadcasting in Japan from that of a 'watchdog', which it had taken in the lead up to the 1993 election, to that of a 'servant of the state', which practises self-censorship, often sends positive messages about the powerful LDP, and reinforces the political establishment. However, this shift seems ephemeral. The rapid technological changes that led to a partial reform of broadcasting regulations in Japan have become factors that created an environment of contestation between the MPT and broadcasters, thus providing room for the television medium to re-shift the course of its political role.

3.4 Regulatory and Technology Changes

The broadcasting reform process in Thailand reflects a high degree of contestation between the state, the media, and the public, who all struggle to gain or retain control over television frequencies. This media reform movement was initiated during the constitutional reform process in 1994-97. It was aimed at overhauling the duopolistic broadcasting structure, by establishing an independent regulatory agency to decentralize media ownership and reallocate broadcasting frequencies, allowing NGOs and community groups fair access to frequencies, raising standards of broadcasting content as well as freedom of media professionals, and guaranteeing communication and information rights of the public.[178] The movement culminated with the placement of

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[177]   Aparisim Ghosh et al., "Paper Chasers", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 20, 1997, pp. 24-5.

[178]   Pisith Chawalathawach, "*Raththammanun mattra 40 huachai samkhan khwam yutitham nai kan bangsanpansuan kankhrumkhrong sitthi issara khong khaosan*" (The integral part of Article 40 of the Constitution: *Justita Distrbuta*, Protection of Rights and Freedom of Information), *Lok khong seu lamdub thi 3 (Media World Vol. 3)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1999), pp. 203-19.

Articles 39, 40, and 41 into the sixteenth Constitution, as promulgated in 1997. Article

40 deals, in particular, with broadcasting reform. It reads:

> The frequencies for radio and television transmission,
> and radio communications are national resources to be used
> for public interests.
> An independent state regulatory agency must be set up to supervise
> the allocation, license and regulate frequencies of radio and television
> broadcasting and for telecommunications as stipulated in clause one
> of this article.
> The objectives of clause two must take into consideration the highest
> public interests at the national and local levels, in the area of education,
> culture, security and public safety and other public benefits, including
> free and fair competition.

According to the Article, radio and television frequencies are recognized as 'national

resources', and to be used for 'public interests'. This signifies a new notion that

broadcasting frequencies are resources that must be used for the public and not state

interests. However, Ubonrat has commented that the recognition of frequencies as

'national resources' instead of 'public resources' still reflects the conservative mindsets

of Thai politicians and the military, most of whom blatantly do not want to see their

commandeered frequencies turned into 'public resources', which intrinsically belong to

the 'public' as the name suggests.[179]

Opposition from military officers, whose preoccupations were to retain their

controls of 203 radio stations, two national television stations and 2,947 frequencies for

telecommunication services, has been explicit and framed within the pretext of national

security.[180] They argued that the more frequencies are in private hands, the more risks

and susceptibility the nation faces of foreign ownership domination.[181] Needless to say,

these comments were made out of their preoccupations with the revenue and kickbacks

that they usually receive from licensing and operating these frequencies. It is reported

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[179]   Ubonrat Siriyuwasak, "The Media, Cultural Politics and the Nation-State", Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on Thai Studies, Amsterdam, 4-8 July 1999.

[180]   In Thailand there are 514 radio stations. The military owns 203 stations. The PRD owns 145 stations. The MCOT has 62 stations. The National Police Force has 44 stations. The Ministry of Transport and Communications owns 18 stations. The Parliament has 16 stations. The University Council owns 12 stations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has 12 stations. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives own 4 stations. The Ministry of Education has 3 stations. The Royal Palace owns 3 stations, while BBC Thailand and Voice of America have one station each. *"Mor khao kongtap mahuema witthayu 203 sathanee thorathat 2 chong"* (The Army's Gigantic Rice Bowl: 203 radio stations and two television stations", *Matichon Sudsapda*, May 11, 1999, p. 12.

[181]   "TV and Radio and National Security", *The Bangkok Post*, May 6, 1999 (on-line edition).

that the military receive an estimated annual income of A$ 5 million from licensing radio stations, in addition to advertising revenue from Channel 5 which has been projected at around A$10 million in the year 2000.[182] The total revenue is sent directly to the Army's revenue office without being passed to the Ministry of Finance, insomuch as the Revolutionary Order No.101 issued in 1972 permitted the Army to keep the revenue from administering and operating the frequencies within its barracks, and exempted this revenue from public auditing.[183]

There is no doubt that some of the revenue from license fees, and commercial revenue, is diverted from developing and maintaining the Army's affairs. Part of it is usually exploited, or spent to the personal advantage and pleasure of the Army's officers. A trip to play golf in China or a shopping trip in Australia, for instance, have reportedly become regular weekend activities for Army Generals.[184] The loss to the public of these sources of revenue in the foreseeable future has inevitably forced the Army to secure its major source of revenue. Such measures included the Army's restructuring of Channel 5 as a holding company with small subsidiaries. This process allowed private companies to buy shares and have stakes in the station.[185] Behind this restructuring of Channel 5 laid shady deals made between senior officers and private investors, in which past and present military leaders obtained substantial shares in the

[182]   "Army lays claim to 50 channels", Bangkok Post, May 6, 1999 (on-line edition); "Media firms anticipate its increase in earnings", Bangkok Post, June 1, 1999 (on-line edition).

[183]   According to the new arrangement made in 1999 between the Army and the Attorney-General's Office, the Army's funds in some areas, though not all, will be randomly selected for auditing starting in 1999 fiscal year. See "Sorayuth Chulanont sayob krasae kongtapkrue..." (Sorayuth Chulanont pacifies the Army's discontentment), Matichon Sudsapda , May 11, 1999, p. 12; and Thana Poopat, "Army-run media to be scrutinized", The Nation, February 26, 1999 (on-line edition).

[184]   "Naipol tor.bor thalungngob bamruesuk tangdan" (Generals smash the budget, indulging themselves overseas), Krungthep Thurakit, May 25, 1999 (on-line edition); A colonel of the Thai Army was reportedly arrested for stealing at the Sydney's International Airport in May 1999. This officer claimed that his trip was only an "educational excursion". See Peter Alford, "Thai Army radio hits static", The Australian, May 26, 1999 (on-line edition); and Wassana Nanuam, "Military Frequencies: Cash from media goes on fun trips", Bangkok Post, May 25, 1999 (on-line edition).

[185]   Channel 5 Co., Ltd. was established on March 14, 1997 with Bt250 million in registered capital and 25 million shares. The Army allowed the officer in the position of the Company Director and his three deputies to hold 10 million shares. The company has four subsidiaries: Channel 5 Marketing Co., Ltd; Channel 5 Production and Management Co.Ltd.; Channel 5 Radio Co., Ltd.; and Channel 5 Publishing Co., Ltd. See Bamrung Amnartcharoenrit, "Army Channel 5 goes Commercial", The Nation, March 27, 1997 (on-line edition); and Prakobpong Panapool, "Channel 5 boss sets out defence", The Nation, November 3, 1999 (on-line edition).

new company.[186] Indeed, this process could be classified as a premeditated undertaking by the Army's officers to maximize their personal gain before the new law to reallocate and re-regulate the frequencies is enacted.

The intent of the Constitution to reallocate broadcasting frequencies owned by the military and state agencies has opened a pandora's box of consolidation between the broadcasting, military, and political elite, whose economic interests are intertwined. In 1998, an anomaly was found in a contract renewal made between the Army and Bangkok Broadcasting Co., Ltd., the operator of Channel 7, despite the nine years remaining before the license expiration. Channel 7's contract was, however, hastily worked out by the Army, and signed by an Army Chief only few months before his retirement and before the passage of the new Frequency Bill. The Army simply claimed that the company needed at least a twenty-year contract so that it could be qualified to list on the stock market. Yet, such a crucial condition was apparently excluded from the contract. Moreover, the contract was approved by the Army without being scrutinized by the office of Attorney-General, as required by the law.[187] Instead, the contract was discreetly renewed for 25 years, and the agreed concession fee was extremely low.[188] After the deal was disclosed, the cabinet was pressured by the public to investigate the deal. Due to the Army's determination to cover up the deal, the government proceeded with circumspection to avoid causing serious conflict. So far, what the government has been able to do is only to pass a resolution to prohibit other state agencies from renewing contracts for radio or television frequencies for more than two years, pending the establishment of the new regulatory body.[189]

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[186]   *"Chuan sungsob naipol thue hun tor.tor.bor.5"* (Chuan orders an investigation into Channel 5's shareholders), *Krungthep Thurakit*, March 9, 1999 (on-line edition).

[187]   "Channel 7 deal points up long-term privilege", The Nation, November 2, 1998 (on-line edition); "Chettha vows to take on us in TV row", The Nation, November 20, 1998 (on-line edition).

[188]   Bangkok Broadcasting Co., Ltd. agreed to pay only Bt. 4.6 billion over 25 years, which was five times lower that the amount agreed to be paid by *iTV* for the same period. These low fees were also in stark and puzzling contrast to the operator's healthy profit of Bt. 6.8 billion during 1994-1998. See "Chuan asks Sorayuth to review Channel 7 deal", The Nation, October 23, 1998 (on-line edition).

[189]   Prakorbpong Panapool, "Cabinet moves to limit media contract terms", The Nation, November 25, 1998 (on-line edition).

The foregoing discussion of the Army's deliberate undertakings merely foreshadows subsequent movements by conservative politicians and the state agencies that did not want to see any reduction in their controls over radio and television stations. For instance, Vijit Vutthi-umpol, Director-General of the PRD, was concerned that the reallocation of the frequencies will strongly affect the success of his organization:

> It would be difficult for us to successfully promote the national development without media in hands. Since the annual budget we receive from the government is very limited, it would be much tougher for us to use this budget to buy media time. We may not succeed in any projects afterwards.[190]

A senior staff member of the PRD also pointed out that due to the nature of the broadcasting business, which generally yields multi-million dollars income, the state would not allow the new independent regulator to be established smoothly and exactly as constitutionally intended.[191] Indeed, the flaw in Article 40 has become a loophole through which state agencies have tried to maintain their control over broadcasting. As the Article was initially intended to re-regulate the broadcasting industry, the telecommunication clause that was added later posed a crucial problem -- there is no clear demarcation between the scope of telecommunication and broadcasting businesses. In April 1999, the Cabinet approved a draft of the Frequencies Allocation and Broadcasting and Telecommunication Supervision Organization bill high-handedly written by the Council of State, which suggested the establishment of one regulatory body to oversee both broadcasting and telecommunication businesses, whilst discarding the other draft jointly written by media academics, journalists, lawyers, members of NGOs, and representatives of the public, which advocated the establishment of two separate regulatory bodies. The state's version of this bill clearly did not support broadcasting reform, as it failed to address a number of important aspects: firstly, it failed to establish a separate independent regulatory body for each business that is highly different in terms of technicality and content; secondly, it opened a loophole which would allow telecommunication giants to yield influence over broadcasting industry; and lastly, it maintained a degree of government influence on both industries

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[190]   Interview with Mr. Vijit Vutthi-umpol on September 3, 1998, the PRD, Bangkok.
[191]   Interview with Ms. Kanha Tephasadin Na Ayuddhaya, Senior Officer of the National Broadcasting Commission, on May 15, 1998, the PRD, Bangkok.

by requiring that the majority of the selection committee for the regulatory body to be state officials.[192]

Media academics, NGO representatives, particularly the Working Group Monitoring Article 40, and members of the public ran numerous campaigns to contest the Cabinet's ruling, and suggested that national public hearings should be embarked upon to include public participation and dialogue in the process. Due to increased media and public pressure, the House Committee vetting the bill finally resolved in favor of establishing two commissions - the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) overseeing telecommunication frequencies, and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) supervising broadcasting frequencies.[193] The media and the public, however, soon faced another battle: the state swiftly proceeded with its own nomination of state officials and candidates who were closely connected with large media corporations to become the Selection Committee for the NBC.[194] The state also submitted its version of the new Broadcast Act, which contains provisions deemed detrimental to freedom and autonomy of the Commission, as well as professional broadcasters. These provisions are, for example, that technicians, anchors, announcers, and show hosts are required to obtain licenses from an officer assigned by the Commission (Article 84); that consultation with the Cabinet must be sought when the Commission allocates frequencies to state agencies (Article 19); and that cooperation in broadcasting programs or newscasts deemed important to the public is required from license holders (Article 70).[195]

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[192]   "Rivals stay adamant on frequency bill", The Nation, April 8, 1999 (on-line edition); Mongkol Bangprapa, "Academics: Two separate agencies are necessary", Bangkok Post, April 9, 1999 (on-line edition); Supara Janchitfah, "Control over the airwaves", Bangkok Post, May 16, 1999 (on-line edition).

[193]   "House frequency panel votes for two agencies", The Nation, June 24, 1999 (on-line edition).

[194]   Seven members of the new National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) will be screened and selected by five representatives from the state agencies including the Prime Ministerial Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, and the National Security Council, four academics, four broadcasting professionals, and four members of the non-profit organizations. See "Khoo fong rath rub kammakan sanha phidkodmai" (Threaten to sue the State's move to find the Committees as illegal", Krungthep Thurakit, February 18, 2000 (on-line edition).

[195]   "Thai Talk: New Broadcast Bill: It's bad news all the way", The Nation, March 16, 2000 (on-line edition).

Some media academics in Thailand are concerned that this broadcasting reform is fundamentally flawed due to the domination of interest groups in the process, the bureaucratic resistance, and the dubious character of the reform, which has been more about furthering an ends for the politicians and interest groups than being a means to meet public interests.[196] These concerns have in part been confirmed by the fact that it is highly likely that Frequency Bill will not affect the existing contracts, and a provision prohibiting media cross-ownership will not be included in the new Broadcast Act. Moreover, there has reportedly been a domination of the military and their crony associates in the appointment of the selection panel of the NBC.[197] Seemingly, the intent of broadcasting reform in Thailand has been caught between the dialogue, fragmentation, and perhaps a compromise between the politicians, bureaucrats and broadcasting elite.

Indeed, the process of drafting broadcasting regulations in Thailand is similar to those made elsewhere, in its likelihood to culminate in a compromised form of legislation resulting from the negotiation, creation, and then discharge of obligations and direct manipulation.[198] As such, less positive results than expected may result from the final process. Yet, the most interesting aspects of this reform lay not in the probably doomed attempts to free broadcasting from the state's controls, but rather in the forces that brought together the public and the media to confront and contest with the state. The press and broadcasting media played a crucial role in setting an agenda for this media reform by providing stages for both representatives of the media and the public to voice their demands and negotiate, and making outright objections to the state's abuses of power and its maneuvers in the legislative process. Discussion programs such as *Krong Sathankarn* (Distillation of events) closely monitored the legislative process of Article

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[196]   Ubonrat, *op. cit.*

[197]   "Anand elected to the NBC, but conservatives still dominate", The Nation, August 26, 2000 (on-line edition).

[198]   Article 335(2) of the Constitution demands that all organic laws of the Article 40, including the new Broadcasting Act, the Telecommunication Act, and the Radio Regulatory Act must be enacted within three years after the Constitution was promulgated, thereby before October 2000. By August 2001, this has not been realized, and even the process of appointing the Selection Committee for the NBC has not been finalized.

40. A week before its cancellation, a critic of the government's sponsored bill was reportedly invited onto the program against a ministerial order.[199]

This broadcasting reform process has paved way for a contestation of political information control between the state and the television media, in which the boundaries of state control are defined and redefined. In such a process, by which each side redefines and renegotiates its types of power relations (*coercive, reward, expert,* and *legitimate*), the political role of television media also changes. However, it is quite unlikely at this point that lower ownership concentrations of television stations in the hands of the state and a few of the broadcasting elite will be immediately brought about by the reform alone. The progress of the implementation of Article 40 has so far suggested that the reward strategies, which have long bound the state and the broadcasting elite, still retain their importance, yet perhaps to a lesser degree. Nonetheless, the guaranteed access of the public to television media, as intended by the Article 40, is expected to provide a platform for a more autonomous watchdog role of television in Thailand.

The broadcasting deregulation in Japan, which began in the 1990s, was by no means a result of internal political reforms. Several attempts to pass amendment bills to the broadcasting law were blocked by the ruling party, which preferred to maintain the existing regulatory structure. Rather, deregulation was largely brought about by technological change, which pressured the state to liberalize the cable television and satellite broadcasting markets. This opened up the restricted television broadcasting industry to foreign partnerships as well as to small operators who were previously kept out of the industry.[200] As mentioned earlier, the existing licensing process in Japan based on the principle of the MPT-orchestrated unification adjustment (*ipponka chôsei*) -- to guarantee the satisfaction of all participants, protect major terrestrial broadcasters, and preserve bureaucratic and political interests -- has impeded the development of

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[199]   "Messy over meddling", The Nation, July 21, 1999 (on-line edition).

[200]   Gregory W. Noble, "Let a Hundred Channels Contend: Technological Change, Political Opening, and Bureaucratic Priorities in Japanese Television", Journal of Japanese Studies, May 2000, 26(1), pp. 79-109.

broadcasting technology. The first commercial satellite broadcaster was introduced as late as 1991, due to a delay caused by the *ipponka* process. Due to the MPT preoccupation with preventing excessive competition in a fully liberalized market, it had to arrange for all 264 private applicants from various kinds of businesses, ranging from commercial TV operators, newspapers to insurance companies, to merge into a single broadcaster called the Japan Satellite Broadcaster or JSB, which is also known as *Wowow*.[201]

In the late 1980s, the MPT fell under attack for its status-quo oriented policies and slowness to keep up with the growth and diversification of broadcasting technologies, particularly in comparison with the MITI.[202] The MITI oversaw the rapidly-advancing business of computer technology, and had overlapping interests in telecommunication with the MPT. In trying to retain its supervision of the telecommunication business, the MPT submitted to MITI's demands for radical reform in 1984, when the Electric Communications Business Law and the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT) Corporation Law were passed. As a result, the principle of competition was introduced into the telecommunication business, and NTT was subsequently privatized. Based on this success, the MPT reorganized its internal structure by re-orienting it towards long-term policy formulation, something that had previously been lacking. Realizing the weaknesses of its technological position, the MPT concentrated on plans to carry out the liberalization of cable television and communication satellite broadcasting, as well as digitalization.[203]

In combination with public pressure for a radical move from the government to deal with the bubble economy in the early 1990s, domestic economic and political factors in Japan compelled the MPT to deregulate cable television and broadcasting via

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[201]   Kawasaki Hisao, "New Development in Japanese Broadcasting and Borderless Television Signal" in Hyeon-Dew Kang (ed.), Changing National Order in Northeast Asia and Communication Policies (Seoul: Nanam, 1992), p. 140.

[202]   For discussion on the rivalry between the MITI and the MPT in the 1970s-1980s see Jonathan Weinberg, "Broadcasting and Administrative Process in Japan and the United States", Buffalo Law Review, Fall 1991, 39(3), pp. 615-735.

[203]   Kaifu Kazuo, "Japan's Broadcasting Digitalization Enters the Second Stage, Its Present Stage and Prospect", NHK Broadcasting Culture & Research, New Year 2000, (11), pp. 5-11.

communication satellite (CS) markets.[204] In 1992, the MPT revised the Broadcast Law

and the Radio Law. It also established the consignment system (*jutaku-itaku*), which

separated facility supplying broadcasters (*jutaku hôsô jigyôsha*) and program supplying

broadcasters (*itaku hôsô jigyôsha*). The latter do not need to have broadcasting licenses

but cannot broadcast any programs to general household audiences. This new system

broke the conventional rule that licensed broadcasters must also produce programs, as

well as reducing barriers for new entrants in the CS business.[205] In 1993, the MPT also

allowed an easing of regulations on media ownership concentration for ten years to

allow terrestrial broadcasters to enter the CS business.[206] The MPT also revised the

restrictions on controlling multiple broadcasting stations. This enhanced the

introduction of digital signal compression technology which, by using only one set of

relaying equipment, allows for four to six times the amount broadcast by analog

systems. In 1996, the MPT applied this revision to digital broadcasting via

communication satellites, thus allowing each provider to broadcast multiple channels.[207]

The MPT demonstrated greater acceptance of liberalization by repealing

legislation that limited cable TV companies to only one operator per town, village, or

ward of a large city, and barred investments from foreigners and firms outside the

district.[208] In 1993, the Hosokawa Cabinet also announced regulatory changes for cable

television by allowing outside firms to invest, and by permitting foreigners to hold up to

thirty-three per cent of the shares in Japanese cable firms. The MPT further allowed

cable companies to operate multiple systems nationwide.[209] This lift in foreign

ownership allowances produced a surge in a number of US firms joining with local

companies to invest in cable TV. In 1996, there were 937 cable TV operators in Japan

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204   Weinberg, *op. cit.*; and Noble, *op. cit.*
205   Kaifu Kazuo, *op. cit.*; and also Otsuka Hisashi, "The Legal Framework for Media and Channel
       Multiplication in Japanese Broadcasting", <u>Studies of Broadcasting</u>, May 1996, (32), p. 196.
206   Kaifu Kazuo, *op. cit.*; and Otsuka Hisashi, *op. cit.*
207   Kaifu Kazuo, "Internationalization, Market Deregulation, and Digitalization: Restructuring
       Japan's Broadcasting Industry", <u>NHK Broadcasting Culture & Research</u>, Autumn 1997, No.1,
       pp. 5-12.
208   At a municipal level, the local unit of administration are the city (*shi*), the town (*chô* or *machi*)
       or the village (*son* or *mura*), which are designated according to population and a degree of
       urbanization. In Tokyo, the ward (*ku*) has a special administrative status.
209   Gregory W. Noble, *op. cit.*

supplying original programs, and the number of subscribers had reached around 12.62 million.[210]

Another legal revision that the MPT undertook was the deletion of the clause in the revised Commercial Law of 1966 that made it the duty of each commercial broadcaster to seek an endorsement from the board of directors prior to transferring company stocks, and to include this provision in its company articles. For nearly thirty years, the Japanese commercial broadcasters had refrained from listing their company stocks, thus preventing takeovers and foreign partnerships. In assisting commercial broadcasters to reach the MPT deadline of changing all television, cable TV, and satellite broadcasting systems into the digital systems by the year 2010, the MPT removed its restrictions on stock listing in 1994.[211] As a result, commercial broadcasters were able to procure funds necessary for them to participate in the MPT satellite broadcasting and digital television projects. However, the MPT still guards the terrestrial broadcasting industry against foreign partnerships. In contrast to the cable TV and satellite operating firms whose levels of foreign capital have been lifted to one-third of total capital, the ratio of foreign capital of terrestrial broadcasting companies still stands at twenty per cent.[212] The MPT has been unwilling to change Article 5-4 of the Broadcast Law, which has long protected the major five commercial networks from foreign penetration. This Article states that no license shall be granted to stations with foreign capital "taking hold of more than one-fifth of the voting rights".

However, Article 5-4 did not prevent global media moguls such as Rupert Murdoch, the President of News Corp., from channeling his interests into the traditional broadcasting market in Japan. In 1996, News Corp. joined forces with the largest

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[210] Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, White Paper: Communications in Japan 1998 (Tokyo: MPT, 1998), p. 71.

[211] Kaifu Kazuo, "Internationalization, Market Deregulation, and Digitalization: Restructuring Japan's Broadcasting Industry", NHK Broadcasting Culture & Research, Autumn 1997, (1), pp. 5-12.

[212] As of 1999, the level of foreign investment at TBS was 19.9 per cent, approximately 15 per cent for NTV, and 8.34 per cent for Fuji TV. See Asian Mass Communication Bulletin, January-February 1998, 28(1), p. 9; and Asian Mass Communication Bulletin, November-December 1998, 28(6), p. 9.

software retailer in Japan, Softbank, to launch a CS operator called J Sky B. In finding program suppliers, News Corp. and Softbank jointly purchased 21.4 per cent of *TV Asahi*'s shares that were held by Obunsha Publications, without the knowledge of TV Asahi's management.[213] The existing group of shareholders, with *Asahi Shimbun* at the center, strongly opposed the foreign newcomer. It did so at first by bringing together the disparate shareholdings -- which were held in individual names and by other means -- under the control of *Asahi Shimbun*, thereby reinforcing its position as the largest shareholder.[214] Then, it appealed to MPT regulations barring foreigners from serving on the boards of broadcasting companies.[215] Finally, it demanded that both News Corp. and Softbank sign an agreement to refrain from buying more shares and participating in the management of TV Asahi.[216]

Confronted with strong opposition, News Corp. and Softbank finally sold their shares back to *Asahi Shimbun* the same price at which they had originally been purchased.[217] Soon after, News Corp. and Softbank announced that they had found a new partner, Fuji TV, to supply programs. They had also taken over another carrier, PerfecTV, and had been operating under the new name, Sky PerfecTV, which was gaining more subscribers than the other existing carrier, DirecTV.[218] Competition between these operators, aimed at securing content produced by terrestrial broadcasters, has intensified. A new alliance was also formed between TBS and Sumitomo Corp., one of the biggest corporations in Japan, to launch a new business involving transmitting programs via satellite to cable TV stations in various Asian countries.[219] Due to the increased market pressures, it may also be inevitable for Japan to adopt an open-sky

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213 Gregory W. Noble, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
214 Dentsu Inc., Japan 1998 Marketing & Advertising Yearbook (Tokyo: Dentsu, 1998), p. 155.
215 Gregory W. Noble, *op. cit.*
216 Dentsu Inc., *op. cit.*
217 *"Tere Asa kabu Asahi shimbun ni zenkabu baikyaku"* (Selling of all TV Asahi's stocks to *Asahi* Newspaper), *Gekkan Shimbun Daijesuto*, May 1997, (368), p. 73.
218 At the end of January 2000, *DirecTV* had 400,000 subscribers, whilst *Sky PerfecTV* had 1.66 million. *Sky PerfecTV* also announced that it would buy *DirecTV* 's shares from its US shareholder, Hughes Electronics Corps. This takeover would inevitably allow *Sky PerfecTV* to monopolize the broadcasting via communication satellite in Japan. See "Japan's *Sky PerfecTV* to Absorb Rival Satellite Broadcaster", AFP, February 28, 2000 (online edition).
219 Dentsu Inc., *op. cit.*

policy that will permit the commercial reception of programs from any of the satellites in the region in the near future.

Japanese policy on broadcasting technology has been driven largely by economic and industrial considerations. Most policy interests were finely in tune with corporate strategies of large broadcasting companies, and not political and social utility as they have been in the Thai case. Digitalization has also brought more scrutiny on to the existing Broadcast Law. The MPT moved towards drafting a new law, yet several recommendations made thus far have indicated the continuing dominance of economic and industrial factors in the policy judgments. These are, firstly, that there should be no limitations of foreign investment in the CS and cable TV businesses. Secondly, the regional stations would suffer financial crises in expanding equipment investment in the transitional process. The bar on foreign investment in terrestrial broadcasting should be lifted to help increase funding in this area. Finally, the existing prefecture-based licensing system and prohibition on media cross-ownership may have to be revised for the same reason.[220] Indeed, the MPT move towards multi-channel broadcasting systems not only created a space that has allowed foreigners, who had virtually been kept out of the broadcasting market, to penetrate but also shifted the fundamental basis of the industry from the compromising and accommodating positions traditionally favored by the MPT to more competitive responses to market pressures.

Although the adoption of new broadcasting technologies cannot be avoided, the MPT is not completely powerless in resisting influences considered undesirable. The MPT realized that multi-channel broadcasting would make interference and content-monitoring increasingly difficult. Therefore, in 1996 it decided to establish an 'Advisory Board on the Convergence of Communications and Broadcasting toward the 21st Century'. The committees of this Board included representatives from the NHK, the

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[220] In May 2000, the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry established a study group to consider revision of the Broadcast Law of 1950. The study group is assigned to establish a new definition of broadcasting, which may include internet and cell phones, to review NHK's activities, and to design new regulations for commercial broadcasting. See "Broadcasting at odds over updating of a law", Daily Yomiuri, June 22, 2000 (on-line edition).

commercial networks, academics, lawmakers, and were chaired by MPT representatives with an aim to draw up several countermeasures to monitor the increased volume of information, prevent a decline in program quality, and focus on politically-biased content made possible by multi-channel broadcasting.[221] The Board also drafted programming guidelines for satellite operators to follow. Due to the bureaucratic domination and lack of public participation in this process, these countermeasures have been criticized as merely confidential agreements that the MPT has made in an attempt to establish better conditions for itself within the confines of a reward relationship with the broadcasters.[222]

The MPT has, however, been facing a critical dilemma. On the one hand, it must continue fostering and bringing about new broadcasting technologies due to rapid technological changes and bureaucratic pressures. On the other hand, with the advent of multi-channel broadcasting, which brings greater competition between different channels catering for the same audiences, the MPT cannot sustain its control of the industry. News, information, political debate, and current affairs programs will become more available and more competitive. This is exemplified by the broadcast of a 24-hour news service on Murdoch's CS service, and the live broadcast of daily parliamentary debates, known as *kokkai terebi*. As the basis of imposing control on broadcasting has been entirely rooted in the issue of spectrum scarcity, multi-channel broadcasting will make it impossible for the MPT to tighten regulations on the flow and content of information broadcast. Moreover, any strict regulations on broadcasting content will fend off new investors, thus undermining the growth in these new sectors. This technological change is thus expected to cause a shift in a political role of television broadcasting more towards a watchdog role.

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[221]   Tajima Yasuhiko, "*Naiyô kisei ni mukau hôsô gyôsei*" (The broadcasting administrations head for content control), *Sekai*, July 1996, pp. 150-54.

[222]   *Ibid.*; See also Hattori Takaaki, "*Mokuzen no [ôchaneru jidai] to hôsô gyôsei, hôsô gyôkai*" (The imminence of multi-channel age, the broadcasting administration, and the broadcasting industry), *Sekai*, May 1999, pp. 117-21.

Yet, this dilemma has inexorably strengthened the MPT's position in contestation with the new broadcasters, particularly the extra-terrestrial broadcasters, over the control of political information. Nevertheless, this political information contest induced by technological change in Japan is different from the political information contest caused by the media reform process in Thailand, because that particular contest was fought by various groups of the public. In Japan, on the contrary, most agreements and negotiations regarding the deadline and characteristics of the new digital receivers and broadcasting programs were exclusively made between the MPT, the TV manufacturers, and the terrestrial and extra-terrestrial broadcasters. The public voice in the liberalization process of multi-channel broadcasting in Japan clearly has been absent.

3.5 Comparative Remarks

Both the Thai and the Japanese states have regulated television broadcasting frequencies on the premise that television broadcasting frequencies are scarce resources, and that television is the most influential medium to mould public opinion. In Thailand, the state applied coercive and reward instruments that forged control over television broadcasting in terms of administration and broadcasting content, fostered the domination of a few broadcasting elite, and restricted entry into the industry. In Japan, the weakness of TV broadcasting regulations provided the state with reasons to channel its covert control over the national public broadcaster, NHK. The discussion on the licensing systems in both countries, however, demonstrated that both the Thai and Japanese states preferred to apply reward strategies to the broadcasting elite, rather than coercive strategies. Clearly, most arguments over the control of broadcasting have been resolved by informal process rather than by legal means. This is perhaps due to two reasons: there has been a small group of broadcasting elite in both countries, whose economic positions enabled them to have resources to negotiate with the state, and the distinctive cultural factors of both countries. Patron-client relationships in Thailand and reciprocal consent in Japanese political culture each accommodate the state's applications of reward strategies with the most responsive environment.

These distinctive cultural characteristics have forged and perpetuated the collusive relationship between the broadcasting and political elite. In Thailand, personal relationships based on the principle of the patron-client system yielded both political and economic advantages for the political elite or *phu yai*. The political elites who received political or financial benefits from *phu noi*, or the clients, were expected to reward them with broadcasting licenses. However, the underlying feature of patron-client relationships between these instituted elite in present-day Thailand has changed from the traditional moral concept to a modern form that emphasizes coinciding economic interests. The relationship has thus become more materialistic and has weaker loyalty bonds.

In Japan, the relationship between the broadcasting elite and the political elite is more systematic and institutional. The mutual accommodation between these elite groups occurred reciprocally and was made through both formal and informal channels. Former NHK Presidents were formally obliged to heed the Diet and the MPT requests for administrative changes and content intervention for the sake of approving increased receivers' fees. NHK, as well as the five commercial networks, also informally accommodated the demands of the MPT by sponsoring their staff to train at the MPT, and allowing their senior staff to be appointed as media members of various advisory councils. However, these accommodations have encouraged practices of self-censorship and assisted the MPT to control programming content at both NHK and the commercial stations. The summoning of the President of TV Asahi to testify in the Diet to secure a license reissue marked a major setback for television media, insomuch as Japanese commercial television left the watchdog position it had assumed prior to the election in 1993.

In Thailand, despite the removal of regulations and special decrees strictly controlling broadcasting content in 1992, state control and interference in TV broadcasting content still largely existed due to political pressure and internal censorship. The attempt to remove the state authority to intervene was clearly evident

in Article 40 of the Constitution, which aimed at overhauling the entire broadcasting system by removing state ownership rights of major broadcasting media. This reform has constituted a political information contest between the state, the public, and the media. The Thai state, which has always understood the prime role of television in the promotion of national identity and protection of the status quo, tried to defend its media ownership. The media and the public, on the other hand, fought for a more transparent and more accessible broadcasting system. The liberalization process induced by technological changes that has been taking place in Japan has likewise put the Japanese state in a defensive position of contesting to maintain its level of control. Like the Thai state, the Japanese state is losing its domination of, and control over, political discourse on television. Reward strategies that have been highly useful for the MPT to consolidate agreements among traditional broadcasters are less likely to be viable in the age of rapidly changing media technologies, the basis of which relies more on competitive arrangements than co-option or compromise.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND JOURNALISTIC

PROFESSIONALISM

> *Journalists need to recognize the borderline between their duty*
> *of social responsibility, their freedom, and their links with the*
> *powerful state and other influential groups. It can't be denied*
> *that journalists and these powerful groups are connected in*
> *some ways. But it is an ideal for all journalists to be able to*
> *strike a balance between these vested interests and their own*
> *responsibility.*

> Sommai Parichatre[1]

> *In Japan, there is a saying - "koketsu ni hairazunba*
> *koji wo ezu"(nothing ventured, nothing gained).[2] This*
> *means that journalists have to get close to politicians, who*
> *are a major source of information. Journalists are thought*
> *to approach sources for information individually. However,*
> *in Japan, a group of journalists usually approaches a source*
> *together, and obtains the same information. Yet, the more*
> *information they retrieve, the less likely they will report*
> *all about it.*

> Kawamura Shigemitsu[3]

In political information contests, the media struggle against sources of political

information, such as politicians and bureaucrats, to gain control of information. These

sources wish to retain control because they feel that they would lose their influence on

the manner of its presentation once that information is handed out to the media and

reaches the public. The media's ability to triumph in this contest varies according to

journalistic success in gaining access to sources, interpreting as well as filtering and

disseminating information. As suggested by Ericson et al., the power of the controller of

the information is matched by the power of the reporters to define what is news and to

give that information meaning.[4] The high degree of expertise and morality required to

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[1]   Interview Sommai Parichatre, Executive Editor, *Matichon,* April 23, 1998.
[2]   This phrase literally means 'if you do not enter the tiger's cave, you won't acquire the baby
        tiger'.
[3]   Interview Kawamura Shigemitsu, Editor-in-Chief, *Akahata,* 21 October 1998.
[4]   Richard Victor Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek, and Janet B. L. Chan, Negotiating Control: A
        Study of News Sources (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989), p. 14.

complete these tasks has meant that journalists have come to regard themselves as professional. However, a debate about whether journalism can be considered a profession, in which conduct is enforced voluntarily through norms that allow journalists to resist outside pressure and still allow them to make right decisions on behalf of the public is in progress.[5] Indeed, even the journalistic profession in Western countries, such as the U.S. and Australia is not yet fully developed to fit the sociological definitions of professionalism, which is said to require stringent forms of knowledge, independent organization, a degree of autonomy, socially-responsible service, and a code of ethics.[6] As Julianne Schultz argues, the goal of self-enforced journalistic professionalism remains far-fetched, because

> journalists themselves lack the ability to restrict access to the occupation, their autonomy is limited, they have a poor record of self-regulation and would strongly resist the statutory registration which applies to other professions, because of a commitment to the media as the Fourth Estate, a watchdog, independent of government.[7]

As suggested with the *political information contest* model in Chapter One, the ability of media to gain control over information is considered a variable factor impinging on the occurrence of political information contests and changes in the media's role. The ability refers to the extent of the media's expert relations, which particularly concern the expertise that relies on the degree to which journalists can gain access to political information, to accurately construct the meaning of that political information, and to correctly disseminate that information. These forms of expertise can thus be measured by five elements: knowledge, organization, autonomy, a high degree of social responsibility in service, and ethical codes. To assess the status of these elements in the journalistic profession in Thailand and Japan, this chapter discusses education,

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5   Michael Meadows, "A Sense of *Deja Vu*: Canadian Journalism Education Ponders Its Future", Australian Journalism Review, July/December 1992, pp. 100-113.

6   For a discussion of sociological literature regarding professionalism and journalism, see John Henningham (ed.), "Is Journalism a Profession?", Issues in Australian Journalism (Melbourne: Longman, 1990); For Australian examples, read Julianne Schultz (ed.), Not Just Another Business: Journalists, Citizens and the Media (NSW: Pluto Press, 1994); Sally White, Reporting in Australia, 2nd ed. (South Yarra, Victoria: Macmillan, 1996). For the American examples see Timothy E. Cook, Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Shanto Iyengar and Richard Reeves (eds.), Do the Media Govern? (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1997).

7   Julianne Schultz (ed.), "The Paradox of Journalism", Not Just Another Business: Journalists, Citizens and the Media (NSW: Pluto Press, 1994), p. 36.

recruitment and training systems as well as professional ideologies of journalists in both countries. In this way, journalistic professionalism is gauged not only by the level of each journalist's knowledge and their experience, but also by the extent to which each individual pursues his or her work with a professional attitude and consciousness. Next, the newsgathering process within news organizations, journalists' autonomy from outside interference, and norms in interpreting and disseminating practices are analyzed. This analysis is conducted based on the premise that the news which journalists produce is shaped by their immediate work environment and organizational factors. These include many of the routine methods that journalists employ to decide upon and produce the news. This process is influenced by the structure and division of labor, and the requirements and normative news practices of the media organizations for which journalists work.[8] Moreover, ethics and morality are important factors, which determine judgments and assumptions about the news value, about what news is and what it is not, and about what to select and what to omit. These ethical and moral values, together with attitudes concerning social responsibility, influence ways in which news is presented. These ethical and moral values help journalists to debate and adapt perceptions - to see themselves as professionals and to apply professional standards to news. In this regard, elements that can deflect journalists from their own professional ethical standards, such as widespread corruption practices among the Thai and Japanese journalists, are discussed and compared.

4.1. Journalism Education, Recruitment, and Training Dilemmas

The teaching of journalism at a tertiary level in Thailand began in 1939 at Chulalongkorn University.[9] However, it did not become a popular subject until 1954, when a Journalism Faculty offering Bachelor degrees was established at Thammasat University. Chulalongkorn University followed suit with such formal arrangements in 1965. Earlier teaching programs and texts in journalism borrowed heavily from the U.S. syllabus.[10] In

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[8]   Ian Ward, Politics of the Media (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1995), p. 208.
[9]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "*Kan suksa nithetsart nai prathet thai*" (Communication Arts Studies in Thailand", in *Wiwatthanakan seumolchon Thai (Evolution of the Thai Mass Media)* (Bangkok: Buddhabucha, 1983), p. 162.
[10]   As Sulak mentioned, "during this period (from the mid 1960s to 1970s), Thai academics and

the early 1980s, there was an increase in the number of the U.S. educated lecturers who returned to Thailand and commenced teaching at several leading universities. Unsurprisingly, these foreign graduates started writing texts by reproducing mainstream U.S. approaches to journalism and applying them to the Thai experience.[11] Such approaches, which emphasize the application of technical knowledge over the strengthening of theoretical knowledge and professional understanding, remain an important feature of many journalism study programs and texts in Thailand.

This emphasis on technical knowledge has greatly influenced the way in which the journalism curriculum is constructed. Appendix 4, which tables core courses of journalism programs in three public universities -- Chulalongkorn, Kasetsart, and Thammasat -- shows that students are required to develop a basic knowledge of important disciplines such as law, economics, and politics during their first and second years of study. The remainder of their four-year courses concentrates on writing and reporting techniques, as well as other forms of technical training.[12] Malee, a senior journalism educator at Thammasat University, explained that the curriculum planning of journalism programs tends to accommodate industry demands because the industry does not have proper in-house training. She also argued that "the curriculum is designed in response to the industry demand because the industry provides employment. Since they expect a ready-made product which can be instantly put on the job, we are thus obliged to supply".[13] However, it is ironic that only a handful of annual journalism graduates from schools of communication at prestige universities such as Chulalongkorn,

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administrators were, on the whole, trained en bloc in the USA. American teachers and researchers not to mention military personnel - penetrated through all our institutions". See Sulak Sivaraksa, Siam in Crisis, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Rung Seang, 1990), p. 151.

[11]   Thai textbooks on journalism, such as Malee Boonsiripunth's Lak kan tham nungsuphim buangton (The beginning principles of newspaper-making) (Bangkok: Prakaipruek, 1988), rely very much on American sources. Suwipa Sukcharoen also suggests that the reproduction of U.S. approaches occurred in all areas of communication studies in Thai tertiary institutions, particularly in development communication studies. See Suwipa Sukcharoen, "The Emergence and Use of Development Communication Studies in Thailand: An Analysis of Its Origins, Texts, Teaching and Research Programs", Unpublished Thesis, Master of Arts in Communication, University of Canberra, Australia, 1993.

[12]   For example, in order to graduate, students must complete an internship at newspaper companies or broadcasting stations based on their specialization. Kasetsart University, Kasetsart Academic Catalog (Bangkok: Office of the Registrar, Kasetsart University, 1996), p. 437.

[13]   Personal communication on April 17, 1998.

Thammasat, Kasetsart, and Chiengmai Universities eventually land jobs in journalism. Poor starting wages divert graduates to better-paid jobs in related areas, such as advertising or public relations.[14] As a consequence, most working journalists graduate from other fields such as political science, law, arts, or the humanities.[15]

Despite the fact that journalism in Thailand is a low-paying vocation, the rapid expansion of the private media sector during the bubble economy of the early 1990s saw a enormous surge in demand for journalists, and a subsequent increase in the number of journalism students.[16] Consequently, journalism programs have since produced an estimated 4,000 new graduates per year.[17] As Thai public and private universities could only accept a relatively small number of students per year,[18] thirty-six Teachers' Colleges (*Satahban Rajabhat*) were upgraded to tertiary institutions in 1995. Since then, these Colleges have offered both degree and diploma courses in journalism,[19] and they produce as many as thirty per cent of newly recruited journalists.[20] However, some of

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[14]   According to Sommai, Executive editor of *Matichon*, monthly wages among newly recruited reporters in 1998 started at around Bt.12,000 ($A600) before tax, while the average earnings of young Japanese reporters were about 211,586 yen ($A3,000 approximately) per month. See Figure 13: Model Monthly Wages in Yen, The Japanese Press '98 (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 81.

[15]   Sunan Kasemchainan conducted a survey on 124 reporters working for newspapers and television stations in 1993. She found that about eighty-six per cent of them held bachelor degrees in other areas than journalism or communication. See Sunan Kasemchainan, "*Thatsanakati thangkanmuang lae kanmee suan ruam thangkanmuang khong seumolchon Thai suksa priabthiab phuseukhao nungsuphim lae phussukhao thorathat saikanmuang*" (Political Participation and Attitudes Among the Mass Media: A Comparative Study of Political Reporters of Newspapers, and of Television Stations), Unpublished Masters Thesis, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, 1993, p. 109.

[16]   There was an extensive expansion of tertiary education in Thailand during the 1990s. According to Hewison, there were only 100,000 students enrolled in seventeen state universities in 1972. In 1990, there were more than 360,000 students enrolled in some forty universities and private tertiary institutions. See Kevin Hewison, "Thailand: On Becoming a NIC", The Pacific Review, 1992, 5 (4), p. 332.

[17]   The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Nork Krong* (Outside the Cage), April 1997, p. 9.

[18]   For example, of the annual 500 student intake at the Faculties of Communication of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat universities only about 150 students graduate with journalism majors. Private universities, such as Bangkok and Rangsit Universities, produce about 120 journalism graduates every year. These figures are based on my own inquiries into the journalism programs at these universities in May 1999.

[19]   For example, a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and an Associate Diploma in Mass Communication are now offered at all of the *Rajabhat* Institutes. See Ministry of Education, Office of *Rajabhat* Institutes Council, (Bangkok: Sasana, 1997), p. 23. For further discussion see Chai Chatrapong, "*Wikrit wichacheep nak-khao: phap luang ta bon phong saboo*" (The crisis of journalistic profession: A bubble fantasy), *Matichon Daily*, September 4, 1997, p. 21.

[20]   The Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2537* (Reporters' Day 5 March 1994), (Bangkok: RAT, 1994), p. 36.

the colleges lack qualified and experienced lecturers to provide students with extensive theoretical knowledge and intensive training, and are seen as producing a large number of poorly qualified journalism graduates purely for commercial gain.[21]

Indeed, industry demand for journalists with technical skills has led to an under-emphasis on journalism concepts and cross-disciplinary programs in universities. Thai media organizations, as a result, are full of reporters with good technical skills but lacking in thinking skills and critical perspectives. Boonrak has observed that limited interdisciplinary training has caused Thai journalists to be recognized as 'generalists' rather than 'specialists'.[22] He further suggested that it is necessary that journalists should specialize in a certain discipline. Due to the increasingly specialized nature of areas such as economic and finance, journalists need to have real expertise and depth of knowledge in their specialty areas to be able to screen a mass of information for relevant news, and provide in-depth analysis on important issues. It is therefore necessary to change the emphasis of university curricula to reflect current realities. Boonrak's comments, however, were not taken seriously until the Asian economic crisis hit Thailand in July 1997. The lack of a strong economic background and financial knowledge essential to conduct investigative reporting became an urgent problem. A large number of university professors and lecturers in economics were hired to write news about the crisis. This situation certainly led to increased discussion about curriculum planning, with suggestions of more interdisciplinary course input into journalism programs in Thai universities.[23]

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21   Interview with Associate Professor Aruneeprapha Homsettee, Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Humanities, Ramkhamhaeng University on 31 August 1998. Associate Professor Aruneeprapha Homsettee is also the President of Mass Communication Academics Institution of Thailand (*Satahban Nukwishakarn Suesarnmolchon Haeng Prathet Thai*). Due to the general concerns about the graduate quality from these *Rajabhat* Institutions, she has pioneered a project which provides assistance and training to their lecturers in mass communication.

22   Boonrak is a lecturer in journalism and communication at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Thammasat University. See Boonrak Boonyaketamala, *Thanandorn thi si: Chak rabob lok thung rath thai (The Fourth Estate: From the World System to the Thai State)*, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 1996), p. 151.

23   See for example, Wirat Seangdowchai, "*Tob-tuan kan son nithetsart ya son tae technic ngan 'rcheep"* (Revise Communication Arts Teaching Programs: Don't Teach Only Technical Skills", *Wan Nak Khao 5 Minakhom 2541 (Reporters' Day 1998)* (Bangkok: Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1998), pp. 93-95.

Remarkably, this situation parallels that of Japan, where newspapers reported inaccurate and false details regarding the restructuring of the country's financial systems in 1998-99. During October 1998, *Yomiuri Shimbun* felt the need to run a series of commentaries on the role of media reports on the financial reform, most of which urged the dissemination of more accurate reports and the interpretation of difficult financial and economic information in more simplified terms than before.[24] One article written by the President of the Housing Loan Administration Corporation (*Jyûtaku Kinyû Saiken Kanri Kikô*), for example, strongly criticized the press's lack of understanding of the whole troubling issue of housing loans (*jyûzen*).[25] As in the Thai case, the problems of inadequate knowledge in finance and economics amongst Japanese reporters partly have their roots in the journalism education, recruitment, and training systems.

In Japan, there are about fifteen universities that have undergraduate courses in journalism, and about five two-year junior colleges provide vocational training.[26] However, almost all of the 25,000 active reporters today are university graduates.[27] The University of Tokyo was the first to offer a program for journalism studies (*Shimbun Kenkyû Shitsu*) in 1928.[28] However, formal journalism education at the undergraduate level did not start until 1932, when a Department of Journalism was established at

24   Nakabô Kôhei, "*Kinyû hôdô ni tarinu kihonteki imi no rikai*" (Insufficient Reports of the Financial System and Comprehension of Basic Meanings", *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 2, 1998, p.19; Higuchi Hirotarô, "*Hôdô ga yoron wo jôsei, shakai henkaku wo atooshi* " (Reports to Brew Public Opinion to Support Social Reform), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 9, 1998, p.25; Yamasaki Yasuhiko, "*Nenkin meguru hôdô wa shimin no me no takasa de*" (Reports on the Reform of the Pension at the Public's Level of Understanding), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 16, 1998, p. 17.

25   Nakabô Kôhei, "*Kinyû hôdô ni tarinu kihonteki imi no rikai*" (Insufficient Reports of the Financial System and Comprehension of Basic Meanings", *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 2, 1998, p. 19.

26   Ito Yôichi and Tanaka Norichika, "Education, Research Institutes and Academic Associations in Journalism and Mass Communications Review", Keio Communication Review, 1992, (14), p. 22.

27   The figure is as of 1997. See Japan's Foreign Press Center, "Japan's Mass Media", About Japan Series No.7 (Tokyo: Japan's Foreign Press Center, 1997), p.41.

28   This program was established by Professor Ono Hideo, who earlier published the first book on Japanese journalism called "*Nihon Shimbun Hattatsu-shi*" (The Historical Development of Japanese Newspaper). Despite Ono's earlier visits to schools of communication in the United States and Europe, he did not import directly the US or European models of newspaper studies. Rather he insisted on adopting a more cultural approach to studies of newspapers.

Sophia (*Jôchi*) University.[29] Nevertheless, the first generation of journalism graduates from universities had no influence on the course of journalism and the newspaper industry during the war. One reason for this suggests that these graduates might have been too young to report the war, as they only finished their studies in 1936.[30] Another reason might have been that journalism courses fell under the government's watchful eye at that time, and the demand for journalists in the newspaper industry was shrinking due to the government's control of the paper supply.

Under the supervision of the SCAP during the occupation period, a program for journalism studies was established at Keio University in 1946, as well as in other universities. These departments and schools constructed their curricular for journalism courses according to the American model, which emphasized professional hands-on skills and technical training. This kind of American approach to journalism studies also gained influence over the newspaper studies program at the University of Tokyo after the war.[31] Yet this emphasis on the American-style of technical training in university curriculum continued at these prestigious universities for only a short while. The course curriculum was then reconstructed to become more and more 'basic course oriented', to meet with the tradition of academic orientation at these universities, and to suit industrial needs.[32]

As shown in Appendix 5, courses on communication and journalism offered at the three prestige universities – the Tokyo, Keio, and Waseda Universities — are mostly theoretically and socially oriented. The system of lifetime employment (*shûshin koyôsei*) within Japanese mass media companies allow journalists whom the company hires to stay remain in its employ until retirement. Therefore, what companies need are not so much graduates with professional skills for the job, but rather individuals with

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[29]   Ito Yôichi and Tanaka Norichika, "Education, Research Institutes and Academic Associations in Journalism and Mass Communications Review", <u>Keio Communication Review</u>, 1992, 14, p 17.

[30]   *Ibid.*

[31]   In contrast to Ono Hideo's emphasis on European-styled, cultural approach to media studies, Koyama Eizô, Ono's successor, emphasized an American-style audience-oriented approach to newspaper studies.

[32]   Ito Yôichi and Tanaka Norichika, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

general knowledge from any faculty who have the potential to learn through practical training provided. As journalism is the most popular occupation after banking, most young graduates enter this career without knowing what the employment actually entails. In recent times, many have quit after a few years in journalism through dislike for the job and a lack of endurance.[33] The relative decline in the job continuity ratio of newspaper employees in the 1990s has also indicated the likely breakdown of the lifetime employment system. In 1987, 30.6 per cent of employees in the whole newspaper industry had been working continuously within that industry for a duration of ten to nineteen years, whilst only 18.9 per cent were reported in the same category recorded in 1997.[34] These statistics suggest that present employees are more likely to change jobs before they retire.

As with most Japanese companies that adopt the system of lifetime employment, media companies tend to train new recruits themselves. These media companies found that the technical skills the students learned at the university became 'obstacles' in the company training programs. As Professor Takeichi Hideo put it, "they want to train raw recruits themselves and mould them into 'their kind' of reporters"[35]. For this reason, broadcasting networks and big newspaper companies introduced an entrance examination as an important part of their annual recruitment, similar to the system of civil service recruitment.[36] However, unlike the bureaucracy, which generally recruits law or economics graduates from highly prestigious universities such as Tokyo and Kyoto Universities, each major media company recruits around 100 graduates annually from any field of study, and from all the best universities. Nevertheless, as with civil service recruitment, applicants are required to take a written exam and undergo an interview, which critically assesses essay writing ability, foreign

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[33]   Interview with Professor Takeichi Hideo, Department of Journalism, Sophia University, on October 14, 1998.

[34]   See Figure 11: Number of Employees classified by continuity, in *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, The Japanese Press '98 (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 79.

[35]   Takeichi Hideo, "Journalism Education in Japan: Its Present State and Problems" *Jochi Daigaku Komyunikeshon Kenkyû (Sophia University Research on Communication)*, 1996, (26), p. 36.

[36]   See, for example, Ellis S. Krauss, "Japan: Divided Bureaucracy in a Unified Regime" in J. Pierre (ed.), Bureaucracy in the Modern State: Introduction to Comparative Public Administration (Hants, England: Edward Elgar, 1995), pp. 127-28.

languages, and general knowledge. Questions related to journalism per se are absent.[37]

The mass media companies do not give preferential treatment to journalism graduates.

Instead, as argued by Professor Takeichi, "they discriminate against graduates in

journalism, because these students would ask questions they cannot answer",[38] and

they "would like to receive new recruits as 'white handkerchiefs' which they may dye

any color they wish".[39] Further, a culture of nepotism in which executives and senior

editors of newspaper and television companies employ their own offspring or relatives

also adds to this problem.[40]

Discrimination against hiring women exists in Japanese media organizations.

Until 1986, the labor law prevented Japanese women in most occupations, including

media, from working after 10 p.m. Moreover, before 1986 some publications and wire

services had a policy of hiring women only for secretarial posts, and not as reporters.[41]

However, the situation has little improved, notwithstanding the repeal of the labor law

and the enactment of the equal opportunity law. There was only one female in every ten

journalists hired in the entire Japanese newspaper industry during 1999.[42] Nakajima

Gengo of the NSK explains that only a small number of women are hired by the

newspaper companies because they are less mobile than men, and tend to quit after

marriage.[43] Most women reporters only work an average of a five to nine year span.[44] A

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[37]   The exam is held in April, and is usually known as the Spring Exam. The topic on essay writing is not at all related to journalism. It revolves around topics like 'peace', and 'culture'. The essay topic in the exam at *Asahi Shimbun* in 1998, for example, was '*Settai Bunka*', or 'Reception Culture'. Applicants can choose one of the three foreign languages in the exam. These include English, French and German. Exams on general knowledge include basic mathematics, history, geography, and current affairs. Interview with Professor Takeichi Hideo, Department of Journalism, Sophia University, on October 14, 1998.

[38]   *Ibid.*

[39]   Takeichi Hideo, "Journalism Education in Japan: Its Present State and Problems" *Jochi Daigaku Komyunikeshon Kenkyû* (Sophia University Research on Communication), 1996, (26), p. 36.

[40]   Iwase Tetsuya, for example, notes that a culture of nepotism has played a certain role in the recruitment of new reporters at *Asahi Shimbun*. See Iwase Tetsuya, *"Shimbun ga omoshirokunai riyû"* (The Reasons Why Newspapers are not Interesting) (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1998), pp. 169-171.

[41]   Hatano Ruriko, "Japanese Women in Media", Media Asia, 1987, 14(4), pp. 216-17, 239.

[42]   In 1999, there were 2,062 females of the total 20,651 reporters working in ninety newspaper and wire service companies which responded to the NSK 1999 survey. See "Women Reporters Reach 10% for the First Time", NSK News Bulletin, December 1999, 22 (4), p. 10.

[43]   Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, the Japan Newspapers Publishers and Editors Association on October 23, 1998.

majority of them work in the 'Home and Family' section, the target readers of which are also women.[45] Similar trend was also found in the broadcasting industry wherein the ratio of female workers stood at less than ten per cent in 1993.[46] The ratio of female reporters working in the Thai newspaper industry, however, is relatively higher. In 1998, there was an average of one female to every two male journalists in Thailand.[47] Yet the proportion of female reporters for the English language press is higher than of the Thai language press. The growing popularity of hiring female reporters in Thai news organizations was observed by Kavi Chongkitthavorn, the Executive Editor of *the Nation*: "Female journalists have more privilege than male journalists for a cultural reason that female approaches are more gentle and less threatening than male. In particular, Thai men, especially most high-ranking bureaucrats and politicians, are womanizers".[48] His explanation, however, emphasizes the views of senior reporters on the necessity for junior reporters to secure close contact with their political sources. Yet, despite the increasing number of women reporters, Thai news media organizations continue to lose young journalism graduates from prestigious universities to other higher income professions. Indeed, the Thai situation indeed produces a similar result to the discriminatory recruitment system of Japanese newspapers. The result has been that there are not many journalism graduates from the prestigious universities working in the newspaper industry. However, the recruitment of television journalists in Japan, particularly those work for NHK, is different from that of the newspaper journalists in

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44 See Figure 11: Number of Employees Classified by Continuity in *Nihon Shimbyn Kyôkai, The Japan Press 1998* (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 78.

45 Newspaper companies hire women journalists especially to work for the Home and Family sections because male journalists prefer not to deal with stories on 'pots and pans'. Yet the status of journalists of the Home and Family sections remains subordinate inside the companies. See Hayashi Kaori, "The Home and Family Section in Japanese Newspapers", *Journal of The European Institute for Communication and Culture*, 1998, 5(3), pp. 51-63.

46 According to the 1993 survey results of NHK and three networks in Japan, female staff accounted for only nine per cent. See Muramatsu Yasuko, "*Seikai no medeia no josei no sankaku*" (Women's participation in the world media), *Hôsô Repooto*, September 1995, 136, pp. 43-50.

47 There was an approximate 226 female among 681 reporters in 71 newspaper organizations. These figures were gathered from the lists of registered members of Reporters' Association of Thailand as of 1997. Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2542 (The Reporters' Day 5 March 1998)*, pp. 252-261.

48 Interview with Kavi Chongkitthavorn, Executive Editor, *The Nation*, on April 28, 1998.

that most were directly recruited from elite universities, such as Tokyo, Keio and Waseda Universities.[49]

In comparison to Thai newspapers, which have few local branches and heavily rely on their local stringers for local news stories, the major Japanese newspapers have an abundance of local, not to include overseas branches, which become ideal training grounds for new recruits. *Asahi Shimbun*, for example, has 104 local bureaus in the country, as well as twenty-five overseas bureaus for training and rotating their journalists.[50] According to Ise, new recruits of major Japanese newspapers are trained to be either general reporters (*ippan kisha*), regional reporters (*chihô kisha*), or specialized reporters (*senmon kisha*). A general reporter will spend a couple of years at the headquarters, then will be transferred to a local office in a prefecture. A regional reporter will be assigned to a local office in the region in which he or she was born or has lived in. A specialized reporter will spend 3 to 5 years, or sometimes 6 to 7 years, at a local bureau before being transferred to the headquarters in Tokyo, or to other major cities.[51] In particular, a reporter who aims to work in a political section (*seiji bu*) will not be trained directly as a political reporter from the beginning. He or she will start as a general reporter in sections, such as the social section (*shakai bu*), for a couple of years before being transferred to other sections at other local bureaus. Therefore, a newly recruited graduate may take about 7 to 10 years to be transferred back to Tokyo as a political reporter. Tase Yasuhiro, a veteran journalist working for *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, has been critical of the current training system. He contends that the current in-house training system of journalists has been one of the factors that prevent the Japanese media from becoming proactive. The lack of genuine experience and critical views among Japanese journalists has been generated by various unproductive ways of

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49   NHK sent a limited number of application forms to these institutions this year, so the universities could give them only to students whose qualifications are demanded by NHK. More details of NHK system of recruitment see, Chapter six: Occupational Role and Politics in Ellis S. Kruass, Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2000), pp. 151-176.

50   *Asahi Shimbun, Anata no Asahi Shimbun (Your Asahi Newspaper)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1995), p. 2; See also *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai, Nihon shimbun nen kan'97/'98 nen han (The '97/'98 Annual Reports of Japanese Newspapers)* (Tokyo: NSK, 1997), pp. 64-65.

51   Ise Akifumi, *Shimbun wa kore de ii no ka?: Seijibu kisha no daraku (Is the press really good enough?: The corruption of political reporters)* (Tokyo: Nisshin Hôdô, 1993), pp. 84-5.

in-house training. He commented that young journalists were sent out to local bureaus to work as case reporters (*jiken kisha*). They were often assigned to work on the police beat (*satsu mawari*), on which they would not be trained to develop an analytical mind. Rather they were trained to write about whatever they stumbled upon.[52]

The weakness of the Thai newspaper organizations is, on the contrary, found in the lack of local bureaus for training junior reporters, and the traditional beliefs of a substantial effectiveness of the on-the-job training system. The high frequency of job changes among young journalists in recent years also seems to have discouraged the news organizations from investing in human resources.[53] Most young Thai reporters receive limited training, except for those working in the few Thai media organizations that offer several months of full course training. For example, during the years of bubble economy, *Phuchadkarn* Newspaper Group provided an eight-week training session for new recruits. Yet the training was neglected when the Group faced devastating financial problems caused by the economic crisis in 1997. Since then, there have been no new graduates recruited by the Group.[54] Special course training and overseas training are supported and encouraged by some national papers; however, these courses are often too specialized, too short, and only available to experienced reporters with impeccable work records.

The lack of a complete fit between the ideal kinds of journalism education programs, recruitment systems, and training courses and the realities in both countries illustrates critical dilemmas. These dilemmas exist not only for educators and the news media organizations, but also for journalists. The current structure of journalism education and recruitment systems in both countries is shaped by the economic interests of the industries. In Thailand, journalism education is largely constructed in response to market demand, whereas the system of lifetime employment in Japan

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[52]   Tase Yasuhiro, *Seiji Jaanarizumu no Tsumi to Batsu* (Crime and Punishment in Political Journalism), (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1996), pp. 103-7.

[53]   Interview with Mr. Sommai Parichatre, Executive Editor, *Matichon*, April 23, 1998.

[54]   Personal communication with Jittanart Limthongkul, son of the media magnate, Sondhi Limthongkul and a reporter at *Phujadkan* on February 10, 1999.

allows the recruitment of individuals with no prior knowledge of journalism. The training systems have apparently done little to help these journalists develop their own professional presumptions which underline the way the news should be reported. Journalists are left to face the dilemma of how to develop a professional ideology, one that is not too politically motivated, or bound to their own self-interests, but one that empowers them to exercise their expertise to accurately access, interpret, and disseminate political information that serves public interests.

4.2 Professional Ideology of Journalists

The principles of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' that are held by journalists are core values, which determine whether individual journalists develop expert or legitimate relations with the state in gaining access to, interpreting, and disseminating political information. In Thailand, objectivity and impartiality stem from the Western values that accompanied printing technology when it was imported to the country in the 19th century.[55] When the first royal printing plant was set up, a number of American missionaries with experience in printing and journalism were hired by King Mongkhut to assist in establishing a royal printing press.[56] It is evident that the notion of 'objectivity and impartiality' was then adopted as something akin to 'kan mai lam 'eng' in the press reports. For instance, King Mongkhut closed down the *Bangkok Recorder* in 1865 on the grounds of the 'press biases' and its 'constant criticisms' against the royal court.[57] In a famous essay, "The Press and the People" (*Nungsuphim kab rassadorn*) published in *Sri Krung* in 1932, the author suggested that "the press ought to develop a sound criticism" (*kan tichom ratthabarn yang mee lak*) "and impartiality" (*kan mai lam'eng*).[58] Yet this concept of impartiality was not fully understood or adopted by Thai journalists until much later. The dominance of partisan papers during the 1930s-

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[55] Dr. Dean B. Bradley, an American missionary, cast the Siamese letter printing type in 1942. King Mongkhut, while he was a monk, bought one set of printing type from Bradley to start his own printing plant. See Sulak Sivaraka, Siam in Crisis, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Rung Seang, 1990), p. 138.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[57] Matthew Copeland, "Contested Nationalism and the Overthrow of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The Australian National University, 1993, p. 15.

[58] Phaya Issarapakdi Thammathivet, "*Nungsuphim kab rassadorn*" (The Press and the People), Sri Krung, March 25, 1932, p. 3, 15. The second and third parts of this essay were published in the same newspaper on 26th and 28th of the same month.

1950s, for example, reflected little appreciation of the virtue of this professional concept among certain groups of Thai journalists.

After a formal education program in journalism had been established, the terms 'objectivity and impartiality' were adapted into a more formal, abstract term known as *'khwam-pen-klang'*. This term includes the meanings of both 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' as well as 'neutrality', and has been defined in a nutshell as an opinion-free type of news, or a complete reflection of actual events. In order to achieve 'the truth of the event', or objectivity, journalists must be impartial in their newsgathering methods, and interpret news events without any prejudices, interests, or biases.[59] The constitution of the Press Council of Thailand (PCT), established in 1997, dedicates five articles of its professional code of ethics to emphasizing this notion of 'objectivity and impartiality':

- Article 4: The press shall adhere to facts, accuracy, and complete truth.
- Article 5: The press shall present news in a way that benefits the public, not seek selfish private or collective gains.
- Article 6: The press shall display every attempt to give balanced coverage.
- Article 7: The press shall not in any way inflate or fabricate reports in ways that render them inaccurate or beyond credibility.
- Article 8: The press shall avoid covering news under the influence of prejudice or partiality.[60]

Although these articles define in general terms the way that journalists should report the news, they say very little about what should and should not be reported. Indeed, the code of ethics is filled with phrases pointing to the need for balanced coverage and fairness, but at no point attempts to define what is meant by those vague and elusive terms. Thus, what objectivity and impartiality actually mean in practice is left largely to the common sense of journalists. Discrepancies between meanings of these concepts of objectivity and impartiality adopted at the ideological level, and meanings applied at the practical level by individual journalists, remain topics of an

[59]   Worapol Prommikabut, *Thisadee khwam pen khlang khong seusanmolchon (Theory of Objectivity of the Mass Media)* (Bangkok: Krong Karn Tagrieng Rua, 1997).

[60]   The Press Council of Thailand, "A Code for Professional Ethics for Journalists", Press Release, April 22, 1998.

ongoing debate elsewhere.[61] Similarly, this abstract notion of professional ideology is also found in the professional journalistic code in Japan. This code emphasizes impartiality (*fuhen*), non-partisanship (*futô*), neutrality (*chûritsu*) and fairness (*kôsei*) as the four major principles in achieving objective reports (*kyakkan hôdô*).[62] The concepts of '*fuhen futô*' (impartiality and non-partisanship) have been an unwritten law of Japanese newspapers since the Meiji period, but were only formally adopted in the early Taishô period by the *Osaka Asahi* after it received a banish order (*hakkô kinshi*) for publishing a story about the rice riots in 1918. *Osaka Asahi* adopted the concepts of '*fuhen futô*' when looking for a guarantee from the authorities that the newspaper would not again be a subject of censorship. Once *Osaka Asahi* gained strength in Tokyo, after the Tokyo earthquake in 1923 that had destroyed many Tokyo based political papers, other newspapers followed suit by adopting these principles of impartiality and nonpartisanship as means to avoid state censorship.[63] In 1945, one of points in the ten point Press Code adopted by SCAP, as a guideline for news reporting, also stressed the notion of nonpartisanship by denouncing adherence to any propaganda line in news stories.[64] During the six years and eight months of U.S. Occupation in Japan, one of the CI&E activities included "pressure on the Japanese media to adopt new ethical codes and professional practices, such as less mixing of reporter-editorial opinion in the news".[65]

However, in the postwar period, these concepts of impartiality and non-partisanship have worked against a more proactive political role for the Japanese press.

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[61]   John Hurst, "Journalistic Objectivity and Subjectivity in News Reporting and News Selection", Australian Journalism Review, January-December 1991, 13, pp. 23-30; Matthew Kieran, "News Reporting and the Ideological Presumption", Journal of Communication, Spring 1997, 47(2), pp. 79-96; and Matthew Kieran (ed.), "Objectivity, Impartiality and Good Journalism", Media Ethics (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 23-36.

[62]   See Chapter 2: *Fuhen futô to seijiteki kôhei* (Impartiality, Non partisanship, and Political Fairness) in Hara Yoshio, *Jaanarizumu no shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 95.

[63]   *Ibid.*, p. 96.

[64]   Monica Braw, The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 41.

[65]   Marlene J. Mayo, "Civil Censorship and Media Control in Early Occupied Japan: From Minimum to Stringent Surveillance", in R. Wolfe (ed.), American as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in Germany and Japan 1944-1952 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), p. 317.

To achieve objective reporting, journalists have been influenced by these concepts to refrain from political advocacy, and to convey only statements approved by editors. The concept of 'editorial rights' (*henshû-ken*) adopted by the NSK, which allows the final responsibility for editorial content of the newspaper to rest with its manager and managing editor, particularly strengthens this political position. As such, a concept of editorial rights ensures that there will be no independent voice that expresses views differently from others working in the same company; and thus, conformity is guaranteed within the newspaper.[66] In addition, the Commercial Code (Law No.212 of June 8, 1951) ensures that there will be no influence from any outside business pressure on the editorial policy of the press. Article 212-1 of this Code prevents the sale or transfer of stock to people other than employees or current shareholders. When a shareholder is no longer connected with the company (such as in the case of retirement), he or she must transfer the share back to persons who are connected with the company.[67] Therefore, the ownership of newspapers is highly concentrated among the family and employees of the companies concerned, thus preventing takeovers and external influence on editorial policy.

The concepts of impartiality and non-partisanship, have also maximized the press's economic position by expanding its circulation through acquiring readers with broad party affiliations. In 1946, the concepts of neutrality and fairness (*chûritsu to kôsei*) were included as editorial policy standards of Japanese newspapers by the NSK. The concepts of impartiality, nonpartisanship, neutrality, and fairness have since been specifically identified as boundaries of freedom of the press. They were explicitly pronounced in the Canon of Journalism espoused by the NSK as the subject of voluntary restraint for journalists:

- The fundamental rules of news reporting are to convey fact accurately and faithfully.

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[66]   In some occasions, different voices were expressed by guest writers, or those who wrote letters to the editors. By and large, these people are not representatives of the newspaper companies. Hara Yoshio, *Jaanarizumu no shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), pp. 98-99; and Hirose Hidehiko, "The Development of Discussions on Journalism in Postwar Japan", *Media, Culture, and Society*, 1990, 12, pp. 465-476.

[67]   *Nihon Simbun Kyôkai, Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts)* (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), p.27.

- In reporting news, the personal opinion of the reporter should never be inserted.
- In treating news, one should always remember and strictly guard against the possibility of such news being utilized for propaganda purposes.
- Criticism of individuals should be limited to what could be said directly to the individual involved.
- Partisanship in editorial comments, which knowingly departs from the truth, undermines the true spirit of journalism.[68]

The concept of neutrality, in particular, has convinced the press to stand strictly in the middle of the political spectrum. As such, a politically neutral press could enlarge its readers' base. Yet this concept has induced the press to suspend reports that lack substantial evidence and make judgments in response to the whole political situation, while expressing opinions only on mainstream issues. This concept has also helped the newspaper to avoid controversy during election coverage. Some major dailies censored news items considering favoring or disfavoring one party over another, while some rejected to print advertisements of one party that were directly critical of another party.[69] The selling system based on home-delivery and the price-fixing that guarantees selling targets and profit has also reinforced this neutral position. Political reporters have often blamed the lack of press reports on political scandals substantial 'objective facts' to write 'fair' reports. These controversial subjects are thus left to the weekly and monthly magazines, which according to a weekly magazine chief editor: "present articles that the newspapers should write but don't touch".[70] Scandals are not primarily reported in the newspapers due to journalistic commitment and concerns about the 'trusting relationship' with the sources involved in the scandals.[71] However, it seems that Japanese journalists do not fail to report scandals due to the lack of objective facts. Rather scandalous stories become unnecessary because the sale figures are readily secured by the strong home-delivery system. As commented by Professor Sugiyama,

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[68]   *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, The Japanese Press '98 (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 6.

[69]   Scott C. Flanagan, "Media Influences and Voting Behavior", in S. C. Flanagan et al., The Japanese Voter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 302.

[70]   Suzuki Tetsu, editor-in-chief of *Shûkan Gendai*, cited in Howard French "Race and Scoops in Land of a Very Cautious Press, Racy Weeklies Party Fill the Gap in Japan", International Herald Tribune, February 7, 2000 (on-line edition).

[71]   Mr. Nakayama quoted a famous phrase once uttered by the leader of Japan Renewal Party (*Shinseitô*), Hata Tsutomu, to characterize Japanese newspaper reporters: "*shitte ite kakanai seijikisha*" (do know but do not write type of political reporters). Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, The Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, on October 23, 1998.

"whatever articles a particular newspaper may carry, its circulation figure is wholly dependent on the marketing efforts of individual sale agents".[72]

These abstract concepts of objectivity and impartiality have become a cornerstone of journalistic professionalism in both Thailand and Japan, at least at the ideological level. They remain ideals because journalists are generally sincere in their attempt to be as objective and impartial as they can, but some admit that they are neither totally objective nor impartial.[73] Moreover, it is quite difficult to claim absolute impartiality and objectivity in news reports, because a journalist's worldview and understanding of events is necessarily mediated by interpretative and evaluative frameworks set up by their own professional experience and media organizations. Curran suggests that these concepts of objectivity and impartiality are not guaranteed within organizations whose aim is not to practise professional norms.[74] For the Thai press, the notion of objectivity (*khwam-pen-klang*) is embraced as a professional goal by many independent newspapers. Yet in reality, it is hardly achieved by some because of existing linkages between publishers or editors and the authorities, or powerful interest groups. In the Thai broadcast media, the notion of "*kwam-pen-klang*" has often been distorted within the context of 'national security' as espoused by the military from the 1930s. Notably, the state owned television channels have always served the state by only presenting news from the powerful administrative side of politics, such as by focusing on the Prime Minister, the Army Chief, party leaders, and other high ranking officials. In-depth discussions on legislative proceedings, or alternative ideas of non-mainstream group, were rarely-featured on broadcast news until recently.

In Japan, on the contrary, television has increasingly been perceived to provide more unbiased reports than the press. Former Prime Minister Satô Eisaku, for example, excluded press reporters from his last press conference as a Premier on a grounds that:

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[72] Sugiyama Mitunobu, "Media and Power in Japan", in J. Curran and Myung-Jin Park (eds.), De-Westernizing Media Studies (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 193.

[73] Interview with Sommai Parichatre, Executive Editor, *Matichon* on April 23, 1998.

[74] James Curran, "Mass Media and Democracy: A Reappraisal", in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds.), Mass Media and Society (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 99.

"the press is always biased. I prefer to appeal directly to the public via television".[75]

Japan's public broadcasting network, NHK, has particularly been praised by politicians as a model producer that provides impartial and nonpartisan news reports and current affairs programs (which many would describe as very dull, and at no point stimulating). This is, in part, due to the Article 3-2 of the Japanese Broadcasting Law, which explicitly stipulates that the broadcaster shall "be politically impartial", and "broadcast news without distorting facts".[76] As discussed in Chapter Three, the government's covert influence over the management of NHK is in fact the underlying reason why NHK news producers exercise more caution than their counterparts in commercial networks.

The commercial networks can, ostensibly, keep government pressure more at arm-lengths than NHK. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the President of Asahi Television was pressured to resign following the success of the station's news and political discussion programs, such as *News Station* and *Sunday Projects*, in allegedly influencing voters and bringing about the fall of the LDP in July 1993. This, in turn, illustrates that the safeguard of impartiality and nonpartisanship morals has also been used as a *raison d'être* for government intervention. This case also suggests that the emphatic concepts of nonpartisanship and impartiality prevent all Japanese broadcasting networks from presenting information and disseminating it more freely than is allowed for by the established professional orthodoxy. It also prevents these media from emerging as a pluralistic force with ideological distance from the state. The media have thus become preoccupied with the form rather than the content of the message.

However, apart from the ownership factor, there may be other inherent limitations restraining journalists' sincere attempts to achieve impartiality and objectivity. As Golding contends, "a journalist may well be impartial towards the

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[75] Quoted in Hara Yoshio, *Jaanarizumu no shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 94.

[76] Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai, Press Laws in Japan (Commentary and Abstracts) (Tokyo: NSK, 1995), p. 44.

material on which he works, yet fail to achieve objectivity...due to the inherent limitations in newsgathering and processing".[77] As the discussion below will reveal, the bureaucracy-like structure within the news organizations, the newsgathering process, and journalist's normative practices represent the greatest impediments for achieving absolute objectivity and impartiality. These impediments also limit the media's autonomy, and its ability to contest the control of political information with the state.

4.3 News Organizations as Bureaucracies

Journalists work in bureaucratic organizations characterized by hierarchy, the division of labor, and routinization of working operations through relatively standardized rules and procedures. Yet unlike bureaucracies, the aim of news organizations is to achieve profit maximization and the lowest possible cost of production. The operational goal is therefore to procure efficiency in accessing, gathering, interpreting, and disseminating information. The system of hierarchy in news organizations that centralizes authority in decision-making is, nonetheless, similar to that of a bureaucracy. Such authority is controlled by a few people at the management and senior editors levels, who by and large draw on their past performance to establish and implement editorial policies of the organizations.[78] The following discussion will concentrate on this bureaucracy-like structure of newspaper organizations in Thailand and Japan. The internal structure and production of TV news are not discussed here because the production sections within television organizations in both countries are structured much like the newspaper organizations. This newspaper-model of organization encompasses a specialized assigned structure for reporters, a desk-centered process of story selection, and journalists' standard news values guiding the selection process.

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[77]   Peter Golding, "The Missing Dimensions - News Media and the Management of Social
        Change", in E. Katz and T. Szecskö (eds.), Mass Media and Social Change (London: Sage,
        1981), p. 78.

[78]   In Thailand, the owners of the biggest two newspapers, namely, the *Watcharapol* family who
        owns *Thai Rath* and the *Hetrakul* family of the *Daily News*, play active roles in the day to day
        operation of the newspapers. Some of these owners also sit on the editorial boards, making
        decisions on a daily basis. In Japan, on the other hand, leading shareholders of the newspaper
        companies, such as those of *Asahi*, do not usually take active part in newspaper management
        and operation.

At Thai newspapers, the news departments are divided according to the topic section dubbed by the prefix 'to' (desk) (see Appendix 6). In Thai terms, the political desk is known as 'to kan muang'.[79] Sharp divisions between the responsibilities of each desk in dealing with different types of news have generated similar conflicts and problems as those found in departments within bureaucracies. For example, some news involving a number of interest groups can draw attention and competition from many news desks that claim jurisdiction over the stories. However, other stories dealing with the less influential groups in society are sometimes totally ignored. This arbitrary division of news desks, as McCargo argues, is a main cause for the failure of most Thai reporters to link important issues to encompassing economic, political, and other imperative angles.[80] The presence of this rigid hierarchy not only inhibits the free flow of information between news desks within the organization, but also hinders any further development of news stories. The result has been a lack of breadth and depth in news analysis in the Thai media, as well as a quick disappearance of news stories, most of which have involved scandalous public issues.[81]

This concrete division between news sections is also evident in the news department in Japanese news organizations. *Asahi Shimbun*, for example, divides its news department into sections such as the political section (*seiji-bu*), economic section (*keizai-bu*), social section (*shakai-bu*), science section (*kagaku-bu*), sport section (*supootsu-bu*), and so forth (see Appendix 7). All sections are assigned separate pages

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[79] At the *Matichon Daily* in 1998, for example, there were twelve desks, including the political desk, economic desk, educational desk, police desk, judicial desk, environmental desk, sports desk, entertainment desk, agriculture desk, women's and society desk, foreign desk, and provincial desk. Interview with Mr. Somphop Praison, Chief Reporter (Front Page), *Matichon* on April 29, 1998.

[80] McCargo gave an excellent example on *Matichon*'s coverage of the murder case of Pravien Bunnak, a teacher in Loei province, and also a leader of a local NGO. Due to the scope of the story which intricately linked provincial politics, corruption and violence, and environmental issues, *Matichon* failed to either coordinate a group of reporters to cover the story, or despatch a top reporter to the province due to high costs. Instead, it let the story be handled by a local stringer. See Duncan McCargo, "Reforming the Thai Media", Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on Thai Studies, University of Amsterdam, during July 4-8, 1999.

[81] Somphop Praison, a chief reporter at *Matichon Daily*, suggested the lack of evidence and coordination among reporters from different desks in covering the story was the major reason why the *Salween Logging Scandal* in 1997 - which exposed a network of corruption between a number of government organizations such as the Ministry of Interior, the Forest Conservation Office, and the Customs Office - soon disappeared from the front page of *Matichon Daily*. Interview with Mr. Somphop Praison, Chief Reporter (Front Page), *Matichon*, on April 29, 1998.

in the paper. However, the clearer distinction is drawn between reporters covering 'hard news' (kôha), and reporters covering 'soft news' (nampa). Those who cover "hard news" are usually from the political, foreign and economic news sections, whereas those covering 'soft news' come from the social affairs section. However, at local newspapers, the political section is often combined with the economic section known as the politics-economics section or kei-sei-bu, in which reporters are assigned to cover both local politics and economic stories. Stories on national politics are provided by major news agencies, especially the Kyôdô Tsûshin.[82]

Social affairs reporters cover a wide range of topics such as court and police investigations, welfare, Imperial households, crime, environment, many of which overlaps political and economic issues. Political and economic reporters, on the contrary, cover a relatively narrow range of topics. For example, some political journalists are only assigned to cover individual faction leaders, and the inner circles of the LDP during their inter and intra factional disputes. Although political reporters cover each politician quite closely, they have not generally been responsible for uncovering the political scandals in which these politicians are involved. Instead, most of the exposures of scandals are written by social affairs reporters, and reporters outside the political information loop such as freelancers, reporters working at local bureaus, or foreign reporters.[83] Stories on politicians who are arrested on bribery charges, for example, are covered by social reporters who cover the crime and court beats. The foreign news reporters handle reports from overseas correspondents and translate them from foreign wire services or from foreign newspapers. The economic reporters, on the other hand, generally focus their attention on a narrow range of topics, providing detailed analyses of personnel shifts in major corporations.[84] They are viewed as being

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[82] Interview with Mr. Hashida Mitsuo, Deputy Editor-in-chief, Kobe Shimbun on November 26, 1998.

[83] Maggie Farley, "Japan's Press and the Politics of Scandal", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 159.

[84] Ise Akifumi, Shimbun wa kore de ii no ka?: Seiji kisha no daraku (Is the press really good enough?: The corruption of Political Reporters) (Tokyo: Nisshin Hôdô, 1993), pp. 90-122.

mere extensions of the PR sections of major corporations and big banks, which are the sources of their stories.[85]

Fierce competition for more space in the newspaper, and conflicts over jurisdiction between the "hard news" reporters and "soft news" reporters often occur.[86] When the subject of a story is in dispute, each section is reluctant to pass on information to the others. In particular, a social reporter who has come up with a lead during an investigation of a political scandal will not wish to share his information with the political section in fear of a leak of the story to the politicians involved. As a result, such reporters may sit on the story for a day or two; knowledge which could have been pooled is not; news sources are not approached for information; the wrong section ends up writing the story; and, often, the final reports are badly written. Disputes between political and social affairs sections often occur during the coverage of political scandals.

To cite one example, during the coverage of HIV-infected blood products scandal surrounding the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) in 1996, the news angle shifted between the MHW, covered by political reporters, the High Court reporters, and the social affairs reporters covering the AIDS-infected plaintiffs. It is evident that there was a lack of co-ordination and exchange of information between these three groups of reporters because of the conflicting interests of sources. The political reporters relied on information from the MHW and intensely reported about how the Ministry was handling the problem. The Court reporters covered and closely followed senior MHW officers and medical specialists charged in the case. The social affairs reporters covered the AIDS-infected victims and their social networks. The hostile confrontation among these sources was highlighted when the three groups of reporters became increasingly uncooperative, and stopped sharing information. As a result, the coverage on this issue lacked consistent details of political events, as well as critical analyses of the links between bureaucratic irresponsibility and the complicated decision-making structure

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[85] Interview with Mr. Iwamura Tatsurô, Deputy Chairman Editorial Board, *Asahi Shimbun* on November 18, 1998.

[86] Tase Yasuhiro, *Seiji Jaanarizumu no Tsumi to Batsu (Crime and Punishment in Political Journalism)*, (Tokyo, Shinchôsha, 1996), p. 107.

surrounding this issue.[87] Among the three groups of reporters following the case, the political reporters assigned to the MHW club seemed to have had the privilege of deciding the news direction, and what to report on the story. For example, the press conference calling for a public demonstration in front of the MHW covered by social affairs reporters went unreported. The MHW press release on that same day filled the political pages in most newspapers.[88] Indeed, the close relationship between political reporters and their high-ranked official sources, as Hayashi argues, "fortifies a hierarchy within the newspaper company, mirroring exactly the hierarchy of the authorities they were in charge of".[89] These close relations also make it difficult for reporters to face their sources when their papers publish unfavorable reports. Therefore, some political reporters even feel that social affairs reporters from the same company are their rivals, whilst they develop close connections with political reporters from other companies and regard them as their peers.[90]

An organizational emphasis on seniority also plays an important role in limiting reporters' autonomy in initiating news direction. Junior reporters assigned to the reporters' club have relatively little autonomy to develop their own issues or agendas, or decide how to approach the sources independently. Their handling and writing of stories are closely supervised by three or four senior reporters in the same team (*chimu*), one of which usually with the longest experience will serve as a captain (*kyappu*) while another will serve as a deputy captain (*sabu kyappu*). As Tase mentions, his job as a junior

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[87]   Mochinaga Kazumi, for example, was a director of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Bureau in 1983 where he failed to prevent the provision and use of HIV-infected blood products. Professor Abe Takeshi was a Vice-Chancellor of Teikyô University and was leading an AIDS study group set up by the MHW in 1983. In his research, he found that untreated blood products could spread HIV among patients who had blood transfusion, but failed to raise the alarm. See analyses of the press coverage on the case in Yokagawa Yoshio, "*Yokonarabi shikô kara no datsukyaku wo mondai ishiki wo sôshitsu shitsutsu aru kishatachi*" (Eradicate from 'Pack' Ideas: the Loss of Sensing Problems among Reporters), *Masu Komunikeshon Kenkyû*, 1996, (48), pp. 86-100; Kawada Ryûhei, "*Kisha kurabu wo benrina ketsueki seizai ni shinai de*" (Don't make the reporters' club like blood products), *Shimbun Kenkyû*, 1997, (1), pp. 13-15.

[88]   *Ibid.*

[89]   Hayashi Kaori, "The Home and Family Section in Japanese Newspapers", *Journal of the European Institute of Communication and Culture*, 1998, 5(3), p. 57.

[90]   This point reflects the notion of *tatewari gyôsei* (vertical administration) in the Japanese bureaucracy, where there is severe competition among bureaucratic units. The staff within these units feel loyalty only to those directly above and below them in the chain of command, and not to other units in the same 'horizontal' level. See Young Park, *Bureaucrats and Ministers in Contemporary Japanese Government* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California Berkeley, 1986), p. 114.

political reporter on the Prime Minister beat was only about jotting down the Prime

Minister's speeches and comments, and handing them over to the captain, who would

decide how the whole story would be written.[91]

The process of newsgathering at the reporters' clubs is also highly routinized.

The regular workday of Japanese reporters at a reporters' club, as Feldman observes:

> begins after the team meeting [usually at 10:00 A.M.] and continues until
> evening. There are occasion, such as at the time of cabinet reshuffles,
> when reporters stay at the club until late at night or early hours of the
> following day...On a regular day, when there is no need for certain types
> of information or a feature story, reporters spend the morning covering
> press conferences or listening to briefings given by various persons in the
> agency they cover...At noon, they have lunch and then, remaining in the club
> until 2:00 P.M., write stories for evening edition of their newspaper,
> watch television, read magazines, play mah-jong, take naps...From 2:00 to
> 4:00 P.M., reporters make rounds to meet and chat with officials in the agency
> in search for information; and the hours after 4:00 P.M. are spent in receiving
> handouts, listening to lectures by representatives of the agency, or in writing
> stories for the next morning's edition of their paper.[92]

In comparison with their Japanese counterparts, Thai reporters are less prone to be

subjects of direct intervention and interference by the sources, but they are less

autonomous in initiating news stories. At *Matichon*, a paper widely circulated amongst

the Thai middle-class, a daily news meeting will begin at 11 am on a regular working

day. At the meeting, the chief of each news desk will meet with the front page chief,

editor, senior editors, and executive editors. They will create lists of the top agendas of

the days and brainstorm for new angles to approach the news stories. The senior editors

and executive editor will assist in adding comments, and naming and contacting sources

to interview. The chief of each desk will then summarize the news points and send

directives to reporters on various beats to follow-up particular issues. These news

chiefs and senior editors will meet again at 3.30 pm to report progress of news stories,

and decide which news items are to be reported in the next edition. A proprietor of

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[91]   Tase Yasuhiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-5. Tase described his three main duties when he was a junior
       reporter watching the Prime Minister's Residence: first, gather the list of people that the Prime
       Minister has met, and is going to meet, and should there be any person whom the prime
       minister has met of importance, contact that person for the content of the meeting: second, check
       the PrimeMinister's schedule and inform other clubs, when the Prime Minister happens to go to
       offices to which other clubs are attached; and third, learn about political structure and political
       connection within the Prime Minister's political circle.

[92]   Ofer Feldman, Politics and the News Media in Japan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan
       Press, 1993), p. 75.

Matichon sometimes sits in the news meeting and makes a crucial decision in news selection. The seniority system also holds its importance in the decision-making process within news organizations, as it does elsewhere in the Thai society.[93] Yet, despite the existence of such a seniority system, and centralization in the chain of command, reporters in the field have a certain degree of autonomy to initiate their own news stories by pushing forward the boundaries of acceptability through the process of negotiation.[94]

Journalists' career paths are quite similar to those of public servants in bureaucracies, for whom promotion is generally based on seniority. However, in comparative terms, political journalists in Japan have a more organized career route than their counterparts in Thailand, who have a relatively higher rate of mid-career job changes.[95] For a Japanese political reporter, there is a strict hierarchy leading up to the news desk. After being transferred into Tokyo in the sixth or seventh year of his or her career, a junior reporter is then assigned to a specific government agency or the Prime Minister's residence. In the latter case, after spending one or two years closely watching the prime minister, the reporter will then be moved to the Diet to cover either the ruling or the opposition parties. By the fourth or fifth year, that reporter will be promoted to cover the LDP, and assigned to follow a specific faction within the LDP. After about 20 years in this beat career, the reporter will be called back to the political desk and will work his way up to editorial and administrative ranks. However, promotion to an editorial position is made on the basis of seniority rather than merit and competence.[96]

93   In Thailand there is an old saying: "follow the elders, and the dog won't bite you", which reflects the traditional preference of submissive roles for juniors within the society. See, for example, Niyaphan Pannasiri, "Seniority System in the Thai Society: The Thai University Campus Emphasis", *Warasan sangkhomsat lae manusayasat*, January-June 1998, pp. 52-61.

94   Interview with Mr. Suchart Srisuwan, Editor, *Matichon* on 29 April 1998.

95   During the period of bubble economy in Thailand (from the late 1980s to 1997), there were high rates of job changes among journalists to other related areas such as public relations, and media production. Due to lack of expertise in journalistic profession during that time, some even spent their rest days undertaking freelance employment. However, career uncertainty has emerged since the economic crisis engulfed Thailand in July 1997. Many journalists have lost their jobs, and some have had their salaries and bonuses cut. Interview with Chutima Buranachada, President of the Reporters' Association of Thailand (1997-98), and the news chief of the *Daily News* on April 28, 1998.

96   Tase Yasuhiro, *Seiji jaanarizumu no tsumi to batsu* (Crime and Punishment in Political Journalism), (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1996), p. 106.

A major proportion of reporters tends to stay with their own organizations until retirement at the age of sixty.[97] Moreover, these reporters, particularly in administrative positions, may be rehired within the same company group after retirement. *Asahi Shimbun*, for example, has 156 related companies that are best known as retirement sanctuaries for *Asahi* executives, or *amakudari saki* (descending route from heaven).[98] Additionally, there have been a number of cases in which these reporters have used their experience and contacts gained in the profession as a bridge into successful political consulting careers.[99] The drawback of these appointments is reflected in bland and uncritical coverage of the stories related to the political organizations in which they are involved. The most recent case was an appointment of a former *Yomiuri Shimbun* chief editor to the National Public Safety Commission, which is in charge of reforming the Police Force.[100] *Yomiuri*'s bland and straightforward coverage on the issue was in a stark contrast to *Asahi Shimbun*'s discerning coverage of the same topic.[101] There were also cases where senior reporters became political candidates even before quitting the journalism.[102] Major newspapers such as *Yomiuri, Mainichi*, and *Asahi* have thus established a rule that such candidates have to stop reporting during their election campaigns and to quit should they be elected. However, there are often cases in which reporters, especially from the regional newspapers, have used their columns to publish

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[97]   According to Mr. Nakajima Gengo, although the retirement age is set at sixty, most companies support their employees to accept retirement schemes at the age of fifty-five. However, the retirement age is also extended for those who sit in the boards of the company. Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, Japan Newspapers' Publishers and Editors Association (NSK) on October 23, 1998.

[98]   These related companies are *Asahi Culture Center Tokyo, Asahi Culture Center Fukuoka, Asahi Building, Asahi Gakusei Shimbunsha*, and so forth. See Iwase Tetsuya, "*Shimbun ga omoshirokunai riyû*" (The Reasons Why Newspapers are not Interesting) (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1998), pp. 175-183.

[99]   Tase Yasuhiro, *Jaanarisuto no sahô (Etiquette of Journalists)* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1998), p. 87.

[100] Hanai Kiroku, "Media Credibility is at Risk", *Japan Times*, July 25, 2000 (on-line edition).

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] For example, an editor working for *Nihonkai Shimbun* in Shikoku became a local candidate in an election for a mayor of Tottori prefecture. Another reporter working at *Shikoku Shimbun* became a candidate for the next lower house election. See "*Nihonkai Shimbun kisha tottori chijisen rikkôho hyômei ato mo shomei ronsetsu wo keisai*" (*Nihonkai Shimbun* still carries a bylined editorial article written by a reporter after his announcement of candidacy for a Tottori's mayor), *Mainichi Shimbun*, February 23, 1999, p. 25.

campaign material.[103] Table 7 shows a sample of renowned Japanese politicians and Prime Ministers who have had journalistic backgrounds.

Table 7: A List of Former Japanese Ministers and Their Journalistic Backgrounds

Press Organizations	Politicians	Former Ministerial Posts	Cabinets Attached
Asahi Shimbun	Ogata Taketora	Deputy Prime Minister	Yoshida Shigeru
		Minister of State	Yoshida Shigeru
	Kono Ichirô	Minister of State	Satô Eisaku
	Tagawa Seiichi	Minister of Home Affairs	Nakasone Yasuhiro
	Hosokawa Morihirô	Prime Minister	Hosokawa Morihirô
Mainichi Shimbun	Hori Shigeru	Administrative Management Secretariat	Tanaka Kakuei
	Abe Shintarô	Chief Cabinet Secretary	Fukuda Takeo
Yomiuri Shimbun	Itô Sôichirô	Director-General of Defence Agency	Suzuki Zenkô
		Director-General of Science and Technology Agency	Takeshita Noboru
	Fujio Masayuki	Minister of Labour	Suzuki Zenkô
Sankei Shimbun	Mori Yoshirô	Minister of International Trade and Industry	Miyazawa Kiichi
		Minister of Construction	Murayama Tomichi
		Prime Minister	Mori Yoshirô
Nihon Keizai	Ichida Hirohide	Chief Cabinet Secretary	Ishibashi Kanzan
		Minister of Labour	Ikeda Hayato
		Minister of Transportation	Miki Takeo
	Tanaka Rokusuke	Minister of International Trade and Industry	Suzuki Zenkô

Source: Author compiled.

There are also a number of Thai politicians who have crossed over and engaged in journalistic activities, or launched their own newspapers while assuming political

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[103]   "*Kakanai koto ga shimbun hito no moraru*" (Not writing is the newspaperman's morality), *Mainichi Shimbun*, February 23, 1999, p. 25; and "NSK Warns against Managing Editor's Abuse of Newspaper for Election Campaign", NSK News Bulletin, June 2000, 23(2), p. 1.

positions. These included a former Prime Minister, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, and outspoken politicians such as Wira Musikapong, and Samak Sundaravej. Recently, there have increasingly been cases in which Thai TV broadcasters have used their public persona and reputation as a bridge to a political career. For instance, two elected members of the Democrat Party (1997~2001), including Jakkapan Yomjinda and Ladawan Wongsriwong, were once news anchors for state-owned channels - Channel 7 and Channel 5 respectively. Newsreaders and showhosts of current affairs programs, such as Somkiet Onwimon and Chermsak Pinthong, were elected to the Upper House in March 2000, when Upper House Elections were introduced for the first time. However, not all of these newscasters have become a political success. Sansanee Nakpong, for example, quit her news reading job at Channel 7 to represent the Buddhist reform Palang Dhamma Party in 1992. Four years later, she returned to her news reading post at the same channel after failing to gain enough votes in the 1996 general election.

4.4 Newsmaking Process

Herbert Gans has defined news as "information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists – who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations, and members of a profession – summarizing, refining and altering what becomes available from sources in order to make the information suitable for their audiences".[104] In the process of political newsmaking, journalists thus interact and contest for political information with sources. This contestation occurs at three levels of newsmaking process: when gaining access to political information, when interpreting political information, and when disseminating political information.

4.4.1 Access: Pack Journalism

The journalists' ability to gain access to political information is often inhibited by the practice of pack journalism. Pack journalism is the practice of different reporters writing

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[104] Herbert Gans, Deciding What's News (New York: Pantheon, 1979), p. 80, cited in Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 251.

virtually identical stories.[105] It is the result of rigid, bureaucracy-like organizational structures of news media organization. One characteristic of news organizations that mirrors bureaucracy is the beat system, which assigns journalists to gather news routinely at particular governmental offices, and hence ensuring that they work alongside politicians and bureaucrats. Such a system discourages initiative and limits personal autonomy. As Bennett observes, the beat system "brings reporters from different national news organizations to the same information sources and, as a result, to much the same stories".[106] Moreover, to guarantee the steady supply of news, journalists must make sure to tap certain sources on their beat who provide continuous information that may be used to make news. Such sources also organize permanent access to the journalists, such as by providing exclusive information. As a result of this routine tapping, journalists partly share the interests of these sources, and ultimately apply *legitimate* relations with them. Their news production routines are finely tuned to the representation of the sources' actions, their point of view, and their ideology.[107]

In the Japanese case, both print and broadcast journalists have been bound by a rigid structure of newsgathering dominated by factional reporting and reporters' clubs. The fact that the conservative LDP party was in power for a long time had a significant influence on how the newsgathering process of the news media organizations were structured. Accordingly, media reports on the party center around the factions (*habatsu*) which make up the LDP. These reports are more concerned about political infighting within and between factions than political policies.[108] As these factional leaders are the most influential and important sources of political stories, two to three journalists are assigned to cover each main faction within the LDP, one of which will be assigned to follow each factional leader very closely.[109] Most reporters are also allowed

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105   David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, Media. Power. Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1981), p. 19.

106   W. Lance Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representation of Politics", Political Communication, 1996, (13), p. 373.

107   See, for example, Rodney Tiffen, News & Power (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1989).

108   Tase Yasuhiro, *Seiji jaanarizumu no tsumi to batsu* (Crime and Punishment in Political Journalism), (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1996), p. 14.

109   According to Feldman's survey of 395 Diet members in 1993, 99 members from the LDP met with reporters about three times or more per week. Feldman further argued that the more political experience the Diet member has, the more frequent he is likely to be approached by

to see the leading politicians on a daily basis, simply by knocking on their doors. According to Feldman's survey on the relations between reporters and Diet members, most Diet members regard meetings with reporters as priorities because the media, particularly the national press, not only gives them the most effective channel to reach millions of voters, but are also their sources of information. For Japanese reporters, meeting with these politicians is not a guarantee of access to abundant information. Rather it is an opportunity to learn about political dynamics and the interrelationships between political figures, which may impinge on decision-making and have policy implications.[110]

Media organizations in Japan generally assign a group of political reporters to eleven main clubs in Tokyo.[111] They are also divided and assigned to follow factional leaders, influential members of the LDP, and leaders of coalition and opposition parties whose names have been included on the reporters' watch lists since the decline of LDP in 1993.[112] These reporters are known as 'bankisha' or 'night watchers'. They are assigned to follow important politicians from the time they leave home in the morning until they return at night. They even visit these politicians after working at their houses. In doing so, these bankisha use numerous tactics such as making night attacks (youchi), night rounds (yomawari), or morning visits (asagake) to their houses.[113] Some of these reporters have become involved in the politicians' activities so deeply that they become

reporters. See Ofer Feldman, Politics and the News Media in Japan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 36.

[110]   Ibid., pp. 40-52.

[111]   These main clubs include the Prime Minister's Residence (Kantei Kurabu); the LDP Headquarters (Hiragawa Kurabu); the Opposition at the Parliament(Yatô Kurabu); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kasumi Kurabu); the Defence Agency (Bôeichô); the Ministry of Labor (Rôdôshô); the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kôseishô); the Ministry of Education (Monbushô); the Ministry of Justice (Hômushô); the Ministry of Home Affairs (Jijishô); and the Management and Coordination Agency (Sômuchô).

[112]   See, for example, a series of Asahi Shimbun's columns on "Kawaru seiji hôdô" (Changes in Political Reporting) in "Bankisha kondan kieta" (Nightwatchers' Informal Briefings Disappeared), Asahi Shimbun, 24 August 1993, p. 25; "[Kondan haishi] kanchô demo" (Kondan Briefings Also Discontinued at Government Offices), Asahi Shimbun, August 31, 1993, p. 25.

[113]   According to Feldman, "the 'night attack' is practised much often than the 'morning visits'. This is because...'night attacks', which begin at 8.00 pm, give reporters three or four hours to write stories before morning edition dateline. Night rounds can also serve as a method of squeezing information of a reporter who find himself without any item of news at the end of the day" (p.90). See more details about youchi, yomawari, asagake, habatsu kisha, and bankisha in Chapter four: Reporting the Diet, The View from the Press Club in Ofer Feldman, Politics and the News Media in Japan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 63-93.

messengers for factions, carrying messages from one to another when there is a dispute. Some become the factional leader's right hand men, giving comments and suggestions on party policies.[114] Some even write memos for Prime Ministerial press conferences, advising on how to deal with sensitive questions.[115] Because political information is accessed in this way, journalists are not encouraged to develop critical perspectives on politicians and their policies. Sometimes political factions also conduct reviews of journalists' reports about them, and should critical comments be found, there is a strong likelihood that the journalist will be shut out of the information loop. Consequently, factional reporters (*habatsu kisha*) tend to develop strong loyalty to the factions they cover. They even refer to their assigned faction as *uchi* (home). As the demarcation between *uchi* (home), and *soto* (outside) is strictly observed in Japan, these factional reporters are quite protective of their factional bosses, and do not share information they retrieve, even with other reporters from the same company.[116] Although most of these reporters agree that they do not need to get permission from these sources before publishing an article, they concede that they would not publish an article that might trouble their sources.[117]

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114   Writing from personal experience, Tase argues that factional reporters are easily manipulated by the factional bosses they are covering. Their positions in the faction are elevated as though they are "number two" within the political factions to the extent that they cannot make a clear distinction between their jobs as news gatherers, or policy makers. See Tase Yasuhiro, *Jaanarisuto no sahô" (Etiquette of Journalists)* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1998), p. 85.

115   In June 2000, a reporter from *Nishi Nippon Shimbun* found a memo written by an NHK reporter at the Diet Club. The memo was written to Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro a day suggesting the PM how he should respond at the upcoming press conference to media's inquiries about his remarks that "Japan is a nation of gods with the Emperor at its center" (*kami no kuni*). The story was first published by *Nishi Nippon Shimbun*, and later picked up by late night TV news programs, and weekly magazines. However, whether Prime Minister Mori actually read the memo could not be confirmed. See "*Hitoku Jôhô*" (Confidential Information), *Shukan Bunshun*, June 15, 2000, pp. 39-44; and Kawazaki Yasushi, "*Shiru kenri wo fuminijitta seiji kisha no shishitsu*" (The right to know was trampled by typical political reporters), *Sekai*, August 2000, pp. 21-25.

116   These factional journalists use the word "*uchi*", which literally means "home", or in this case "we or us, or our faction", when interviewing or discussing with factional leaders or members, and even with their journalist counterparts. Tase Yasuhiro, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

117   In 1993, a survey was conducted by the *NSK* of 1,735 political journalists working at newspaper or broadcasting companies. Around 40 per cent of respondents conceded that they have not fulfilled the role of a public watchdog by not closely and impartially watching powerful politicians, bureaucrats, as well as influential figures in the corporate world. About 58.4 per cent of respondents suggested that they would not publish articles that would jeopardize their sources. See Akao Mitsufumi, "*Nihon no kisha no idaku [Shimbun no kinô] kan oyobi, [Shuzai hôdô ni kakawaru kôi no zehi] kan to sono kôzô no bunseki. . .*" (Analyses of Reporters' Views about "the Functions of the Press", and the Structure and Views of "Newsgathering Activities and News Reports" . . .), *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô*, 1995, pp. 80-94.

Reporters assigned to follow the Prime Minister closely, for instance, are known as '*sôri-ban*' or '*shushô-ban*' ('Prime Minister's watchers'). This group comprises mostly junior reporters who have just been moved to political affairs sections. Each news organization usually sends three or four reporters to this '*ban*'.[118] These reporters use tactics such as '*burasagari*' (hanging), meaning hanging around or getting close to the Prime Minister or influential politicians as much as possible, or '*hako nori*' (riding a box), meaning getting a ride with these politicians or following them in a separate car. However, in practice, only one reporter (usually from either *Kyôdô* or *Jiji* news agencies) is allowed to walk or ride with influential sources, and is obliged to share all information retrieved from the sources with their fellow reporters.[119]

This practice of sharing information is tantamount to pack journalism (*yoko narabi hôdô*), due to the way in which the press clubs organize and shape the content of information to reporters on a daily basis.[120] This is because almost all major media organizations in Japan share the same kind of information sources, and receive almost identical types of information from the same channels on a daily basis, through the newsgathering activities at *kisha kurabu*. At *Nagatachô*, most of the reporters from various news organizations work together: they chat and exchange opinions among each

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[118]   The usual participators of this beat include reporters from *Kyôdô, Jiji, Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, Nikkei, Sankei, Tôkyô,* and *NHK*. Reporters from commercial broadcasting are not always present.

[119]   It is important to note here that news agencies such as *Kyôdô* and *Jiji* are major sources of political information for local papers, foreign correspondents, as well as weekly papers and organ papers like *Akahata*, which are not members of the reporters' clubs. See more about *Kyôdô* and *Jiji* news services in Japan's Foreign Press center, Japan's Mass Media, About Japan Series No.7 (Tokyo: Foreign Press Center, 1997). "*Bankisha kondan kieta*" (Nightwatchers' Informal Briefings Disappeared), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1993, p. 25; "[*Kondan haishi*] *kanchô demo*" (Kondan Briefings also Discontinued at Government Offices), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 31, 1993, p. 25.

[120]   Ofer Feldman, Politics and the News Media in Japan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). In this book, Feldman emphatically argues that the Japanese reporters' clubs have shaped and determined: the nature and scope of political communications in Japan, the functions of the press and other channels of communication, the role of reporters, and the content of the information gathered and made known to the public. In his previous article, Feldman conducted a content analysis of news stories during the 1986 Japanese election campaign. He argued that political reporters tended to develop the same type of news frames, and the national newspapers often published similar items on the same day because most media organizations in Japan share the same channels of information, and, more or less, of the same nature, and the same scope of information. See Ofer Feldman, "Political Parties, Politics, and the Japanese Media", Keio Communication Review, 1991, (13), pp. 13-38.

other, and most importantly, they ask questions and receive answers from the official sources in front of each other in press conferences (*kaiken*), lectures (*rekucha*), and informal briefings (*kondan*).[121] Press conferences are usually short, and only a few questions are asked by reporters, all of whom have previously been given press releases.[122] Lectures are usually given by top officials at a designated time, once or twice weekly. In recent years, more and more reporters have become accustomed to heavily relying on the press releases, and information received at the lectures in writing their reports. A number of critics have called this practice as *happyô jaanarizumu* (announcement journalism).[123] Consequently, news stories that appear in different newspapers are sometimes almost identical. The lecture system has significantly been generating news conformity among major newspapers. As de Lange notes,

> It is the lecture system that diverts Japanese journalism of its
> vitality through stiffened procedures and endless repetition. The
> conformity of methods and the complete predictability of which
> the majority of news gathering activities embodied in the lecture
> system are executed ultimately result in a form of journalism that
> lacks any individuality of style and fresh insights.[124]

The collapse of the LDP in 1993 was first regarded to have brought significant changes to the system of factional reporting and reporters' clubs. For instance, a number of reporters' clubs attached to government offices cancelled their *kondan*, and a larger number of political reporters were assigned to cover small parties which made up the

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121 *Nagata Kurabu* , the largest reporters' club in Japan is located on the 2nd floor of the building which is next to the Prime Minister's residence. The club occupies a room of 288 square meters. In 1993, it had 608 members from ninety-seven news companies. See Iwase Tatsuya, *"Shimbun ga omoshirokunai riyû" (The reasons why newspapers are not interesting)*, (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1998), p. 297.

122 According to the statistics from the *Monbushô kurabu* (the reporters' club which is attached to the Ministry of Education), there were a total 110 press conferences, 162 lectures given by various people from the Ministry, and 786 press releases in 1994. Yoshikawa Yoshio, a reporter from *Kyôdô* news service, commented that since the reporters have been spoon-fed, they became heavily dependent on government agency for information, thus, became too attached to the sources. See, Yokogawa Yoshio, *"Yokonarabi shikô kara no datsukyaku wo - mondai ishiki wo shitsutsu aru kishatachi "* (Eradication from pack journalism – the recognition that has been lost from journalists' thoughts), *Masu Komyunikeeshon Kenkyû*, 1996, (48), pp. 86-100.

123 Hara Yoshio, *Jaanarizumu no Shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), pp.155-56; Hirose Hidehiko, "The Press Club System in Japan", Keio Communication Review, 1994, (16), p. 73.

124 William de Lange, A History of Japanese Journalism: Japan's Press Club as the Last Obstacle to a Mature Press (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998), p. 187.

coalition government.[125] However, the return to power of the LDP led by Prime Minister Hashimoto as a governing coalition in 1996 brought back the monolithic structure of factional reporting.[126] An NSK announcement of a new official view on clubs as venues for newsgathering in 1997 neither reduced the dominance of the reporters' club system nor abolished its exclusiveness. Moreover, the prevalence of the reporters' club system today not only determines the nature and scope of the press and its newsgathering function, but also the shape and functions of television news. As Krauss notes,

> The club system's effect on newsgathering is magnified in the case of television news. Because the need for visual materials to accompany the news, advance warning of where and when stories are likely to break is crucial. This is why 'stage events', such as press conferences, and interviews, play a large role in the representation of television news.[127]

However, the breakaway from the reliance on the reporters' clubs as gatekeepers of information can be seen in the recent popularity of 'life-interview' TV political programs. Programs such as *Sunday Projects*, and *News Station* have provided TV reporters a degree of autonomy to ask relatively more independent questions of politicians than those asked in the non-confrontational environment of NHK programs.

To gain access to political information in Thailand similarly involves high profile official sources, such as the Prime Minister, ministers, party leaders, and senior bureaucratic officials.[128] News organizations, in general, assign journalists to regular beats, known in Thai as '*sai khao*'. Important '*sai khao*' includes the Government

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[125] See the series in *Asahi Shimbun* on "*Bankisha kondan kieta*" (Nightwatchers' Informal Briefings Disappeared), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1993, p. 25; "[*Kondan haishi*] *kanchô demo*" (Kondan Briefings also Discontinued at Government Offices), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 31, 1993, p. 25; "*Shushôban [Hosokawa Ryû] ni tomodai mo*" (Prime Minister's watchers were at a loss by Hosokawa's Style], *Asahi Shimbun*, September 2, 1993, p. 29; "*Spokesman Takemura Ryû no Ikagetsu*" (During a Month of Takemura, spokeperson), *Asahi Shimbun*, September 8, 1993, p. 29.

[126] Kurashige Atsurô, a political journalist at *Mainichi*, suggests that despite the fall of LDP in 1993, factional reporting is still a predominant factor determining news direction. In the press, in particular, news reports on political situation (*seikyoku*) largely dominates reports on policies (*seisaku*). See Kurashige Atsurô, "*Tsutaerarenai kokkai katsudô*" (The Diet's Movements that are not conveyed), *Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû*, 1995, (152), pp. 68-73.

[127] Ellis Krauss, "Portraying the State: NHK Television News and Politics", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), *Media and Politics in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 110.

[128] Other sources of domestic political news on which both Thai and foreign news organizations rely are such as the Thai News Agency (*Sam Nak Khao Thai*) which is state owned and attached to the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT), INN News Agency and ABN News Agency which produce news specifically for radio broadcasting.

House, the Parliament, the Army, the Ministry of Interior, and so forth. For example, there are about 120 journalists from the local media covering the Government House beat.[129] These are people working closely on a daily basis with important official sources. Yet these Thai journalists working on such important beats do not get much opportunity for scheduled press conferences. Unlike their counterparts working on the same beats in Japan, who routinely wait for official press releases in the press club, Thai journalists usually run around an area in front of office buildings with microphones and cameras, or tape recorders, waiting to interview their sources as they arrive or depart the buildings. Due to the lack of a press gallery, journalists who work at the Parliament House beat usually have only one press briefing in a week -- after the cabinet meetings every Tuesday.

With few opportunities to conduct exclusive interviews, and a scarcity of information, Thai journalists are often forced to work in packs. They pursue a similar line of questioning in interviews, mostly focusing on the reaction of individual politicians to new developments, or the so-called news current (*krasae-khao*), in order to build up a news agenda (*praden-khao*). They share copies of released documents, transcripts of interviews, and manuscripts. Consequently, the news content from different media outlets offers few scoops or news breakthroughs coming from journalists on official beats. During the economic boom, these junior reporters were often hired right after graduation. They were then put to work with little training. Lacking experience, they could not predetermine news issues, and therefore could not pose appropriate questions during interviews. They frequently asked for news briefs from around a dozen of elder and better experienced colleagues on the same beat who were generally considered as 'agenda-setters' of their day. News stories from the same beat, therefore tend to be highly uniform. Even so, both newspaper and television

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[129] Each newspaper, radio and television station usually sends at least two reporters to station at the Government House beat to cover a number of important organizations located within the Government House including the Prime Minister's Office, National Security Council, Office of the Ministry's Secretariats, and so forth.

broadcasting organizations prefer to appoint junior reporters as beat reporters because of their endurance and active nature.[130]

Meetings with official sources of news do not always take place in government offices or Parliament House. They are sometimes held at party headquarters, or at houses of the secretary-generals of political parties or at houses of group (*kloom*) leaders. Some group leaders, for instance, open their house every weekend for press receptions and exclusive interviews.[131] This practice highlights a distinctive similarity between the Thai and Japanese political party systems -- the preponderance of cliques, factions, or groups within main political parties.[132] However, Thai political reporters do not gravitate towards groups within major political parties, since such groups (*kloom*) in the Thai political landscape are more easily dissolved or amalgamated than are factions in Japan.

Although the strategies Thai reporters use to gain access to group leaders are not as aggressive as their Japanese counterparts (who usually follow their news generators from morning until night), this practice of home visiting leads to similar results in that journalists are easily captured and manipulated by the sources whom they regularly tap. These reporters will neither reveal their sources' names when not allowed, nor criticize their sources because of a long standing custom which entails that reporters must be in awe of their sources (*kreing chai lang khao*). On the one hand, junior reporters are advised to '*kreing chai*' their sources, or to have a sense of affiliation with their sources

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130   See, for example, Krikiet Phanphiphat, "*Kwam pen meuarcheep...Singpung Prathana nai thorathat thai*" (Professionalism...It is what we need in the Thai television broadcasting), in Kanchana Kaewthep (ed.), *Lok Khong Seu* (Media World Vol. 1) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1997), pp. 83-9.

131   Since the Democrat Party, led by Chuan Leekpai, was elected in 1997, General Sanan Kajornprasart, the secretary-general of the party, held a weekly press conference and reception in a suburb called *Sanam Bin Nam* in Nonthaburi province, which was known among reporters as the "*Sanam Bin Nam Beat*". The former secretary-general of the New Aspiration Party, Sanoh Thienthong, also known as the head of the "*Kloom Wang Nam Yen*", arranged similar meetings with the press every weekend at his house at Muang Thong Thani, or the so-called "*Wang NamYen Beat*". Interview with Somphop Praison, Chief Reporter (Front Page) on April 29, 1998.

132   For discussion on the comparison of the political party systems in both countries see Likhit Dhiravegen, "The One-and-a-half Party System and the Halfway Democracy: A Comparative Perspective", in Yoshihara Kunio (ed.), *Thai Perceptions of Japanese Modernization* (Kuala Lumpur: Falcon Press, 1989), pp. 68-90.

in order to secure friendship. On the other hand, these junior reporters feel insecurity and a sense of fear (*kreing klua*) when faced by those who have high authority in political realm. The best thing they can do is feel '*kreing chai*' to achieve harmony and a non-problematic result. Reporters who cannot distance themselves from politicians are often used as informants to report political trends to politicians on a daily basis. Some of them end up parroting what politicians say.

A good illustration of this was the lack of media attention when some 3,000 farmers camped outside Thai Government House from February to June 1998, demanding compensation for land lost as a result of government's construction of dams. The farmers camped for more than five months in front of Government House, but received little attention from the groups of journalists working inside. Reasons given for this lack of attention included a comment that "Our duty is to follow the work of the government, we cannot devote our time to covering the stories of people here"; and that "I suspect they get paid. I suspect some politicians are behind these people".[133] Notwithstanding their suspicions about the farmers' motivations, no journalists working inside Government House attempted to investigate these issues. Instead, they viewed the protest as 'not newsworthy' and blurred the dividing line between journalist and politician by making the same type of comments as those expressed by the Government House politicians themselves. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, for example, had previously said: "I wonder where these people get money to cover all expenses while staying here".[134] This case made what Paletz and Entman said about the American journalists nearly twenty years ago very applicable to Thai journalists nowadays: "Reporters find it expedient to see the world from the perspective of their sources".[135]

4.4.2 News Interpretation

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[133]   Cited in Supara Janchitfah, "A Conspiracy of Silence", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, June 21, 1998 (on-line edition).

[134]   Cited in "*Rathaban Chuan kab mob mak chob long thi leod..namta*" (The Chuan administration and rallies often ended in blood and tears), <u>Athit</u>, January 30, 1998, p. 30.

[135]   David L. Paletz, and Robert M. Entman, <u>Media Power Politics</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1981), p. 20.

The media's ability to challenge state discourse depends largely on journalists' ability to interpret news. Their task is to interpret political information by explaining the significance of 'facts', and to put them into proper context by offering relevant background information. One factor that determines such interpretation is the news value of the organizations.[136] News value refers to the working rules of and guidelines for newsroom practices. However, such value is not simply given and available. It is constructed, interpreted, and elaborated in the actual setting of news work. It is used as the main criterion of selection of what constitutes news and what does not. It also guides the presentation of news items suggesting what to emphasize and what to omit. In Thai newspaper organizations such as *Matichon*, the five standard criteria applied in selecting news are: prominence, newness, freshness, extremity, and conflictuality.[137] As discussed below, extremity and conflictuality are generally the most crucial news values held by the Thai journalistic professionals.

Most Thai political journalists usually look for conflict in the political world during interviews. In doing so, they tend to look for conflicts between people rather than conflicts in the substance of policy issues. They conduct interviews by asking politicians to comment on other people's comments. In this way, an endless chain of arguments and counterarguments is created to fill newspaper space, or newsholes on television news. This so-called 'ping-pong' style of news reporting (*khao ping-pong*) consists of phrases like, "with regards to the restructuring of the Police Department, the Minister of Interior suggests that...and in response, the Chief of Bangkok Police Department argues that..." While a few journalists will analyze the pros and cons of the restructuring of the Police Department, most will try to interview key players involved in the process, and position these players in the news reports as if they were opponents in a boxing match. Yet, the practice of conflict-seeking in news reporting is based on the traditional school of journalism that teaches journalists to look for the controversy and disagreement that gives a story tension and drama. Although this kind

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[136]   John Hurst, "Journalistic Objectivity, Subjectivity in News Reporting and News Selection", Australian Journalism Review, January-December 1991, (13), p. 27.

[137]   Interview with Sommai Parichatre, Executive Director, Matichon Newspaper on April 23, 1998.

of reporting does not necessarily convey any knowledge to audiences or readers, it appears to satisfy them. A Thai social activist, Dr. Prawase Wasi, views these practices as commercially driven. He claims that, "journalists present political news like reporting a boxing match because Thai people like boxing. Because of the audience's preferences, the Thai news media continue to be shallow and nonsensical. Yet the news well reflects Thai society and its people".[138] Tannen also agrees that journalists, in general, have a tendency to present news as conflict, because readers and audiences enjoy watching fights. So the most extreme views are presented.[139] Since news organizations are strongly driven by commercial motives, journalists are trained to look for disagreements. They eventually lose the ability to capture the essence of a story, or find any doubts or alternative views necessary to produce informative news.

Japanese journalists, to the contrary, do not determine news value in terms of conflictuality or extremity. Rather, they decide what is or is not news by reference to the source's interests, which often outweigh the 'public's right to know'. In this regard, the close relationship between journalists and official sources play a major part in the process of news selection. The press's blackout of racist comments made by Prime Minister Nakasone in September 1986 provided a good example here. While giving a speech at the training session of young LDP members, the Prime Minister commented that the presence of 'blacks' and Hispanic American such as "Puerto Ricans and Mexicans" was the reason behind a supposed decline in American intelligence levels. Despite the fact that this LDP training session was attended by large numbers of reporters from both *Nagatachô* and *Hiragawa kurabu*, Nakasone's comments did not make headlines in any national newspapers. *Tôkyô Shimbun* was the only paper that published the story, as a political tidbit. Although these comments were not made off-the-record, most reporters mutually and silently agreed that they were the kind of joke that Nakasone often made, and hence they did not score much news value. However, *Akahata* newspaper, which stands outside of this tight information loop, picked up the

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138   Prawase Wasi cited in the Reporters' Association of Thailand, *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2537 (The Reporters' Day 5 March 1994)*, p. 69.

139   Deborah Tannen, *A Destructive Culture of Critique* (1994), cited in Paz H. Diaz, "The 'New Edge' in Asian Journalism", *Media Asia*, 1998, 25(4), p. 191.

story and featured it as a headline. The US media followed suit, and politicized it to the extent that Prime Minister Nakasone had to make a formal apology.[140] This incident vividly demonstrates that the relationship between the information source and journalists in Japan has become too close for the journalists to establish their own judgement on news values that are different from the source's interests.

Yet standards of news value used to evaluate and present news in news media organizations, whose main goal is profit maximization, are largely determined not merely by their intrinsic significance -- the presumed interest that readers and the audience may find in it -- but also by its commercial implications. The following case indicates that the economic crisis, which has impinged on the survival of the press in Thailand, has also affected the process of news interpretation together with the selection and production of news.[141] During this crisis, news judgment in reporting certain 'facts' seemed to be less political and more commercial. Due to the economic slump that preceded the devaluation of the Thai baht in 1997, the overall advertising revenue of the media industry has diminished by a half. Consequently, each media organization has been struggling for advertising money. In this harsh situation, the news media have been easily manipulated by advertisers who are keen to pursue their own interests.

The case of news reports on the building of the Yadana Gas pipeline project between the Thai and Burmese borders illustrates this point. This project was undertaken by a consortium that comprised Myanmar Oil and Gas Exploration and the Thai government represented by the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (*Por.Tor.Thor* or PTT). The project was scrutinized by the media when a group of environmentalists and

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[140]   Katsura Keiichi, *Gendai no shimbun (Newspapers At Present)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), pp. 32-3.

[141]   The economic crisis had an enormous impact on the organizational structure and the future direction of the Thai press. Large newspaper groups with a large sum of overseas debts have to seek foreign investors to roll over their debts. For instance, the Nation Multimedia Group, owner of the English language daily, *The Nation*, had to allow foreign investors to own bigger stakes in the company for purely economic reasons. The increasing rate of foreign ownership of local media may foreshadow a possible change in the news value of these media organizations. In this regard, Kavi Chongkitthavorn, an executive editor of *the Nation*, expressed his concern that *the Nation* will become more commercially oriented, and more regionally-oriented than locally-oriented due to pressure from foreign investors. Interview with Kavi Chongkitthavorn, Executive Editor, *The Nation* on April 28, 1998.

human rights protesters, led by Sulak Sivaraksa, a famous social critic, filed reports that people from Burmese ethnic minorities had been used as forced labor to build the gas pipeline, with some allegedly killed. The reports also drew attention to the fact that the government's decision to pursue the project had been made without public consultation, and that they ignored substantial damage caused to the forest environment and local fauna, as well as communities in Kanchanaburi province through which the gaspipe was laid.[142]

For its part, the PTT went on the counter-attack by threatening to withdraw its advertisements from the newspapers which had published sharp criticisms against the project. Amidst the crisis, no newspapers wished to lose big advertisers and the revenue they offered. Most of them chose to stop criticizing the PTT. Some newspapers even became more supportive of the PTT Yadana project than before. The PTT also launched a new PR campaign that aimed at promoting public and local support. In this campaign, the PTT purchased advertising space in both national and local dailies to publish its public relations advertisements, which took the form of normal news articles. Without using any references or the PTT logo, and instead employing headlines such as "Dusit Poll tells public's support for gas pipeline", these advertisements could be easily have been mistaken by readers as news items. These advertisements published in a number of high-profile dailies such as *Matichon, Phujadkarn, Naew Na, Krungthep Thurakit* and *Thai Post,* were highly supportive of the project, while distorting various facts.[143] The PTT generously paid journalists and provincial media to write or report positive accounts on its behalf, as well as sponsoring television and radio stations to make special reports in support of the project.[144] The government, led by the PTT,

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142   Sulak Sivaraksa organized a demonstration in Kanjanaburi forest. He and a number of activists were later arrested and charged by the police for obstructing the construction of the pipeline. See discussion of this case and samples of media coverage in Sulak Sivaraksa, *Panyashon kaboth nam-pueng yod diew (An Intellectual's Rebel, A Single Drop of Honey)* (Bangkok: Song Siam, 1998).

143   Although some of these materials were published in an 'advertising space', elsewhere they appeared not so much as advertising but rather as news items with the byline 'by a designated reporter'. See Thawatchai Jaranai, *"Tor gas pu parrd rai som, Por.Tor.Tor. tum ngob khosana"* (The Gaspipe Laid Across the Orange Orchard, The PTT Heavily Advertised", *Matichon Sudsapda,* February 24, 1998, p. 68.

144   Rom Israrath, *"Naew ruk dan tor gas jak Por.Tor.Tor pan sumolchon* (The PTT's Counter Attacks Against the Media", *Siam Rath Sapdawijarn,* February 22, 1998, p. 85.

eventually succeeded in finalizing the project by minimizing public space in which oppositional views could be aired. Given the economic crisis, journalists as well as media organizations were susceptible to the PTT and the government's manipulation. Indeed, the PTT capital influence caused journalists, editors, as well as publishers to deviate from their objectivity, and to select and produce only positive views of the project.

Commercial implications of news reports are considered crucial factors in the process of selection and interpretation of news stories. In Japan, unfavorable reports involving major sponsors, advertisers, or creditors such as large commercial banks, and security companies often go unreported. *Dentsu*, the largest advertising company controlling around fifty per cent of Japanese advertising market, is credited with the power to control much of what is printed in the Japanese press about its client companies.[145] The coverage of business malfeasance of big corporations, as a result, has been avoided by commercial televisions, as well as by Japan's public service broadcaster — NHK. For instance, when senior executives of Japan's largest brokerage house, Nomura, were arrested for agreeing to make up losses for major clients in 1991, NHK agreed with the company not to report the story in an exchange for its commitment to provide daily stock market commentary.[146] As for newspapers, due to low profit levels and restriction on trading their shares in the stock market, companies have become heavily dependent on bank loans for capital investment.[147] Accordingly, the press rarely names big banks when publishing unfavorable pieces. A case in point involved an exclusive report in the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* morning edition of November 22 1997 of the collapse of Yamaichi Securities.[148] A week before the publication most reporters

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[145]   Peter Hadfield, "Japan: Keeping in with the Club", Index on Censorship, July 1991, 20(7), p. 16; Mr. Nakajima Gengo of *NSK* also admits that the influence of *Dentsu* in directing the news reports are undeniable. Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs, Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai on October 23, 1998.

[146]   Spencer Sherman, "NHK Japan: East Meets West in the Newsroom", Columbia Journalism Review, March/April 1994 (on-line edition).

[147]   D. Eleanor Westney, "Mass Media as Business Organizations: A US-Japan Comparison", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 56.

[148]   Nagano Yoshikazu, " [*Yamaichi shôken jishu haigyô*] *e no sukuupu*"] (Anecdote on Scoop of Collapse of Yamaichi Securities), Shimbun Kenkyû , 1998, 10, pp. 15-18.

attached to the press club at Yamaichi Securities suspected that something had gone wrong, when the negotiation between executives of Yamaichi Securities and foreign investment companies came to a dead end. Yet most reporters did not pick up any signal of the seriousness of the issue. They did not even believe that such a first rate company, which was a hub of financial information as well as a major creditor to a number of media companies, would easily collapse.[149] On the following day, Yamaichi's stocks dropped sharply, and rumors of further drops in price also circulated. Despite all these 'objective' facts, no reporter attempted to investigate the situation, or report the true causes of the problems. The story had been discreetly kept behind closed doors for a week before being exposed by *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*.[150]

4.4.3 Dissemination

To disseminate news, political information that has been gathered is sorted and packaged in a way that reflects media organizational rules and journalism norms. Since the onset of journalism education in Thailand, students have been taught that a sharp line should be drawn between facts and opinions. 'News' is simply defined as 'fact'. Any simplification or elaboration of the journalist's opinions and emotions cannot be incorporated into news reportage. Instead, this is to be located within 'comments'. However, it has often been the case that this dividing line becomes blurred, because 'facts' in Thai news are not pure facts, or facts that come from solid evidence or proven sources. Instead, they often originate from rumor mongering, anonymous letters, fax sheets from unidentified sources, or documents dropped by an unknown messenger who quickly disappears. Yet rumor and materials from unconfirmed sources have long been important sources of 'facts' in the Thai news media. It is believed that rumor occurs when there is an imbalance between urgent demand for information and a failure in supply.[151] Indeed, supply of political information in Thailand, especially from centralized bureaucratic sources, is inadequate and often released with exploitative goals,

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149   *Ibid.*, p. 16.
150   *Ibid.*
151   Jeremy Tunstall, <u>Journalists at Work</u> (London: Sage, 1971), p. 17.

such as to attack political opposition, or to cover up the real story. The reliance on rumor was explained by Suthichai Yoon, an editor-in-chief of *The Nation*:

> You learn soon enough in this profession not to trust facts especially when they come from the authorities. The more senior they are, the more suspicious you should be of their "facts". But with rumor, you know you are up to something very interesting. They offer you the whole range of "facts" to choose from.[152]

Thus, 'factual' political stories in the Thai press are in fact based almost entirely on rumor, which might in fact be entirely somebody's opinion. Yet this practice of heavy reliance on rumor as a tip for "facts", especially in the press, has left editors and publishers to become increasingly vulnerable to libel lawsuits.

In the Thai press, there is an important norm that news and comments are to be presented separately. Comments are caged in the editorial columns. News that is all about 'facts' commands the news pages, and each piece is usually very long. The distinction is institutionalized in the contrast between reporters and columnists. News is written based on information mostly provided by junior reporters who work on beats and send 'facts' to the news desk by phone or fax. These facts are then edited by the so-called 're-writer', and presented as 'news' in a broadsheet style.[153] Comments, on the other hand, are generally presented in editorial and other specialized columns. They are produced by columnists, who present their own opinion on popular issues, which sometimes do not conform to the stance presented in the news content on the front page or in any other columns. Often they '*fun thong*' or 'strike a flag' by making judgments and speculating on issues by deciding the rights or wrongs, or what will happen usually without seeking out the 'facts' or relevant material. Most of these columnists are experienced journalists, who are well connected and have a large network of news sources. Because of their extensive connections, most comments made by these

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[152] Suthichai Yoon, "In Defence of Political Rumors", Thai Talk (Bangkok: Nation Publishing, 1995), p. 203.

[153] Duncan McCargo, Policy Advocacy and the Mass Media in Thailand (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies), p. 26.

columnists are often biased, merely reflecting their own vested interests.[154] Television journalists have also recently highlighted this practice of separation between "facts" and 'comments'. Using a newspaper format, an *iTV* evening news program has attached a short news analysis, which purely reflects journalists' opinion on the lead story of the day.

In the Japanese case, the ideological division between 'facts' and 'opinion' is, on the contrary, not held so firmly by television journalists. Earlier findings of an analysis of news content of TV news programs suggested that news anchors and reporters often insert overt political opinion and comments into news items.[155] However, this is not the case as for newspaper journalists. Current practices of newsgathering activities and news reporting indeed do not allow such a mixture of facts and comments in Japanese newspapers. Political news articles are already filled with the government's news releases and official speeches, leaving little room for any analysis. A couple of editorial columns written by senior editors thus become the only space where the press presents its opinion. Moreover, a reporter's name, or the so-called 'by-line' (*shomei*) attached to the news article, becomes a signal of whether that article is based almost entirely on facts, or embedded with personal opinion. In order to claim objective reporting, and to avoid causing source-reporter conflicts, Japanese newspapers have not carried many by-lined articles (*shomei kiji*) until recently.[156] Most newspapers tend to believe that by-lined articles allow reporters to present different views, which could jeopardize the 'trusting relationship' with their sources. *Mainichi Shimbun*, for example, has adopted an

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154   Two recent cases confirm that Thai columnists have used their influence and connections to achieve their own ends. The first case involved two well-known columnists who had a personal sideline in the tree selling business successfully lobbied the Ministry of Interior for building two public parks in Bangkok [Bangkok Post, July 20, 1998 (on-line edition)]. The second case revealed that a number of leading columnists had used their influence to place their offspring in an elite primary public school [The Nation, February 4, 1999 (on-line edition)].

155   A comparative study of news content of NHK's 7 o'clock news and TV Asahi's *News Station* suggested that more frequently, reporters or anchors give a commentary or analysis far more often on *News Station* than on NHK, particularly on the topics concerning politics and government. See Ellis S. Krauss, "Changing Television News in Japan", The Journal of Asian Studies, August 1998, 17(3), p. 673.

156   There have been two major changes in news presentation in Japanese newspapers during recent years: the size of news articles have been larger, and there have been more by-lined articles than before. See Tamaki Akira, "*Kawari hajimeta nihon no shimbun*" (Japanese Newspapers Began to Change), *Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû*, 1996, (156), pp. 18-23.

internal guideline regarding by-line attachment: journalists must not attach their by-line to police, judicial, or political matters because this may cause harm to the journalists; they must not attach their by-line when a news source is identified, and the source may be troubled by such identification; and they must not attach their by-line to articles that are written based entirely on personal opinion or observations.[157] In practice, by-lined articles are not encouraged by the current newsgathering structure in which news reporters are assigned to work not individually, but as a team. Moreover, editors feel that a uniform and consistent position must underscore the treatment of similar stories throughout the papers. As a result, such normative practices preclude representing views different from others.

4.5 Self-Censorship

Another level of normative practices within news media organizations that limits the media's ability to disseminate political information concerns self-censorship. To prevent interference from authorities that try to uphold the existing social and political orders and prevent any contestation, both Thai and Japanese journalists impose self-restraint on coverage of their monarchical systems. In Thailand, any critical analysis of the monarchy, any publication of speech or comments that are deem detrimental to the monarchy, as well as publication about the crime of *lèse-majesté* itself, is discouraged by the threat of a *lèse-majesté* charge. According to Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Law, whoever commits the crime of *lèse-majesté* or *min-pramat* (causing injury to sovereign power) against the king, heir apparent or regent shall face three to fifteen-year imprisonment.[158] As the Thai monarchy has been placed at the epicenter of the Thai sociopolitical life and the national identity, any injury caused to the monarchy can be seen as disloyalty not only to the monarch but also to the Thai national government.[159]

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[157]   These kinds of opinionated articles include comments about the mental state of power players in politics. Therefore, they are usually written by reporters who closely follow the politicians such as factional reporters and nightwatchers (*bankisha*). Hara Yoshio, *Jaanarizumu no shisô (Thoughts in Journalism)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 164.

[158]   Manit Sooksomchitre, *Koo-meu kodmai thi na roo samrab nak-khao (Legal Manual for Reporters)* (Bangkok: Press Development Institute of Thailand, 1995), p. 2.

[159]   See a critical analysis of the case of *lèse-majesté* in nineteenth-century Siam in Craig Reynolds, "Sedition in Thai History: A Nineteenth-Century Poem and Its Critics", in M. Chitakasem and A. Turton (eds.), Thai Construction of Knowledge (London: School of Oriental and Asian Studies, 1991), pp. 15-36.

However, most journalists are unwilling to report news that may tarnish the image of the royal family not only because of the threat of a *lèse-majesté* charge, but also of genuine belief that under the present king the monarchy is above criticism. According to Kobkua, Thais view the current King Rama IX, or King Bhumibol, as a "constitutional monarch in his own class", who has united the country and has at least twice led the country out of a dangerous political impasse, in 1973 and 1992, when all other means had failed.[160] A foreign academic also asserts that the King is seen by the Thai public as having an important role in the development of the Thai political system and its course of democratization, although the King's conservatism has influenced the way in which the pivotal position of the monarchy are preserved through such course.[161] Another academic went so far as to say that the King's political involvement is seen by the public as national salvation. The King has held out solutions for many pressing problems ranging from traffic, flooding to violent political crises.[162] For these reasons, the King continues to be regarded by the Thai public as "revered, sacred and inviolable".[163]

By and large, the Thai monarchy does not receive critical coverage because the *lès-majesté* law is often strategically utilized by political factions or military cliques to threaten and attack their political enemies. As breaches of the *lès-majesté* law are categorized as one of the "violations against the national security of the state" in the

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[160]   In Kobkua's words, "In the eyes of the world, the source of Bhumibol's unique power is the respect, esteem, love and thrust of his people. Bhumibol has made his own version of constitutional monarchy a reality" (p. 11). Kobkua also argues that King Bhumibol has established a 'Thai way of constitutional monarchy' of which the King would have a role to intervene during the country's political crises, as well as when the country and its people facing insurmountable difficulties. His recent initiation of projects and ideas to overcome the countrys economic difficulties brought about by the devaluation of the baht could be seen as a good example here. See Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, "The Post-1972 Constitutions: Preliminary Analysis of Constitutional Monarchy a la Thailand", Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on Thai Studies, University of Amsterdam, July 4-8, 1999.

[161]   Kevin Hewison, a political economist, argues that the King is inherently conservative, and has sought to define a conservative polity which would preserve the power of the monarchy. To that end, the King has acted outside the limits of the constitutional monarch, by involving in the political and legislative processes. For further discussion see Kevin Hewison (ed.), "The Monarchy and Democratization", Political Change in Thailand (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 58-74.

[162]   David K. Wyatt, "The Student Prince Who Saved A Monarchy", The Asia-Pacific Magazine, June 1996, pp. 17-24.

[163]   Section 2, Article 8, the 1997 Constitution of Thailand

Criminal Code, those who commit the crime are thus seen as national perpetrators. For instance, Wira Musikapong, a former Deputy Minister of Interior, faced a *lès-majesté* charge for saying in a 1986 campaign speech that if he could choose where he could be born, then he would choose to be born in the heart of the Grand Palace. In fact, Wira's case would not have made it through the court should political conflicts among the politicians and the military had not escalated. Despite his formal public apology and pledge of loyalty to the King, Wira was accused by the military of harboring communist links, and given a four-year prison term on *lèse-majesté* charges as a consequence.[164] Streckfuss summed up the case by arguing that "*lèse-majesté* creates a space in which threats to the monarchy can seem almost infinite and can be read into almost anything".[165] All Thai journalists seem to know that most of the *lèse-majesté* charges laid in the past were politically motivated. Journalists can too be easily silenced should they go beyond the discursive norms relating to the monarchy as allowed by the state, which has claimed for itself the duty to protect the King's honor.[166] They have also learnt that dissemination of the crime itself can also lead to charges of *lèse-majesté*.[167] Foreign journalists covering Thailand voluntarily exercise self-censorship because they fear being banned from the country, as comments on the monarchy are easily construed

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[164]   David Streckfuss suggests that this was largely a political case, in which Wira, a leading member of Democrat Party traditionally opposed to the military, was charged with the most serious political crime. The military and the opposition parties then carefully insinuated communist connections and warning of its threat to national security. He also argues that the fact that Wira was given a royal pardon after a month in prison demonstrated that the charge of *lèse-majesté* was used as an opportunity for the state to temporarily silence its opposition. See David Streckfuss (ed.), "King in the Age of the Nations: The Paradox of *Lèse-majesté* as Political Crime in Thailand", in <u>Modern Thai Monarchy and Cultural Politics: The Acquittal of Sulak Sivaraksa on the Charge of *lèse-majesté* in Siam 1995 and Its Consequences</u> (Bangkok: Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, 1996), pp. 54-80; See also Sulak's case in which his dissent against the ruling military force (The National Peace Keeping Council) allegedly slandered the monarchy in the same volume.

[165]   *Ibid.*, p. 457.

[166]   Another good example here is that a *lèse-majesté* charge was filed against Dr.Pradit Chareonthaithawee, a physician, who commented on the health of His Majesty on television. In the television interview, the physician appealed to the politicians to stop fighting for power for the sake of the King's ailing health. A politician who filed a charge against him was Piya Angkinan, an MP from Petchaburi province who claimed that the physician's comments caused people to panic. See "*Lèse-majesté* Filed Against the Physician", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, November 7, 1997 (on-line edition).

[167]   In 1973, *Siam Rath* was suppressed by the Print Act of 1941 for publishing the Thai National Salvation's Movement condemnation of the Monarch. M.R Kukrit Pramoj, the newspaper's publisher, who considered himself a royalist, defended the decision to publish the criticism, by claiming that the newspaper was obliged to defend the monarchy when it was attacked. However, the newspaper was eventually charged for publishing what the officials saw constituted *lèse-majesté*. See David Streckfuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-61.

by the Thai state as criticism. In 1994, an Australian newspaper, *The Age*, published a cartoon showing the King in what appeared to be a party hat, and accompanied this with a story about a royal pardon given to an Australian drug smuggler on the occasion of the King's birthday. Thai government officials later rejected applications for working visas to Thailand by two Australian journalists.[168] The Melbourne radio station 3AW was also obliged to apologize on air for a story aired by a breakfast announcer which referred unflattering terms to the King.[169]

Both the *lès-majesté* law and the self-censorship of journalists indeed play a large part in preserving the state construction of what it contends is a sacred national identity with the monarchy at its center.[170] The narratives on the monarchy that appear in the Thai media, as a consequence, emphasize coverage of his Majesty's sociopolitical achievements and activities. Gossip surrounding the royal family, and any critical analyses of the powers or privilege assigned to the Throne which are exercised or abused by the King or members of his family, are wholly suppressed by means of self-censorship (unlike the way in which the British media generally report about their monarchy). Moreover, the practice of self-censorship by broadcast journalists is also reinforced by the Ministerial Regulation on Broadcasting No.14, which was issued in 1994 under the 1955 Broadcasting Act, and which emphasizes that broadcast programs should not offend or insult the King, but should promote knowledge, understanding, responsibility, and awareness in Thai democracy with the King as Head of State.[171] All television channels must also broadcast a clip on royal news every day at 8 pm. In television coverage, the King is always seen in motion, visiting farmers, or with map in hand directing rural development projects in the distant villages, and the Queen is shown

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168   Nick Carter, "Angry Thais Ban Two Journalists", <u>Daily Telegraph Mirror</u>, October 7, 1995.
169   *Ibid.*
170   For further discussion on the role of the mass media in the construction of an authorized national identity of "nation, religion, and king" in Thailand see Annette Hamilton, "Rumors, Foul Calumnies, and The Safety of the State: Mass Media and National Identity in Thailand", in C. Reynolds (ed.), <u>National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand, 1939-1989</u> (Chieng Mai: Silkworm Book, 1991), pp. 341-79.
171   Clauses 14 and 16 in the Ministerial Regulations on Broadcasting No.14 issued in 1994 under the Broadcasting Act of 1955. See <u>Thailand : Broadcasting Act 1955, 1987 & Regulation on Broadcasting 1992</u> (Bangkok: Public Relations Department, Office of the Prime Minister, 1995), p. 63.

supervising women's handicrafts and other off-farm works, while the Crown Prince and Princesses are seen distributing clothing, food, and medicine to villagers, or attending Buddhist ceremonies at temples. The Thai press echoes these reports of royal activities by printing pictures distributed by the Royal Household Bureau (*Samnak Phraraatchawang*), with small captions in official honorific language. The royal family is seen as making merit or '*tam bun*', with the king presenting the locus of *barami*, or charisma, acquired through accumulation of merit in past incarnation. As Jorgensen has argued, media coverage of the King's activities could be seen as a means of diffusing that '*barami*' throughout the kingdom.[172]

Unlike the Thai monarchy, the Japanese Emperor system (*tennôsei*) is not considered sacred, but it is mystified by conflicting narratives and myths, which in turn keep it sublime yet lacking a clearly defined position in the society.[173] Myths surrounding the emperor system are "situated in the so-called 'empty-center' that harmonizes conflicts which renders them invisible".[174] Accordingly, these conflicts have upheld the emperor system and the Imperial family in a peculiar social position. Before the Second World War, the Emperor (*tennô*) was a living deity, and therefore sacred and inviolable.[175] Crimes against the dignity of the sovereign were subject to the Penal Code of 1880. After the war, this Code was rescinded and the Emperor system was subject to a process of depoliticization and humanization largely by the mass media's

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[172]   Only recently has alternative discourse on the Thai monarchy increasingly become an object of mass consumption. Pictures of third-generation royal heirs in different wardrobes, and their exclusive interviews frequently appear on leading fashion magazines. Stories about Prince and Princesses' unsuccessful marriages, which were previously kept discreet, are now allowed to be published, with royal permission. Although the sacredness of the monarchy seems to be lessened in this light, certain subjects surrounding the monarchy regarded as 'taboos' remain unassailable. These subjects include the mystery surrounding the untimely and accidental death of King Rama VIII, the subject of Crown Prince's committing adultery, and the question of future successor to the Throne. For detailed discussion on the monarchy, the media, and identity creation inThailand. See Nickolas E. Jorgensen, "Media and Identity Creation in Contemporary Thailand", Unpublished Thesis, Master of Science, San Jose State University, 1995.

[173]   See discussion on competing discourses on the Emperor system in Fujitani Takashi, "Electronic Pageantry and Japan's Symbolic Emperor", The Journal of Asian Studies, November 1992, 51(4), pp. 824-50; and Fujitani Takashi, Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

[174]   Inose Naoki, *Mikado no shôzô (Portrait of the Mikado)* (Tokyo: Shôgakkan, 1986); Quote in Fujitani Takeshi, "Electronic Pageantry and Japan's Symbolic Emperor", *op. cit.*, p. 826.

[175]   The Japanese word for "emperor" is "*tennô*", meaning 'the ruler of the heaven', which signifies the traditional belief that the Japanese emperor is a god in human form.

visualization.[176] The abolition of penalties for the crime of *lèse-majesté* and the guarantee of free speech in Japan have also allowed various competing discourses on the monarchy to be pursued by the media.[177] Through these discourses, the monarchy has been treated like stars, and eventually it became a product for mass consumption. In particular, the Japanese monthly and weekly magazines, which are famous for their sensational muckraking, have spearheaded such pursuits.

On the other hand, there is a traditional view among Imperial Household officials that Imperial affairs should be kept private and dealt with in secrecy. The public should obtain only official narratives of the affairs of the Japanese monarchy as directed by the Imperial Household Agency (*kunai-chô*). There has recently been a resurgence of this view as exemplified by a ban on the media's reports on the true nature of Emperor Hirohito's illness during the months before his death in 1989, although the media were allowed to report on his symptoms and vital signs.[178] In 1992, the Imperial Household Agency also requested that the NSK impose a three-month news blackout on Crown Prince Naruhito's search for a bride.[179] Any *kondan* meetings between reporters and members of the Imperial family are considered off-the-record. Reporters of publications that published leaked stories or content from the informal meetings are banned from entering the Imperial Palace.[180] The Agency's institutional position has also enabled

[176] The remaking of the Emperor involved the denunciation of a divine Emperor and the humanizing process including the physical appearances of the Emperor and Empress at national functions and events, and their contacts with people by travelling around the country. This humanizing process was intended to familiarize people with the royal family, and at the same time, the frequency and banality of appearances via the mass media made them less sacred. See *ibid*. and also Sugiyama Mitsunobu, "*Shinkenpô shita de daijôsai wa dô atsukai beki ka?*" (How should *Daijôsai* be handled under the new Constitution?), <u>Shinbun Kenkyû,</u> 1990, (472), pp. 57-64.

[177] In Japan, the sentence for those found guilty for the crime of *lèse-majesté* before the end of the Second World War was a two-month to five-year sentence. This *lèse-majesté* law was abolished by the SCAP during the occupation period.

[178] Sugiyama Mitsunobu, "National Essentialism and the Emperor System in Japan", <u>Review of Media, Information and Society</u> (University of Tokyo), 1996, (1), pp. 19-43.

[179] In February 1992, the Imperial Household Agency and the *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* agreed to suppress reports on the prince's search for bride on the grounds that excessive coverage on the issues had led to the violation of privacy of bridal candidates. The Imperial Household Agency demanded 'a quiet environment for choosing a Princess'. The *NSK* agreed to the news blackout, but asked for the continuation for newsgathering. As a result, when the ban was lifted after the Washington Post had reported that Owada Masako was a likely candidate, most major newspapers and broadcasting channels had two or three-page scoops or special broadcast programs prepared well in advance. Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai* on October 23, 1998.

[180] In March 1996, a women's magazine, *Josei Sebun*, published an article detailing the content of

them to request a ban on certain news stories, or photographs deemed detrimental to the image of the Imperial family. To cite one example, when Prince Akishino married Princess Kiko in June 1990, a *Kyôdô* wire service photographer, Nakayama Toshiaki, took a picture of Princess Kiko touching Prince Akishino's forehead during an interval of the wedding photo session. The Imperial Household Agency considered the picture unsuitable for publishing and requested the Tokyo Photographers' Association to stop releasing such photographs. The Association rejected the request as it came after the photograph had been released. The Agency then sent a request for a ban on that photo to *Reuters*, which is generally in charge of releasing photographs to foreign media. Being in awe of the Agency, *Reuters* has never released that photograph. The Agency also suspended Nakayama from working at the court. Feeling disappointed by quiet responses from the NSK and major media on the issue, Nakayama resigned from *Kyôdô*.[181] Although most journalists and their associations in Japan perceived such the Agency's maneuvering as a clear violation of press freedoms, no journalist representative has been willing to stand up and say it publicly. This again reflects a key component of Japanese culture – 'honne' versus 'tatemae', or 'real intention' versus 'stated principles'.[182]

Although the Agency's functionaries play important roles in gatekeeping offical information, breaking royal news based on leaks and gossip often slips through the reporters' club attached to the Imperial Household Agency.[183] The Japanese mainstream

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the informal meetings with the Crown Princess. Although the published content was merely about the kind of food that she liked cooking, and what book she was reading, the Imperial Household Agency considered that the reporters attended the informal meetings broke the off-the-record rule. The Agency considered to stop arranging such meetings for reporters. See Maruyama Noboru, "*Kôshitsu tabuu kishakurabu Kôtaishihi [kareeto Ôe] hatsugen ofureko sôdôno ayashii*) (The Imperial Family's taboo and the problem concerning the off-the-record disclosure of the Crown Princess fondness of curry and Mr. Ôe's book), *Tsukuru*, 1996, (5), pp. 108-117.

181 Katô Kazuo, "[*Kôshitsu hôdô] gôrika ron ni miru - Botsu minshushugi kankaku*" (Viewing Rationally on Reports of Imperial Family - They are truly undemocratic senses", *Bunka Hyôron*, September 1990, (355), pp. 222-225. For more details on the case of Princess Kiko's photograph see Nakayama Tetsuaki, *Kiko hi no migite (Princess Kiko's Right Hand)* (Tokyo: Jôhô Sentaa Shuppan Kyoku, 1992).

182 See also Yamazaki Kazutami, "Press Freedom Japan-Style: Bow and Scrape", *Nikkei Weekly*, April 4, 1992, p. 7.

183 On December 10, 1999, *Asahi Shimbun* broke the story of the possible pregnancy of Princess Masako.The entire story was based on "exclusive news sources in the Imperial Household". This *Asahi*'s scoop was followed by an ambiguous response from the Household Agency which led other major papers and sensational weekly magazines to cover the story in details. Twenty

media are, however, cautious in covering reports of such stories. Threats from right-wing groups in Japan have forced Japanese journalists to improvise some forms of self-restraint (*jishuku*).[184] There have been a number of cases in the past in which those who made critical comments about the Emperor and the Imperial System were physically assaulted by right-wing groups. For instance, the Mayor of Nagasaki, Motoshima Hitoshi, was shot and seriously wounded for asserting that the Shôwa Emperor was responsible for the Pacific War. A house owned by a professor who attacked the Imperial Household for spending public money on extravagant religious ceremonies was also shot at.[185] The monthly and weekly magazines such as *Takarashima 30* or *Shûkan Bunshun* which had made critical comments on the Empress Michiko in 1993 also received similar threats. Both magazines were eventually forced to publish formal apologies to the Empress.[186] During the coverage of the Emperor Hirohito's illness in 1988-89, taboo subjects such as Korean minorities and Asian colonialism, which would have linked the Shôwa Emperor to the Pacific War, were omitted by the media.[187] Instead, they upheld the policy of forgetfulness by confining their coverage to only about the Emperor's achievements and his liberalist views after the War. In a few instances, the media used public opinion polls or external contributors to express

days later, the Agency announced that the Princess has been pregnant but has suffered a miscarriage. The public blamed the media pressure. Other media shifted the blame on *Asahi* which first reported by relying the story solely on leaks without official confirmation. See "Covering Imperial Pregnancy", NSK News Bulletin, March 2000, 23(1), pp. 4-5.

184 "*Heisei no kôshitsu hôdô '89-'97 wo tettei kenshô suru: uyoku tero,kunai-chô atsuryoku ni masukomi wa kusshitaka*" (Thorough Examination of Reports on the Heisei Family '89-'97: Were the mass media daunted by the right-wing terrorism and pressure from the Imperial Household Agency?), Shûkan Gendai, November 29, 1997, pp. 170-73.

185 *Ibid*. On April 12 1990, Professor Yuge Tooru, a former Vice Chancellor of Feris Graduate Women's University, and professors from three other Christian Universities publicly opposed the use of public money for religious ceremonies during the enthronement of Emperor Akihito.

186 *Ibid*. In July 1993, *Takarashima 30*, a weekly magazine published an article based on a source working in the Imperial Palace. The article slandered the Empress, saying that her Majesty asked for instant noodles even at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. Two months later, *Shûkan Bunshun*, a weekly magazine, critically commented on her Majesty's dislike of the Defence Force uniform, and her dishonoring of her husband's father by ordering the cutting down of trees in the Palace. The Imperial Household Agency held a press conference to denounce the magazines' comments, and pleaded the media to stop harassing her since her Majesty was so depressed by the comments that she lost her voice.

187 The Koreans living in Japan are descendants of those who were brought to Japan by force labor or came to make a living in Japan, which came to a peak during the Second World War. At the end of the War, the Koreans who decided to stay in Japan were considered 'aliens'.The third and fourth generations of these Koreans were constitutionally declared as 'foreigners' and had to live with social discrimination. See Hanami Makiko, "Minority Dynamics in Japan: Towards a Society of Sharing", in J.C. Maher and G. Macdonald (eds.), Diversity in Japanese Culture and Language (London: Kegan Paul International, 1995), pp. 121-46.

criticism.[188] In short, most of the mainstream media in Thailand and Japan publish stories about their royal families, which reflect dominant viewpoints and avoid issues that might provoke threats of *lèse-majesté* (in the Thai case), or attacks from right-wing forces (in the Japanese case)[189], or negative responses from conservative readers (in both cases). As a result, most media limit their royal reports to weddings, births, and travels.

4.6 Journalism Ethics

Journalism ethics are one of the key determinants of the media's ability to interpret and disseminate political information accurately. The lack of personal values in professional ethics can result in journalists' legitimation of the state's version of political discourse. The very nature of the profession allows journalists to be in close contact with their sources, including powerful and wealthy politicians, businessmen, as well as local mafia figures. In the Thai case, journalists are easily drawn into a vicious circle dominated by a culture of patronage and money politics, in which the practices of "gift-giving"[190] and "*kin muang*"[191] have been largely prominent.[192] Corruption among Thai journalists has existed since the end of the Second World War, when the practice of factional politics was at its peak and partisan newspapers proliferated. As Bowra has argued, political survival or patronage were traditionally the basis for the associations between the power holders and journalists in the past, whereas present day journalists tend to give greater consideration to benefits being derived in a given context.[193] This may be due to

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[188]　Sugiyama Mitsunobu, "National Essentialism and the Emperor System in Japan", Review of Media, Information and Society (University of Tokyo), 1996, (1), pp. 19-43.

[189]　In June 2000, two right-wing extremists attacked the editor and deputy editor of "*Uwasa no Shinsô*, a weekly magazine which published an on-line report on its margin addressing Princess Masako without an honorific "sama" saying that she may be pregnant again. It is a protocal for Japanese media to refer to Princess Masako as "Masako-sama". The extremists demanded an apology from the editor and his deputy, and attacked them when they refused. See "Japanese extremists attack editor, deputy editor over princess reference", The Associated Press, June 8, 2000 (on-line edition).

[190]　Patrick Jory, "Corruption, the Virtue of Giving, and their Political Culture", Paper presented at the Sixth International Conference on Thai Studies, Chieng Mai, Thailand, October 14-17, 1996.

[191]　'*Kin muang*' can be defined as a custom in which officials make use of their posts to earn extra income.

[192]　Pasuk Phongpaichit and Sungsidh Piriyarangsan, Corruption and Democracy in Thailand (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1994).

[193]　Ramaimas Bowra, "Media and Political Communication in Thailand: The Role in Policy Advocacy", Political Advocacy and the Media in Thailand (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy

the fact that since the late 1970s, political power in Thailand has changed hands quickly, and there is no necessity to commit to a relationship with certain political figures. News has become a commodity exchanged for money, assets, and favor between powerful persons and some journalists.

The scale of this type of corruption has been identified in three kinds of practices: that of *nungsuphim sopenee* (newspaper prostitutes), or journalists who have been hired to write in favor of someone, or to attack someone in exchange for money or favors that suit their own interests; that of *nungsuphim joan* (newspaper thieves), or the activities of economic and entertainment journalists who can easily blackmail businesses and movie or TV stars for their own benefits; and that of, *song khao nungsuphim* (newspaper's white envelope), which generally refers to money or gifts received from government offices or private sector bodies in return for favors.[194] During the bubble economy, lavish parties and luxury goods such as mobile phones, laptop computers and overseas trips replaced the old form of money and cheque in 'white envelopes'. It has been claimed that some reporters working rounds at the Government House and the Parliament, in particular, have received a monthly wage, or lump sums of money from the politicians they covered, in exchange for favorable-treatment. As there is little space in newspapers and television news spots are very brief, and a lot of favors need to be returned, journalists are forced to omit other important news items which do not present their sources' or their own interests.

Because of growing concerns about the pervasive nature of corruption among Thai journalists, the Press Council of Thailand (PCT) was established in July 1997 as an independent regulatory body to control and check the ethics of daily newspapers and their journalists.[195] The Constitution of 1997, which guarantees the protection of rights and liberties of employees of media organizations (Article 41), saw a panel of media experts set professional standards and ethical guidelines for broadcasters. Due to the

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Studies, 1997), p. 72.

[194] Boonlert Changyai, *Song khao nungsuphim (Newspaper's White Envelopes)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 1996).

[195] "Cleaning Up the Press", The Bangkok Post, August 11, 1997 (on line edition).

unprecedented freedom and protection guaranteed to the media by the Constitution, it is likely that some journalists will abuse these new rights for their own benefit. The economic crisis in 1997 brought about the closing down of newspapers and the reduction of salaries and staff.[196] The establishment of the above-mentioned organizations was therefore necessary, timely, and appropriate. However, concerns regarding the effectiveness of such a self-governing body as the PCT have been raised because of its recent failure to discipline or impose sanctions on corrupt journalists.

In early 1999 a weekly political magazine, *Siam Rath Sapdawijarn*, published a leaked copy of the ledger of a well-known Cabinet minister. The ledger detailed the personal expenses of the minister including the payment of 150,000 baht to a named *Bangkok Post* journalist as a down payment on a car, and another 100,000 baht to an unnamed *Thai Rath* reporter. Both journalists covered the Government House beat. Other reporters covering the Government House and the Parliament submitted a complaint to the PCT urging it to investigate the matter and reprimand the journalists who were alleged to have received bribes.[197]

The list of journalists receiving bribes in the ledger further prompted the associated newspapers to conduct their own internal investigations. The *Bangkok Post* immediately suspended its journalist. However, the accused journalist argued that it was his money which he had spent on the down payment for the car but had used the minister's name in order to get an early delivery of the vehicle. Owing to a lack of evidence, the PCT could only find him guilty on the grounds of using his status as a journalist to acquire a privilege. Despite his action, this journalist did not receive any social sanction and was soon hired by another leading newspaper, *Naew Na*.[198] In the case of the *Thai Rath* reporter, the PCT also failed to press any charges due to a lack of

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[196]   Since the economic crisis took off in July 1997, there have been about 12 national dailies and more than 40 provincial newspapers closed down, and about 3,600 journalists and media related personnel out of work. See Kavi Chongkitthavorn, "Think Thai/Economy Threatens Media Freedom", The Nation, April 21, 1998 (on-line edition).

[197]   "PCT Urged to Probe Pay-Offs to Journalists", The Nation, February 2, 1999 (on-line edition).

[198]   It is interesting to note that his relationship with the same Cabinet minister is still strong. Apparently, his new job contact was made through Prasong Soonsiri, a senior columnist of *Naew Na*.

evidence.[199] These recent corruption cases prompted English-language papers such as *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* to review and tighten their codes of conduct in order to preserve their long-standing reputations.[200] Most Thai-language papers, however, seem to keep their faith in the PCT, whose effectiveness as an independent, self-governing body based its authority on member companies' disciplinary procedures and social sanction has become increasingly doubtful. Many critics suggest that, like other investigative bodies in Thailand, the PCT has become a mere *'sua kradat'* (paper tiger), meaning a body which has power on paper, but is inept at imposing penalties.[201] Its credibility has been undermined entirely by the voluntarism on which it rests.

A culture of patronage and an intimately close reporter-source relationship has also been a major cause of impropriety among journalists in Japan, where gift-giving customs have deep cultural roots and play an important part in politics.[202] Former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, for instance, was well known to have given reporters a bundle of money for spending on funerals of their relatives.[203] An investigation by local ombudsmen into systematic corruption within the Japanese bureaucracy, in which a large amount of taxpayers' money was spent on receptions for bureaucrats known as

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[199]   At the same time, another case of journalistic impropriety was revealed during a police investigation following the arrest of an illegal migrant. Wolfgang Ulrich, a German real estate developer known as "No. 2" among the foreign Pattaya mafia figures, was alleged to have used a *Bangkok Post* journalist in the Pattaya Branch as a go-between for passing money to his lawyer. Although it was originally suspected that the money would be used to secure the release of Ulrich through the journalist's political connections, it was shown in the police evidence that the money was only a legal fee. Therefore, the Press Council did not bring forward any charges and the *Bangkok Post* considered the matters closed. It was, however, discovered later that another reporter working for the Thai language business paper, *Krungthep Thurakit*, had a substantial share in the legal office used by Ulrich. The Press Council did not investigate this case since no complaint was filed. Even so, *Krungthep Thurakit* disciplined the reporter, cutting his salary and suspending him from work for six months. See the rulings of each case at http://www.bangkokpost.net/presscouncil.html.

[200]   Rom Israrath, *"'Post' pued prachapijarn rang janyaban import"* (The 'Post' Opened a Forum to Draft an 'Imported' Code of Conduct), *Siam Rath Sapdawijarn*, March 14-20, 1999, p. 87; Thawatchai Jaranai, *"Kae klong Kavi Chongkittavorn nayok samakhon nakkhao pu ma kab 'mai kwad' lae kamsung 'ow wine pai kuen"* (New President of the Reporters' Association of Thailand, Kavi Chongkittavorn, Who came with 'Sweeper' and Order to 'Return the Wine'), *Matichon Sudsapda*, March 9, 1999, p. 68.

[201]   Suravitch Wirawan, *"Sapha Nungsuphim: San phraphum"* (Press Council: Spirit House), *Siam Rath Sapdawijarn*, February 7-13, 1999, p. 43.

[202]   As Mitchell observes, "gift-giving acts as a glue that bonds a society; reciprocity was demanded of politicians". See Richard H. Mitchell, <u>Political Bribery in Japan</u> (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 143.

[203]   Interview Mr. Nakjima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, The Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association on October 23, 1998.

'*kankan settai*', was conducted in 1997-98.[204] The findings revealed that some public money was also spent on receptions for bureaucrats and reporters, known as '*kanpô settai*'.[205] '*Kanpô settai*' are generally held as a setting for '*kondan*' meetings, or as a thank you dinner party to reporters after such meetings. Other forms also include *gorufu taikai* (golf meeting), and *enkai ryokô* (travel banquet) at luxurious hot springs or ski resorts. The findings disclosed that, during 1994 and 1995, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government held as many as sixteen receptions with a total value of about six million yen ($A86,000) for reporters working at the two reporters' clubs attached to its office.[206] In his national study of public money spent on reporters' clubs, Iwase gave an estimate of about fifty million yen ($A700,000) of public money being spent on receptions for reporters and bureaucrats each year.[207] In another case, it was evident that money spent on the lavish receptions was not public money, but bribery money that officials had discreetly received.[208]

Once reporters are treated in this way, they are obliged not to write anything that could jeopardize their relationship with the sources whom they meet almost every morning at the reporters' club, and sometimes eat and drink with at dinner receptions. As such obligations are essential to the 'trusting relationship' with these sources, reporters tend to 'legitimize' their wrongful conduct, and act against 'the public right to know' by keeping quiet on issues. For instance, it is known that reporters at the club attached to a tax office in the Kansai area are regular guests at tax officers' expensive dinner parties. These reporters admitted that they were asked not to cover scandals

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204 This investigation resorted to the Public Information Act at the local government levels.

205 Shimizu Yasushi, "*Kanpô Settai to Jôhô Kôkai*" (The Press-Bureaucrats' Reception and the Disclosure of Public Information), *Hôsô Repooto*, March-April 1998, (151), pp. 2-8.

206 The two clubs attached to the Tokyo Government Office are *Yûraku kurabu* and *Kajibashi kurabu*. There are altogether 23 media companies and 78 media personnel assigned to these clubs. Reporters assigned to *Yûraku kurabu* are from *Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Tôkyô Shimbun, Kyôdô Wire Service*, and *NHK*. Reporters assigned to *Kajibashi kurabu*. are from *Sankei Shimbun, Nikkan Kôgyô Shimbun, Nihon Kôgyô Shimbun, Jiji Wire Service, Naigai Times, Japan Times, Nihon TV Tôkyô Broadcasting, Fuji TV , TV Asahi, TV Tôkyô, Cultural Broadcasting, Nippon Broadcasting, Radio Japan, FM Tôkyô, Tôkyô Metropolitan TV*. See *Ibid.*, p.3.

207 Based on questionaires responded by 800 reporters' clubs around the country, Iwase gave detailed analyses and figures of how much both national and local governments have spent to operate and maintain each reporters' club. See Iwase Tatsuya, *"Shimbun ga Omoshirokunai Riyû" (Reasons Why Newspapers are not Interesting)* (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1998), p. 24.

208 Shimizu Yasushi, *op. cit.*, p.5. It is reported that the monthly lunch with reporters paid by the Hokkaidô City Government has been made possible by bribery money.

surrounding the office in exchange for information on tax evasion allegedly committed by some well-known persons.[209] In 1994, a group of local ombudsmen in the city of Kyôto utilized confidential information made available through the local Public Information Act to sue the City Mayor and his administration for using large amounts of public money to pay for the City reporters' club's telephone bills, *kondan*, and *kanpô settai*. The High Court ruled in favor of the Kyôto City Administration, against the argument that the Kyôto City authority had used public money to exploit the mass media to act against the public's right to know.[210]

Whilst Thailand has the Press Council as a sanctioning body, Japan has a self-regulatory body -- namely, the Mass Media National Ethical Council. This council was established in 1955 with the purpose of improving the standard of reporting. Because the Council is loosely based on co-operation among media organization members, it has not had much success in solving ethical problems, as any agreements or recommendations cannot be directly enforced.[211] Moreover, most newspapers do not report irregularities within their own organizations, and do not criticize other newspapers. Instead, most media organizations believe that matters should be dealt with by the company itself, and therefore prefer self-imposed sanctions. These self-imposed sanctions are usually applied to deal with the common problem of false reports. Once a report is found to be based on false information, the reporter who filed the report is obliged to resign. In some cases, the President of that newspaper would also resign to convey his responsibility and express the company's guilt to the public.

To cite one example, on April 20, 1989 *Asahi Shimbun* published on its front page a large colored photograph of an initial K.Y. carved on destroyed coral near Okinawa. The article that accompanied the photo condemned the carving, suggesting

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[209] "*Gokuhi [shimbun kisha settai] no shôsai deeta wo kôkai suru*" (Disclose Detailed Data of the Confidential 'Reporters' Receptions), _Shûkan Bunshun_, February 26, 1998, p. 35.

[210] See details of the rulings in Tajima Yasuhiko, "*Kisha kurabu bangumi kakunin seikyû, jôhô kôkai wo megutte*" (Reporters' Club, Demand for Early Viewing of Programs, and the Information Disclosure), _Shimbun Kenkyû_, March 1997, (548), pp. 86-89.

[211] Takeichi Hideo, "Ethics Problems of Japanese Media", _Komyunikeeshon Kenkyû_, 1995, (25), pp. 67-77.

that it was an act of environmental destruction. Later, it was found that the *Asahi*

photographer was in fact the carver. He admitted that he committed the act because he

could not find much damage on the coral in the area. He was immediately fired from

Asahi, and the company President resigned soon after. *Asahi* later established an internal

committee to monitor and probe into its ethical problems.[212] For the first time in the

history of Japanese newspapers, *Asahi* also launched a 'media column' in June 1991 to

report development and changes in the media industry and the journalistic profession.

This move was quickly mirrored by other newspapers such as *Mainichi* and *Sankei*.[213]

Yet it is apparent that the rule of not criticizing others in the same industry is still

strictly observed in these media columns.

The recent increase in cases of journalistic impropriety regarding false reports

and *kanpô settai* prompted the Japan's Newspapers Union Alliance (*Nihon Shimbun*

Rôdô Kumiai Rengô) in February 1997 to launch a sanctioning body similar to the

system of the Press Council.[214] This so-called Media Council was established to

revitalize journalist attitudes towards social responsibility. In the same year, the *NHK*

and the Japan's Commercial Broadcasting League (*Nihon Minkan Hôsô Renmei*) also

allied to set up a Broadcasting Human Rights Committee (BRC), or *Hôsô to Jinken*

nado Kenri ni kansuru Iinkai, to investigate complaints concerning the nature of public

and commercial broadcasting programs.[215] Unlike the existing Mass Media Ethical

Council, members of these two new councils will comprise legal advisers, academics,

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[212] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[213] Takahashi Ikuo, "*Asahi Shimbun [Medeia ran] no kokoromi*" (Attempts of Asahi Shimbun's Media Column), *Sôgô Jaanarizumu*, 1992, (140), pp. 82-85.

[214] Japan's Newspapers Union Alliance (*Nihon Shimbun Rôdô Kumiai Rengô*) observes and tries to improve ethics among journalists at the individual level. Japan's Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (*Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*), on the other hand, monitors ethics among media organization members at the industrial level. Sometimes, these industrial and individual positions brought the two organizations into conflicts. For instance, Japan's Newspapers Union Alliance was in dispute with Japan's Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association when the latter dismembered *Nara Newspaper* on the grounds that it had spent all money donated through it for the victims of *Kobe* earthquake for its own purposes. The dismembering has led to unjudged dismissals of individual journalists working for *Nara Newspaper* from all reporters' clubs. Katsura Keiichi, "*Kisha kurabu wo shin no shuzai kyoten to suru tameni*" (In order to make reporters' club to be a real ground for newsgathering", *Shimbun Kenkyû*, June 1998, (563), pp. 43-45.

[215] Committee 21, " [*Medeia to shimin-hyôgikai*] *wo teian suru,shimbun,zasshi,shuppan ni shimin akusesu no shigumi wo*" (Propose to Form a Committee Between the media and the public - An Instrument for the Public in Gaining Access to the Press, Magazines, and Publications), *Sekai*, November 1999, pp. 149-58.

media researchers, and representatives of the public.[216] The Japan's Newspapers Union Alliance, in particular, launched a Declaration compiling a long list of journalist's reporting guidelines, of which some articles seem difficult to put into practice. For example, Article 1(5) suggests the disclosure of off-the-record comments when the reporters consider that the information will benefit the public. Article 2(1) suggests that by-lines should be attached to all articles. Article 3(1) recommends that reporters shall be critical on all subjects, including the subject of Imperial Family.[217] These unrealistic recommendations have also cast doubt over the plausibility and effectiveness of the new Media Council in imposing penalties and improving ethics among journalists.

4.7 Comparative Remarks

Journalists are the principal representatives of the media. Thus, they are expected to act professionally in a political communication system. In other words, they are expected to have good knowledge and understanding of their profession, to work autonomously within an organization, and to deliver good services with high ethical standards. However, the foregoing discussion of the practices of Thai and Japanese journalists suggests that journalistic practices in both countries are still constrained by a number of dilemmas and problems which, in turn, can limit the scope in which the media can resist the state's push to have more control over political information by imposing legal and extralegal measures on the press, or strengthening its rewarding ties with the broadcasting elite. Consequently, it is difficult for the journalists to act professionally and employ the utmost level of their expertise when reporting about the state.

These dilemmas and problems include the system of education, recruitment and training that prevents journalists in both countries from acquiring professional knowledge necessary to arrive at a judgement of public interests. The lack of understanding of the professional concept of 'objectivity and impartiality' among Thai journalists, and the rigid boundary built around the concept by the Japanese media

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[216]   *Nihon Shimbun Rôdô Kumiai Rengô, Shimbun hito no ryôshin sengen (Declaration of Jounalists' Conscience)* (Tokyo: *Shimbun Rôren*, 1997), p. 4.

[217]   *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

undermine journalists' abilities to achieve their presupposed professional goals. The newsmaking process involving gaining access to, interpreting, and disseminating political information in Thailand appears to obstruct the flow of essential political information to the public. The beat system, and the press club system in Japan, confines journalists to seeking political information within limited geographical areas, and dissuades them from actively searching for news. The emphasis on personal rather than policy conflicts, and the arbitrary division between news and comments have also constituted a lack of analysis. In Japan, particularly, the monolithic and hierarchical structure of newsgathering system dominated by factional reporting and the system of reporters' clubs allows journalists little autonomy to undertake their own professional action, and leaves many loopholes for external interference. The role of journalists is, as a result, relegated to that of 'messengers' who passively convey governmental directives to the public.[218] In addition, an anomaly in Japanese culture, through which consensus and conformity is promoted by social sanction, encourages journalists to be conformist and bound by the informal rules and sanctions imposed by the reporters' club and the sources. Wakamiya Yoshibumi, a deputy managing editor at *Asahi Shimbun* comments on the importance of these rules and journalistic practices: "in Japanese society, it is difficult to hold healthy debates...We have to get information from our politicians. If you ask sharp questions, you may end up being isolated, even from other journalists".[219] Similar rules and sanctions are absent in Thailand. Although young Thai reporters feel in awe (*krieng chai*) of their sources, there are no sanctions imposed when they conduct their own investigations into news stories. However, the sources may impose sanction on Thai journalists should they dislike the journalist, or personally feel that their interests are threatened by journalists' investigation. However, the sanctions imposed on Thai journalists are usually on an individual basis, not on a group basis like those in Japan.

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[218]   The term "messenger" was coined by Feldman to call political reporters at *Nagatachô* Beat . See Ofer Feldman, "Nagatachô Beat: Messengers or Minions?", Japan Quarterly, October-December 1996, 43(4), pp. 20-28.

[219]   Cited in Howard French, "Sex and Scoops in Land of a Very Cautious Press, Racy Weeklies Partly Fill the Gap in Japan", International Herald Tribune, February 7, 2000 (on-line edition).

Normative practices of self-restraint on the issue of the monarchy in both countries further limits journalists' autonomy to pursue questions that would perhaps challenge the legitimacy of the existing political systems, where allegiance and identity is still largely organized. Moreover, the recent establishment of sanctioning bodies, such as the Press Council in Thailand and the Media Council in Japan, signals attempts at both the industrial and societal levels to deal with the alarming problems of journalistic corruption and improprieties. As knowledge, organizations, autonomy, service responsibilities, and ethics of these journalists constitute their professional expertise, the deficiencies in these qualities undermine the likelihood that the mass media can have expert relations with the state, and thus reduce the media's ability to resist the state's push for more control over political information. The improvement of these qualities would increase the media's ability to contest with the state, and promote the shift to a more active role for the Thai and the Japanese mass media.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE DOMESTIC PRESS

The press played a crucial role in assisting the constitutional drafting process by getting the public to become involved and debate the pros and the cons, by gaining support from the public, and by criticizing those who were campaigning against radical reform, all of which eventuated in the cabinet's passage of the Constitution.

Boonlert Changyai[1]

As much as seventy per cent of the Japanese press plays an adversarial role to the government. There have been a number of cases wherein major political corruption was exposed. However, this critical information was entirely based on special investigations. Routine newsgathering at kisha kurabu does not allow journalists easy access to such information. Politicians, themselves, block the flow of essential political information to the public. Some of them do not even know what is political information.

Iwamura Tatsurô[2]

As discussed in Chapters Two and Four, the legal and extra-legal measures that both the Japanese and Thai states have imposed on the press, as well as a number of shortcomings incurred by normative journalistic practices, have undermined the press's ability to struggle with the state for control over political information and perform a watchdog role. However, to what extent has the press in these countries successfully struggled with the state to construct and define its own political discourse despite such limitations, and what other political roles has the press performed? This chapter seeks to address these questions by discussing the overall nature of the press in both countries. Emphasis is placed upon press coverage of domestic politics, as well as four case studies of press coverage in both countries.

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[1] Interview with Boonlert Changyai, Executive Editor, *Matichon Daily* on April 24, 1998. Boonlert was also an elected member of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA).

[2] Interview with Iwamura Tatsurô, Deputy Chairman Editorial Board, *Asahi Shimbun* on November 17, 1998.

5.1 The Domestic Press in Thailand and Japan

Before discussing the nature of the domestic press in each country, it is necessary to point out distinctive similarities and differences apart from censorship and journalistic practices that have shaped the structure of the Japanese and the Thai press systems. Firstly, the number and circulation of Japanese newspapers is much larger than that of the Thai press. In 1998, the annual ratio of newspaper circulation per 1,000 people in Japan was 577 copies – the highest per capita rate in the world – whereas newspapers in Thailand had an average circulation of 194 copies per 1,000 people per year.[3] Japan is famous for its superb mass education system, which has produced a literate public. In Japan, the compulsory education system was introduced in 1872, and by 1890s school attendance had already risen above 50 per cent in Tokyo.[4] By contrast, Thailand only enacted the first compulsory primary education law in 1921,[5] and twelve-year education will only become compulsory in the year 2002. Compared to Japan where the literacy rate is almost a hundred per cent, Thailand still has a mass illiterate public. As a result, a written rather than a visual news culture is more likely to be sustained in Japan than in Thailand. Another reason why Thailand had low circulation per capita was due to the fact that circulation did not accurately reflect readership. Thai people read newspapers but they do not buy them. According to an official survey in 1989, as many as 54.1 per cent of the Thai total households did not buy or subscribe to newspapers, but read newspapers provided at governmental or private facilities.[6]

Secondly, the strong nationwide distribution system and the reliance of the Japanese press on subscription revenue rather than advertising income has long encouraged fierce competition in expanding readership rather than competition in content among major newspapers. In contrast, the distribution of Thai newspapers is less organized, as it primarily occurs through wholesale and retail outlets, and newspaper boys at traffic intersections, rather than by subscription. Moreover, Thai

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[3]   *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, The Japanese Press 2000 (Tokyo: NSK, 2000), p. 75.

[4]   James Huffman, Creating a Public: People and the Press in Meiji Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 171.

[5]   David Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History (Bangkok: O.S. Printing House, 1984), pp. 228-229.

[6]   National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Reports of the Newspaper Reading Survey (Bangkok: National Statistical Office, 1989), p. 24.

newspapers have relied heavily on advertising revenue and only became increasingly competitive in the 1990s due to extensive capital input derived from the stock market. This was when most papers started printing four-color advertisements, and taking different political positions in their editorial lines. Newspapers also started printing separate sections on business, sports, and special features, and marketing them as selling points. Yet following the sharp fall in advertising revenue and the plummeting of their stock price precipitated by the economic crisis in 1997, these newspapers had to increase their retail prices by up to fifty per cent.[7] The Thai newspapers' heavy reliance on advertising revenue also made them susceptible to influence from advertisers, especially those in connection with political parties such as *Shinawatra Corporation* and the *Thai Rak Thai* Party.

Thirdly, both the Thai and Japanese press face a decline in advertising revenue and readership. The recent economic downturn in both countries seemed to contribute to this decline.[8] In Japan, there has been a sharp reduction in the number of subscribers among the younger age group, particularly in the 1990s. Results of a market survey in the Tokyo area in 1998, for instance, showed that more than forty per cent of single-person households did not subscribe to newspapers, and sixty per cent of women in their 20s led a life in which newspapers had no part.[9] As a result, the NSK has embarked on a "five minute more" campaign targeting young people to spend more time reading newspapers every day. More importantly, both the Japanese and Thai readers believe that the newspapers are becoming less trustworthy than before. In 1997, the NSK conducted a national survey to gauge reader valuation of seven characters of the press: correctness, socialization, dailiness, fairness, dignity, human rights concern, and trustworthiness. The survey revealed the lowest level of correctness and

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[7] Interview with Suchart Srisuwan, Editor, *Matichon Daily*, on April 29, 1998.

[8] For further discussion on this issue in relation to Thailand see Kavi Chongkitthavorn, "Think Thai/ Economy threatens media freedom", The Nation, April 21, 1998, p. A4; For discussion on Japan see Katsura Keiichi et al., "*Fukyô chokugeki! shimbunkai wo nayamasu nanmon sanseki*" (Economic slump hits! The newspaper industry is facing with piling problems), *Tsukuru*, 1999, (3), pp. 12-25.

[9] Suzuki Takao, "The Course of Newspapers in the Digital Age", The Japanese Press 1998 (Tokyo: Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai, 1998), p. 31.

trustworthiness in eighteen years.[10] In Thailand, various surveys of public opinion have found that the majority of people think that newspapers were less trustworthy than other media, particularly television. As suggested by a Thansettakit Poll in 1993, the majority of Bangkokians believed that television news had increasingly become a more reliable and impartial source of information than newspapers.[11] Yet, despite such public recognition, this chapter will demonstrate that the press in both countries still has substantial influence on reflecting, articulating, and constructing public opinion.

5.1.1 The Thai Press

Thailand has seventy-one national newspapers. Of these, fifty-eight are printed in Thai, six in English, five in Chinese, and two in Japanese, with circulation ranging from 20,000 to 1,000,000 copies. By far the largest newspapers are the Thai language -- *Thai Rath* (1,000,000) and *Daily News* (750,000). The two largest circulation Chinese newspapers including *Sin Sian Yit Pao* (80,000), and *Tong Hua Yit Pao* (80,000), are both larger than either of the two largest circulation English newspapers - *Bangkok Post* (65,000), and *The Nation* (48,000).[12] In 1997, there were approximately 159 non-daily newspapers in seventy-six provinces around the country. However, with the recent economic downturn, approximately ten national dailies and more than forty provincial newspapers closed down.[13] Popular provincial newspapers are *Chiang Mai News* (in Chiang Mai), *Thai Nimitra Raiwan* (in Lopburi), *Seri Nakhorn Rai Wan* (in Nakhorn

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[10]   The NSK has been conducting a survey of between 2,000 and 9,000 newspaper readers every two years since 1979. See Yamazaki Shigeo, "*Shimbun no shinrui-do to seikaku-sei no kankei ni tsuite*" (The relationship between trustworthiness and correctness of the press), *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai Kenkyûjo Nenpô*, 1998, (16), pp. 27-51.

[11]   *Thansettakit* used a sample of 804 Bangkokians. More than sixty per cent of respondents agreed that television was the most reliable source of information, while newspapers came second, and radio ranked third. However, more than sixty per cent of respondents also suggested that all mass media were, in some ways, subjective when reporting news stories. See "*Thansettakit's Poll: Rumwipaak seumolchon - mai Pen klang, hanghern kwam ching*"(Thansettakit's Poll: Critiques of Mass Media -- Subjective and Devoid of the Facts), *Thansettakit Kanmuang*, June 3-5, 1993, pp. 62-65.

[12]   Far East Advertising, Media Guidebook Thailand '97-98 (Bangkok: Far East Advertising, 1997), pp. 25-6.

[13]   "*Thueng wan lom salai 'Sondhi' luek eek chabab suethurakit rerm lasam*" (Disastrous days for newspapers, Sondhi folded one of his paper, Business papers started to fall), *Matichon Sudsapda*, July 1, 1997, pp. 68-69; Thawatchai Jaranai, "*Samruat-rai phuthorn pid tua laew kwa 40 chabab ti lhuea radkhemkhad sudkheed*" (Examine provincial press: More than 40 papers closed down, The rest tightens their belts tightly), *Matichon Sudsapda*, February 17, 1998, p. 68.

Sawan), and *Prae Khao* (in Prae). Most of the provincial newspapers are published bi-monthly to coincide with the announcement of the state lottery.[14] Moreover, a content analysis of provincial newspapers from five regions in Thailand suggests the newspapers' emphasis is on the printing of lottery results, local advertisements, and gossip, rather than locally or regionally important news.[15] These local papers have circulation of only few thousand copies. They also have little influence on local politics, as both the election of local MPs and the appointment of local council administrators were highly centralized until recently. As such, most news published in the local papers is crime news, whereas political news is often a shorter version of what is published in the national dailies, and news about local development tends to follow government press releases.[16]

On the other hand, the content in the national press is Bangkok-oriented. The priority given to Bangkok's issues in the Thai press perhaps stems from commercial reasons. Bangkok is where the majority of the influential urban readers live, and where the main interests of newspaper owners, reporters and columnists lie. As such, this Bangkok focus of the national press has led the press to serve the middle class, the group which has recently become politically and economically influential and can afford to consume more information. Yet this focus overlooks the interests of the peasants who live in the rural areas. Provincial news is often limited to stories about crime and natural disaster, except during local or national elections, when the coverage of influential politicians in the provincial areas is usually highlighted. The lower literacy rate in the upcountry area is also an important factor in the national papers' focus on Bangkok readers. The Thai national press is thus considered an urban medium, as is well summed up in Somkuan Kaviya's words:

> The main purpose of the press is to produce a profit for
> the owners. Development subjects are taken up only if
> they are profitable. The main target group of the press
> is people who are literate, most of whom live in urban
> areas. The content of the press, therefore, reflects this

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14   Only Chiang Mai and Nakhon Ratchasima have daily newspapers.

15   Pisith Chawalathawach, *Patiroop seumolchon thongthin* (Community Media Reform) (Bangkok: Double Nine Publishing, 1999).

16   Surat Numnonda, "Thai Provincial Newspapers", Media Asia, 1987, 14(2), pp. 73-75.

audience.[17]

In 1984, Boonlert Suphadilok classified Thai national newspapers into two types according to their content – 'quantity newspapers' and 'quality newspapers'.[18] This typology is still a useful means to categorize Thai papers today. 'Quantity newspapers' are the tabloids, which are mass-oriented and tend to concentrate on crime and entertainment and use slanderous headlines and unabashedly sensational stories; whereas 'quality newspapers' refer to those newspapers which pay more attention to serious issues such as politics and economics, and have specific groups of readers. *Thai Rath* and *Daily News*, both of which have the highest circulation, are categorized as 'quantity newspapers'. The format and regular features in *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* are similar. They are printed in broadsheet, with a colored front page and many photographs. They run about six to seven issues a day, but only the morning and evening issues are sold in Bangkok and metropolitan areas. In these papers, most space is dedicated to news on sports, entertainment, the serializing of popular TV series, and advertisements. They compete for circulation by featuring brash headlines, sensational stories, plenty of gossip and tidbit columns, and half-nude photos of stars or beauty pageant contests on the front page. Political columns often appear inside, yet they are politically influential as they have large readerships. These columns are written in a provocative language by senior and veteran columnists using catchy pseudonyms, such as *Sai loe pha* (lightening rod), and *Chalham Khiew* (green shark).

The 'quality newspapers' include *Naew Na*, *Matichon*, *Thai Post*, and business-oriented papers such as *Phujadkan Daily*, as well as the English language papers -- *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*. *Phujadkan*, in particular, is famous for combining business news with political commentary. Tulsathit Thapthim, the Deputy Editor of *The Nation*, suggested that the English language newspapers and the business-oriented newspapers

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[17] Somkhuan Kaviya, "Communication Policy-Making and Implement for Rural Development in Thailand: Problems and Prospectives", Paper presented at a seminar on The Role of Mass Communication on Rural Development in the Next Decade at Thammasat University on June 12-13, 1985, p. 167.

[18] Boonlert Suphadilok, *Sitthi Kansuesan nai Prathet Thai (The Right to Communicate in Thailand)* (Bangkok: Sathaban Thaikhadisuksa, Thammasat University, 1984), p. 83.

in Thailand such as *Phujadkan* are very politically influential. He also claimed that when the Thai newspapers make many page one comments, the effects are minimal. However, when the English papers or Thai papers, like *Phujadkan*, and *Matichon*, which have high levels of influence on urban readers, make page one comments, they have a great impact.[19] Another distinctive aspect of these 'quality' papers is that they regularly feature special columns written by academics and public intellectuals on current political or economic issues. The subject and content of these columns is sometimes highly controversial, and they promote debate and engender a public sphere. The results of a 1999 survey indicated that as many as 228 Thai public intellectuals regularly contributed to newspaper and weekly magazine columns.[20] For Thai intellectuals, print media has recently become an accessible platform for initiating and participating in political and social debates, and for communicating ideas to the public. For journalists and editors, academics and intellectuals are considered better-qualified to promote political and social ideas, or criticize governmental policies, and a reliable source of supply for articles.[21] Both *Phujadkan* and *Matichon* are popular for having a pool of famous lecturers and public intellectuals to contribute to their columns each day of the week.

English-language newspapers in Thailand are important both domestically and regionally. At the domestic level, they are widely read by policy-makers, and thus influential in shaping domestic politics. At the regional level, they have become a source of regional information for foreign press agencies, as well as for neighboring countries whose press and other media technology are underdeveloped or strictly controlled by their governments. However, for Thai local readers, the English-language papers are generally not the only paper that they read. Rather, they serve as 'additional papers' that provide only a 'summary of events' and 'foreign perspectives'.[22] Despite their high circulation, Chinese newspapers are not politically important in a domestic sense

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[19] Tulsathit Thapthim, "New Agencies in Transition", Paper Presented at the conference on Intersection with Asia at University of Technology of Sydeny, November 11-12, 1996.

[20] Suchart Sriyanara, "Public Intellectuals and Useful Knowledge", Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on Thai Studies, Amsterdam, July 4-8, 1999.

[21] Interview with Suchart Srisuwan, Editor, *Matichon Daily* on April 29, 1998.

[22] Interview with Kavi Chongkitthavorn, Executive Editor, The Nation, on April 28, 1998.

because of their neutral and 'low key' coverage of local political issues. Rather, they focus on community and local business news, business linkages with the mainland China, and news translated from Chinese newspapers published in Taiwan and Singapore.[23] This is perhaps due to the fact that several critical Chinese newspapers in the 1950s, especially those with Pro-Peking orientations, such as *Chuan Min Pao*, and *Nan Chen Pao*, were targeted by the Anti-Communist Law. Indeed, the Phibul regime was suspicious of the loyalty of the Chinese, and kept the Chinese community under close watch. The seriousness of punishments according to the Criminal Code created great fear among the Chinese publishers and editors, and led to a gradual change to a rather conservative style of reporting in the Chinese press.[24]

Due to the economic boom in the early 1990s, which increased competitiveness in the newspaper industry, this demarcation between the so-called 'quality' and 'quantity' newspapers began to blur. To increase both circulation and advertising revenue, some 'quality' newspapers have transformed themselves bodily and textually by reducing their editorial comments and adding more sensational stories, entertainment columns and advertising space. For example, when *Siam Rath* was owned by a critical writer and former Prime Minister Kukrit Pramot, it was categorized as a 'quality newspaper'. After the newspaper ownership changed to a recently elected senator and well-known gambling den owner, Chatchawan Khongudom, it started printing half-nude photos of famous stars on the front page and serializing stories of popular TV soap operas. Also *Matichon* had to enlarge its target group owing to increased competition - from urban, well-educated readers to a wider group of readers - and add sensational and soft news stories to attract a larger readership. The *Bangkok Post* also simplified its English language and made its news columns more concise than previously in order to widen its readership. Moreover, ample evidence of increased competitiveness in the newspaper industry was the 1994 launch of a daily newspaper called *Khao Sod* (Fresh

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[23] Bua Khao, *"Thurakit nungsuphim cheen nai muang thai"* (Chinese newspaper business in Thailand), *Wan nak khao 5 minakhom 2542 (The Reporters' Day 5 March 1999)* (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1999), pp. 74-76.

[24] Paul Blackburn, "Communications and National Development in Thailand, Burma, and Malaysia: A Comparative Systemic Analysis", Ph.D. Thesis, The American University, 1971, pp. 93-4.

News), which captured the middle-ground between 'quantity' and 'quality' newspapers. Using an Alsatian as its logo, the newspaper has become known as a 'light' and an 'investigative' front-runner.[25] The paper has pioneered investigations of the environmental impact of the construction of the Burma-Thailand gas pipeline in 1997. However, the paper also dedicates considerable space to running TV soap series and entertainment news similar to *Thai Rath* and *Daily News*.

5.1.2 The Japanese Press

There are 122 daily newspapers in Japan, five of which are national. The rest include bloc newspapers (regional newspapers) and local newspapers. Forty-eight newspapers issue morning and evening editions as sets. Fifty-eight newspapers only issue morning editions, and only sixteen newspapers have evening editions.[26] The 'Big Five' national papers are *Yomiuri* (14,548,387), *Asahi* (12,745,666), *Mainichi* (5,878,701), *Nihon Keizai* (4,657,856), and *Sankei* (2,901,884). Together they account for more than 50 per cent of Japan's total newspaper circulation. Unlike Thailand, where the number of local newspapers is small and less significant than the national press, Japan has widely-circulated regional or bloc newspapers such as *Hokkaidô Shimbun* (1,966,305) in Hokkaido, *Chûnichi Shimbun* (3,237,727) in central Japan, and *Nishi Nippon Shimbun* (1,040,694) on the island of Kyushu, as well as important prefectural and local papers. Comparatively speaking, Japanese local newspapers, such as Hokkaido's *Dôshin* and the *Okinawa Times*, are far more influential in local politics than the Thai local papers. They frequently expose scandals involving local politicians and bureaucrats and promote citizens' movements on issues concerning local interests.[27]

Another type of newspaper that is very influential in domestic politics is the party paper, such as the Japan's Communist Party's *Akahata*. The paper is neither a member of the *NSK*, nor Japan's Press Club. As a result, it is sharp and outspoken, and

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[25]   "The Watchdog Bites: Thailand's Press Increasingly Shows its Teeth, Helped by Greater Official Transparency", Far Eastern Economic Review, December 24, 1998, pp. 25-6.

[26]   Dentsu, "Japan 1998 Advertising and Marketing Yearbook", (Tokyo: Dentsu, 1998), p. 136.

[27]   See, for example, Murakawa Wataru, "*Chiiki seiji to chihôshi no yakuwari*" (The Roles of Local Newspapers in Local Politics), *Masu Komyunikeeshon Kenkyû*, 1996, (49), pp. 14-24.

often carries information that is not released by the press clubs. It publishes scoops on controversial topics, such as issues concerning the American military bases in Okinawa, and the raising of the consumption tax and its consequences. As observed by Tsukamoto Mitsuo, a mass communication professor at Chuo University: "it is a hard fact that when the country is in turbulence, *Akahata* has become the most reliable paper from which people can know the truth".[28] As the paper heavily depends on news agencies and unofficial yet reliable sources for information, it is used by the major national press as an important alternative source for political scoops. The paper is distributed nationwide, and its daily circulation reached almost 2 million copies in 1998.[29] The number of English newspapers in Japan and their circulation are greater than their Thai equivalents: *Japan Times* (67,176); *Daily Yomiuri* (52,046); *Mainichi Daily News* (48,570); and *Asahi Evening News* (38,800). Nonetheless, compared to the English press in Thailand, the English press in Japan is seen to only provide "interpretative angles" to Japanese news for reading by foreign expatriates, and not by the local elite or the general public.

Japanese newspapers rely primarily on subscription sales. Readers subscribe to both morning and evening editions as a set. As of October 1997, 93.1 per cent of newspapers were home-delivered, 6.3 per cent were sold on stands, and 0.5 per cent were sold by other ways.[30] The industrial revenue breakdown shows that 50.8 per cent of newspaper revenue derives from subscription fees, 35.4 from advertising fees, and 12.3 per cent from other sources.[31] Due to an industrial agreement on a fixed price system and a heavy reliance on subscription fees, there has been excessive competition (*katô kyôsô*) among wholesalers of major newspapers to gain subscribers. In addition, there is a high level of circulation of free papers that are distributed in most local areas

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[28] Cited in Miura Kazuo, "*Akahata*: A Paper for the People", <u>Dateline Tokyo</u>, November 1995, (30), p. 4.

[29] Interview Mr. Kawamura Shigemitsu, Editor, *Akahata* on October 21, 1998.

[30] *Nihon Simbun Kyôkai*, <u>The Japanese Press 1998</u> (Tokyo: NSK, 1998).

[31] *Nihon Simbun Kyôkai*,*Nihon Shimbun Nenkan 1998, 1999 Nenhan* (The 1998/ 1999 Annual Report of Japanese Newspapers) (Tokyo: NSK, 1998), p. 439.

around the country. According to a 1999 survey, there were as many as 688 editions of free newspapers and their combined circulation reached nearly 79 million copies.[32]

As mentioned in Chapter Four, Japanese newspaper companies are not generally listed on the stock exchange. Therefore, newspaper ownership is highly concentrated in private hands and amongst employees of the company. The 'Big Five' are held by a tightly knit group of family members of the papers' founders and top management. *Asahi Shimbun*, for instance, is owned by Murayama Michiko and Ueno Junichi, descendants of Murayama Ryôhei and Ueno Riichi, who founded *Asahi* in 1879. *Sankei Shimbun* is controlled by the *Shikanai* family, which founded the Fuji-Sankei media group. *Yomiuri Shimbun*'s primary owner is Shoriki Torô, whose father, Shoriki Matsutaro, acquired the newspaper in 1924.[33] *Mainichi Shimbun* is still owned by the Motoyama family, after Motoyama Hikoichi had rescued the dying paper and turned it around within a short period. In Japan, there has not been a single newspaper company which has sold its shares publicly. There are as many as thirteen newspaper companies whose employees hold 100 per cent of the issued shares, and fifteen companies whose employees hold more than fifty per cent of the issued shares. There is no foreign ownership of any Japanese newspaper. As such, most newspaper companies have heavily borrowed from financial institutions to raise capital.[34] Not surprisingly, these financial ties between the banks and the newspapers are seen as factors influencing the newspapers to be reluctant to critically report the recent bank collapses as a result of Japan's financial difficulties.

The 'Big Five' national newspapers have no ownership links amongst themselves. Although some have bought small local papers, vertical expansion through which big papers acquire small papers to form media groups, as is the case in Australia, is not common. However, horizontal expansion, where big papers acquire other media, is prevalent in Japan, despite the existence of regulations against cross-media

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[32]   *Nihon Simbun Kyôkai*, The Japanese Press 2000 (Tokyo: NSK, 2000), p. 77.
[33]   Jon Vanden Heuvel and Everette E. Dennis, The Unfolding Lotus: East Asia's Changing Media (New York: Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, 1993), p. 87.
[34]   *Ibid.*

ownership. These media groups have also ventured into entertainment and sport businesses, such as travel agencies, amusement parks, symphony orchestras, and baseball teams. For example, *Yomiuri* finances the entire baseball team, the *Yomiuri Giants*. *Yomiuri* and its NTV network enthusiastically promote the team during the baseball season.

In general, Japanese newspapers can be divided into two types: quality newspapers, and sports newspapers. The quality newspapers include the Big Five, the Bloc, and the local newspapers, most of which publish both morning and evening editions, except on Sunday when only morning editions are published. On the other hand, sports newspapers are tabloids, sold mostly as evening papers for urban-working men to read on their way home. Stories published in the sports newspapers generally include sports news and related gossip, the entertainment industry and related rumors, violence, sex, tragic accidents, and crime involving gangsters. With regards to political coverage, the front pages of these papers often cover the abuse of power by the LDP, with flashy headlines outlining heated arguments between members of the LDP and those of the Opposition in parliamentary sessions. The back page often features controversial stories in popular sports, such as baseball and sumo wrestling.

With the exception of the *Nikkei*, which specializes in economic news, the four remaining papers -- *Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi*, and *Sankei* -- carry almost equal amounts of political, economic, cultural, science, and sports stories. The front pages of these four papers are quite similar in appearance. The stories featured in these papers are often dominated by domestic political or financial news, and they are full of facts, while lacking comment and opinion. As discussed in Chapter Four, there are few by-lines related to these topics. Moreover, the very high circulation rate of these quality papers does not reflect a diversity of the news content. Rather, uniformity in news content is usually detectable between these papers. The system of *kisha kurabu* plays an important part in building the standardization of news reporting. The monopoly of media ownership dominated by the 'Big Five' is also an obvious indication of the

monopolization and conformity of news media, such as newspapers and television, particularly those from the same group.[35] Although differences in the daily content of political news among these quality papers are subtle, slight variations in the language and the placement of political articles on the front page and on the political page can be detected. Each of these quality papers also claims to take a different stance in their editorial lines. Broadly speaking, this ideological difference is characterized by the bipolarity of the two main groups in the Japanese political system: the conservative (*hoshu*), and the progressive (*kakushin*). For instance, *Asahi* has long been considered a progressive newspaper. During the campaign against the Security Treaty in the 1960s, *Asahi* even claimed to espouse pro-left editorial lines. Although its pro-left inclination is less pronounced today, its progressive stance still largely affects its editorial content. *Yomiuri*, the largest paper, once secured the middle-ground. However, since it formed a close connection with the ruling LDP in the late 1970s, especially through a personal relationship between former Prime Minister Nakasone and a former President of *Yomiuri* who were university classmates, *Yomiuri* has been seen as a conservative paper.[36] Moreover, certain privileges that *Yomiuri* has received from the government must also have strengthened its pro-LDP stance. For instance, the paper was offered the opportunity to buy land in Tokyo at a price well below market value. *Sankei* has also built a close relationship with the state agencies. It was reported that staffs from the Self-Defence Force Agency were sent to *Sankei* to be trained as reporters on an annual basis.[37] Undoubtedly, the paper has adopted a conservative, pro-LDP stance, similar to that of *Yomiuri*. Noticeably, *Sankei* has developed a strong nationalist position over the year, and this clearly manifested in its coverage of the controversial textbook issue in early 2001.[38] *Mainichi*, on the other hand, sporadically shifts between conservative and

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[35]   Komatsubara, 1971, p. 87.

[36]   Interview with Mr. Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, *Nihon Shimbun Kyôkai*, October 23, 1998.

[37]   "*Jiekan, shimbunsha de kisha jisshû*" (Defence Force bureaucrats practised as reporters at a newspaper company), <u>Asahi Shimbun</u>, September 15, 1993, p. 29.

[38]   In early 2001, Japan's textbook controversy has re-emerged with the Japanese government authorization of publication of a new neonationalist junior high school history textboook. This gave rise to vigorous protest by Japanese scholars, citizens, and sharpened the division in the editorial lines between the liberal papers, such as *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, and the pro-nationalist paper like *Sankei*.

progressive, as does the *Nikkei*, the daily financial paper, which was modelled after the *Wall Street Journal*.

5.2 Press Coverage of Domestic Politics

There are distinct similarities and differences in the coverage of domestic politics between Thai and Japanese newspapers. Firstly, the Thai press generally uses catchy headlines on the front page, followed by extensive details under numerous subheadings in the following pages. These details, which try to link political events, can run up to two or three pages. Additional information on the current political atmosphere and speculations can also be read between the lines in the gossip column on the social page. The Japanese press, on the other hand, tends to keep political news to the front and political pages, which are allocated according to the desk system and occupy no more than two pages. News stories usually do not continue on to a separate page. A political tidbit column usually appears in a small section at the bottom of the political page. In comparison to Thai news, Japanese news is much more concise, and places more emphasis on the visual aspects of page layout to allow readers to rapidly absorb large amount of information simply by scanning headlines that are often written in short but very expressive Chinese characters. Therefore, news stories usually consist of multiple headlines, flow charts, and graphics. Moreover, whilst Thai newspapers have a deductive macrostructure (the main points precede the details) like most Western newspapers, the Japanese seem to have an inductive macrostructure (the main points follow the details).

Secondly, editorial content in the Thai press does not necessary follow the front-page political news, and different opinions on the same story are sometimes presented. According to interviews with editors of various Thai newspapers conducted by Piangpen Toomanon, the lack of agreement between the front-page news and editorials is largely due to the freedom given to the editorial team to write whatever they see fit.[39] Moreover, the sharp division of news and comment in Thai news organizations

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[39]   Piangpen Toomanon, "Editorials in Thai Daily Newspapers: Content and Writing Process", Unpublished Master of Arts in Communication Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1993, p.

also allows the editors to voice their own views. In addition to the editorial column, there are several columns in Thai newspapers that are dedicated to politics. As mentioned earlier, experienced political columnists or university lecturers and public intellectuals regularly contribute to these columns. Similar practices are also found in the Japanese newspapers. However, political columns in the Japanese papers and their headlines are more uniform, yet they are often not by-lined. Although the Japanese press often makes claims about the neutrality and objectivity of its political coverage, an earlier study on the Japanese press found that editorials attributed much more importance to news from the LDP and its coalition than to information from the Opposition.[40] This is because of the reliance on information from *kisha kurabu* and the limited number of official sources. As the LDP was in the government for a long period of time, and has continued to lead a coalition since 1994, most of these official sources are LDP members, who are in charge of important government ministries and agencies.

Thirdly, political news in both the Thai and Japanese press is mostly about political conflicts and alliances between groups and factions, from which the press attempts to set a political agenda. Reports of policy are, on the other hand, usually dictated by the parliamentary progress of important legislation. Therefore, the content of political news features lengthy quotations of what politicians said, with references to whom on the issue. However, a summary of analysis is usually available at the end of political news stories in the Japanese press. The lack of analysis in Thai press often results in stories abruptly finishing with quotations. As the political stories reported in the Thai and Japanese press are usually written by a team of reporters, they do not carry by-lines.

Fourthly, there is a similarity in the way in which the international media have an influence on the reporting of domestic political stories in both countries.[41] In the

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[40]   Ofer Feldman, "Political Parties, Politics and the Japanese Media", Keio Communication Review, 1991, (13), p. 21.

[41]   This comparison was first made by Duncan McCargo, "The International Media and the Domestic Coverage of the Thai Press", Modern Asian Studies, 1999, 33(3), p. 553.

past, several cases of domestic political corruption were exposed by the international media before being reported in the local press. The credibility of these international media has also ensured an enormous political impact. Duncan McCargo, for instance, examined domestic coverage of alleged corruption in the buying of Swedish submarines by Prime Minister Banharn and his party. The allegation, which had been made by a Swedish newspaper, was picked up by several Thai national papers that covered the allegation extensively. McCargo concluded that the Thai press is likely to use foreign sources to campaign against the abuses of power locally.[42] A similar case in Japan occurred in press reports of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei's involvement in the Lockheed scandal. The story was first reported by a local magazine, *Bungei Shunjû*, but was ignored by the mainstream Japanese newspapers. These big newspapers only picked up the story after it had been reported in the *Washington Post*. Systematic collusion between journalists and their powerful sources, and potential sanctions from *kisha kurabu*, were cited as the main reason why the story went unreported domestically.[43] A similar situation is also evident in the reporting on the Japanese Imperial Family. Rules and sanctions on reporting about the Imperial Family strictly imposed by the Imperial Household Agency seem to have encouraged frustrated local reporters to tip off banned information to their foreign counterparts.

Finally, the Japanese press seems to rely more on public opinion polls to represent public judgments on political issues than does the Thai press. This is largely due to the fact that opinion polls were conducted in Japan since the early period. In 1853, more than 250 questionaires were sent to feudal landlords by the central Tokugawa government asking their opinion on how to respond to the official letter from the President of the United States, which demanded that Japan open up the country.[44] However, the first nationwide public opinion poll was not undertaken until 1940, when

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[42]   *Ibid.*, p. 577.
[43]   Maggie Farley, "Japan's Press and the Politics of Scandal", in S. Pharr, and E.S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 141.
[44]   Itô Yôichi, "What Causes the Similarities and Differences Among the Social Sciences in Different Cultures: Focusing on Japan and the West", Asian Journal of Communication, 2000, 10(2), p. 110.

Mainichi questioned the public on middle school entrance examinations.[45] In the 1980s, approximately 150 polls were conducted annually by newspaper organizations. Each of the major newspaper organizations -- particularly *Yomiuri, Asahi,* and *Mainichi* -- carry out nationwide opinion polls several times a year at regular intervals, but special emphasis is placed on pre-election polls. Their polls are planned by the public opinion poll section of the main editorial office, and then conducted by the news bureaus throughout the country. This is similar to the practices in the U.S. where major newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* use their own professional research staff to conduct public opinion polls.[46]

Public opinion polls are popular in Japan because, as suggested by Nishihara, the Japanese people are more concerned about the collective thoughts of their reference groups than expressing their own ideas. The publication of the polls thus helps people to place themselves within the distribution of opinions, or among the people who have no opinion.[47] However, for the Japanese press, the involvement of editors and reporters in the planning and usage of such polls, the process through which they can elicit opinions suggests that the Japanese press directly functions as a mediator of the public's will in political and economic decision-making. As Negrine argues, "it is perhaps more usual to rely on public opinion polls as a summary of the public's verdict on events, and where such polls exist there is often little argument about 'what the public thinks' ".[48]

The polling tradition in Thailand lags well behind that of Japan. The first nationwide public poll on the subject of politics was conducted in 1983 by a group of liberal academics on the amendment of the Constitution proposed by General Arthit Kamlangek, the then Army Chief, regarding the power of the Upper House and the

45   Nishihara Shigeki, "Political Opinion Polling in Japan", in R. M. Worcester (ed.), <u>Political Opionion Polling: An International Review</u> (London: The Macmillan Press, 1983), p. 152.

46   Leo Bogart, <u>Polls and the Awareness of Public Opinion</u>, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), p. xvi.

47   Nishihara, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

48   Ralph Negrine, <u>The Communication of Politics</u> (London: Sage, 1996), p. 107.

ability of military and bureaucrats to concurrently hold a cabinet position.[49] In the 1990s, public opinion polling in Thailand was conducted more extensively than before by a number of tertiary and research institutions, such as Suan Dusit Poll, Bangkok University Poll, ABAC Poll, Ramkhamhaeng University Poll, and Thai Farmers Bank Research Center Poll. Each undertook about 100 polls a year on a wide range of social, economic, educational, and political issues. Pre-election polls were conducted as often as once a week.[50] However, polls conducted by educational and research institutions have been criticized for having unreliable sampling sizes, as most surveys only took place within Bangkok and surrounding areas. According to these pollsters, the lack of telephone access in the provincial areas proved to be a major obstacle.[51] Moreover, most surveyors are not professional statisticians, but university students hired to conduct interviews. Only a small number of Thai daily newspapers including *Matichon* and *Daily News* conduct or finance opinion polls. Others have cited the lack of expertise and financial limitations as main reasons for not directly engaging in opinion polls.[52] Thai business papers, on the other hand, such as *Prachachart Thurakit, Thansetthakit,* and *Phujadkan,* regularly carry out opinion polls. Poll reports are considered newsworthy by Thai editors and journalists and are thus published whenever available. However, the way in which the Thai press frames these poll results to elicit conclusions in line with its own political inclinations has drawn severe criticism, including claims that most newspapers are "data rich but analysis poor" and technical details of the polling are usually omitted.[53] The press coverage of pre-election polls, in particular, is mainly limited to "who's ahead and who's behind" reporting. The close relationship between pollsters and particular politicians is also another source of criticism of partiality of these opinion polls. One critic has labeled such operations as "opinion

49   Prudhisan Jumbala, <u>Nation-building and Democratization in Thailand: A Political History</u> (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1992), p. 100.

50   Voranai Vanijaka, "Pulse-taking is a growing business", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, October 31, 2000 (on-line edition).

51   "Polls intended only to be a fair guide", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, October 31, 2000 (on-line edition); Kunsiri Olarikkachat, "Profile/Sukhum Chaleysub", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, July 6, 1998 (on-line edition).

52   Interview with Manich Sooksomchitre, Senior Editor, *Thai Rath* on April 20, 1998.

53   See, for example, Pira Chirasophone, "*Rai ngan khao poll: cheua thue dai khae nai?*" (Poll reports: Can we believe them?), <u>Wan Nak Khao 5 Minakhom 2538 (Reporters' Day 5 March 1995)</u> (Bangkok: The Reporters' Association of Thailand, 1995), pp. 67-70.

polls by and for the middle class".[54] Nevertheless, the prevalence of poll reporting in both Thai and Japanese newspapers does not necessarily imply that these newspapers disregard other forms of public opinion reporting. Newspapers in both countries also carry letter-to-the-editor sections, which are often important spaces for fruitful political debate.

5.3 The Agenda-Setting Role of the Press

It cannot be denied that the most important role of the press in a democratic society is that of a watchdog which keeps the state in its sights and exposes its wrongdoings. However, the Thai and Japanese newspapers are able to perform this role less frequently than the British newspapers, which, "though biased in their presentation of the news and current affairs, are allowed to print most of what they wish to say without fear of reprisal or falling foul of the law".[55] As mentioned in Chapters Two and Four, the legal and extralegal controls, as well as certain normative journalistic practices, have influenced the Thai and Japanese press to refrain from printing criticisms or controversial stories, thus limited their opportunities to perform the watchdog function. Another role of the press that is more prevalent in the Thai and Japanese cases is an agenda-setting role, that is, influencing the way in which readers think about politics. The news-gathering system and the close linkage between journalists and politicians in both countries allow journalists to receive a wide range of daily political information, sometimes at a range and depth unparalleled by their counterparts in other countries. Consequently, the Thai and Japanese press is generally in the position that can provide their readers with information and education about political affairs and encourage public involvement and participation in political issues.

By and large, the attention and amount of time the press gives to an issue is a crucial factor determining the agenda-setting role of the press. The American mass

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54   Mike Hayes, "Constructing the Public: The Public Voice and the Public Body in the Thai Media". Paper presented at the Conference on Research on Thailand in the 1990s, The Australian National University, August 18-19, 2000,.

55   Duncan Watts, Political Communication Today (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 197.

communication model has defined agenda setting as a 'cumulative process', or, as the amount of attention to a story given by the press increases over time, more agenda-setting effects are produced.[56] One important effect is that, over time, a press agenda will turn into a 'public agenda', and into a 'policy agenda', because the dynamics of the agenda-setting process do not involve only the 'thinking of audiences', but also the actions and thinking of those who are responsible for the agendas, including political actors, interest groups, social activists, as well as journalists.[57]

The attention from both the Thai and Japanese press to political reform was substantial. As the press coverage lasted longer than a year in both cases, they provide appropriate data for a comparative study of the press' role as an agenda-setter. In the Thai case, press coverage of political reform from November 1996 to October 1997 in two newspapers, *Thai Rath*, and *Matichon*, will be discussed. As for the Japanese case, coverage of Japan's political reform in selected editions of *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* from April 1993 to March 1994 will be examined. A stratified sampling technique was employed to select the sample in both case studies. In doing so, one-week of newspapers of every month were selected. The method to select the appropriate weeks used a procedure known as constructing a "composite week".[58] This involved selecting seven daily issues (Sunday to Saturday) published on the first week of the selected month as the first selected seven issues, and the second selected seven issues were those published on the second week of the following month. This was continued through one-year period (see Appendix 8).

Overall, the results were derived from the analyses of a total of 168 issues of Thai newspapers and 168 issues of Japanese newspapers. In collecting the results of analysis, coding sheets were prepared according to three sets of questions on the pattern of press coverage on political reform (see Appendix 9). Firstly, how much and how did

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[56]   Alex S. Edelstein, Itô Yôichi, and Han M. Kepplinger, <u>Communication & Culture: A Comparative Approach</u> (New York: Longman, 1989), p. 224.

[57]   *Ibid.*, p. 228.

[58]   Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, <u>Mass Media Research: An Introduction</u>, 3rd ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1991), p. 163.

the press cover the political reform? Were there specific issues which the press emphasized? Who were major sources for stories? And how were stories presented in general -- as news stories, or commentaries? Secondly, did the press generally initiate interest in the issue, or select to discuss certain related issues, and set an agenda? Or, did it act as a passive agent by mostly reporting debates and arguments among politicians and related parties on the reform? Lastly, was the content of the coverage for or against reform in general? What sub-issue seemed to dominate press coverage on political reform -- was it the direction of the reform, the timing of the reform, or obstacles to the reform?

5.3.1 Thai Press Coverage of Political Reform: An Agenda-Setter for the Middle-Class

A movement towards political reform in Thailand emerged after the watershed of events of May 1992, when a group of protesters was murdered and a military-backed government was overthrown. A group of NGOs and activists, and another group of technocrats and political scientists who led a quasi-think tank called the Institute of Public Policy Studies (IPPS), came up with proposals for constitutional reform as a way to restructure the whole political system.[59] The core thesis of these proposals was that there should be a change to the existing constitution because it locked the country into a vicious cycle of money politics and corrupt politicians. This situation had frequently opened the way for the undemocratic process of government change by means of a military *coup d'ètat*. A constitutional change was thus recommended to prevent the recurrence of military rule. However, most of the previous constitutions were written by military juntas, which took over governments without popular support. These constitutions contained a number of loopholes, which maintained privilege for the juntas and special interests backing them, and allowed those interests to act with impunity.

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[59]   Michael Kelly Connors, "Political reform and the State in Thailand", Journal of Contemporary Asia, 1999, 29(2), p. 207.

An earlier study that looked at the role of the press in advocating political reform and mobilizing movements in support for constitutional change during 1994-1996 suggested that Thai quality newspapers had an indispensable role in advocating reform.[60] This study argued that a group of IPPS political scientists and public intellectuals used newspaper columns, primarily in *Phujadkan*, to advocate their reform agenda. It was concluded that the debates on political reform created a wholesale shift in the emphasis of national newspapers, from focusing on personal conflicts in local politics to discussing a wide range of debates on political issues that should undergo reform.[61]

During 1994-1996 most quality newspapers indeed devoted much of the space to debates by university scholars and public intellectuals on political reform. However, attention from the Thai quantity press, which has a much larger national circulation, to the concept of political reform was actually prompted by the hunger strike for constitutional change by a popular political activist, Chalard Vorachat, in April-May 1994. This hunger strike drew vast publicity and precipitated the official formation of the Democracy Development Committee (DDC) under the leadership of Dr. Prawase Wasi, a pivotal figure in the local discourse of public morality and wisdom. This committee considered proposals for reform.[62] The deliberations of the DDC report submitted to Parliament in 1995 were covered extensively in the national press, and the contents were considered favorably. According to Connors, the publicity of the DDC report brought together a political reform movement consisting of "an unlikely alliance between reforming state bureaucrats and civil servants, public intellectuals, the press, progressive politicians and the developmental NGOs and democracy activists".[63] After that, the term "political reform" (*kan patiroop kan-muang*) became so highly popularized that it was employed as an election promise by Chat Thai party.

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60   Duncan McCargo, "Policy Advocacy and the Media in Thailand", <u>Policy Advocacy and the Media in Thailand</u> (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1997), pp. 24-40.
61   *Ibid.*, p. 39.
62   Connors, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
63   *Ibid.*, p. 211.

Figure 1: Size of Articles on Political Reform in Matichon (n=224)
and Thai Rath (n=136) from November 1996 to October 1997

	Very brief < 1/8 page	Brief 1/8 - 1/4 page	Medium 1/4 - 1/2 page	Long 1/2 - 1 page	Very long > 1 page
■ Matichon	7%	31%	33%	27%	2%
☐ Thai Rath	16%	59%	16%	7%	1%
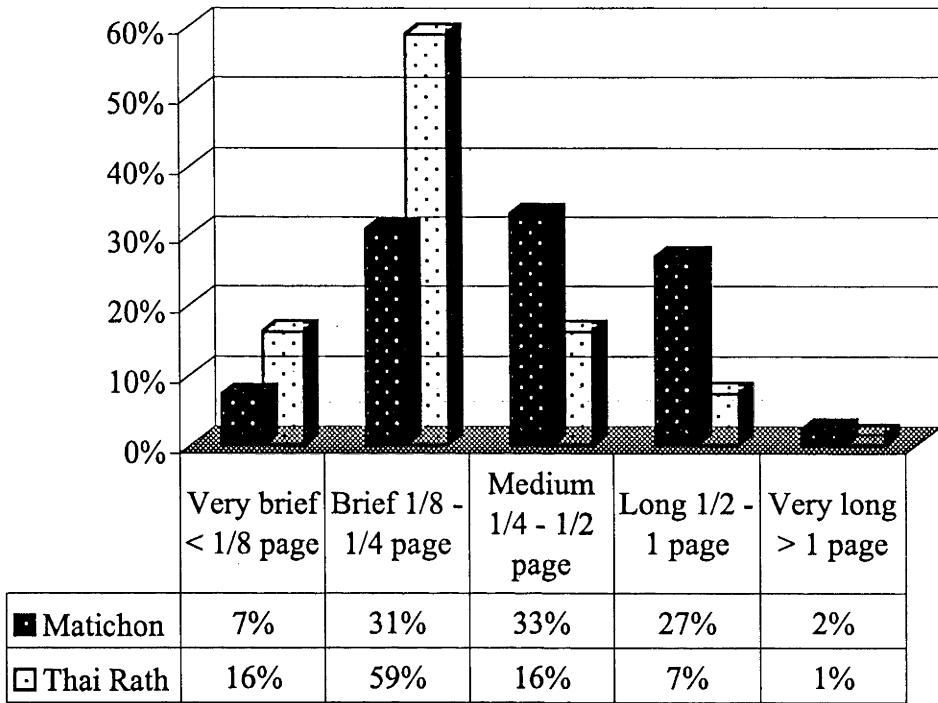
Figure 2: Topics of Headlines of Articles on Political Reform from November
1996 to October 1997

	Issue in the reform	Key decision-makers	Opposition to the reform	Timing of the reform
■ Matichon	64%	17%	14%	6%
☐ Thai Rath	52%	15%	19%	13%
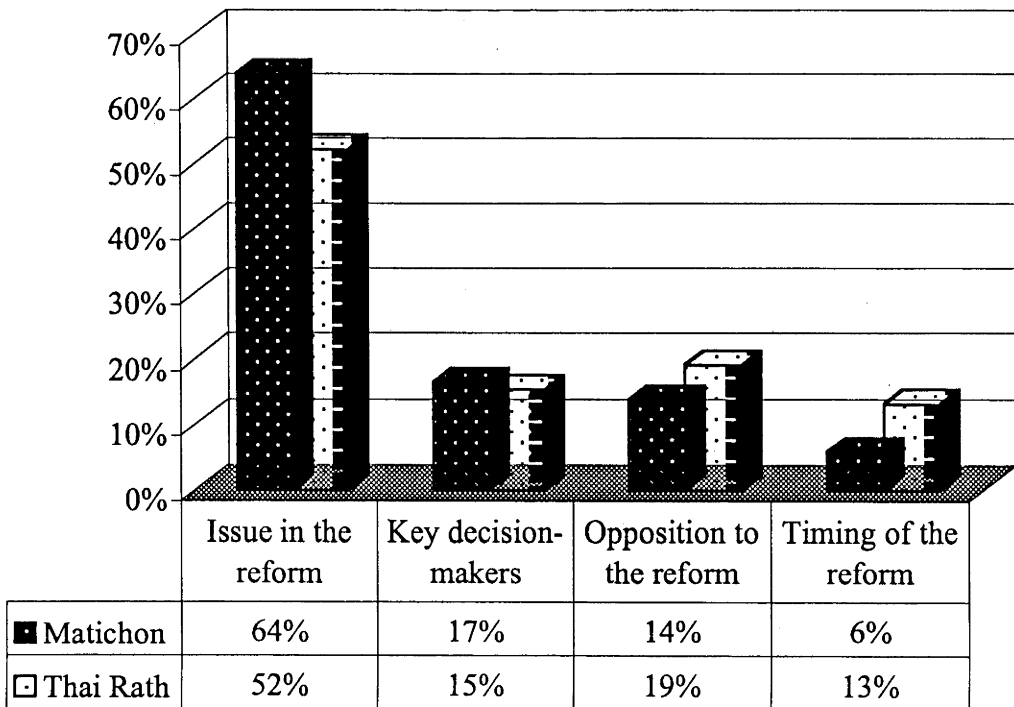
Subsequently, constant coverage of this political reform movement in both quality and quantity newspapers helped sustain pressure on the Banharn and Chavalit governments to carry on the process of constitutional drafting. For instance, attacks from the press put pressure on the Banharn government not to include MPs in the membership of the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA). The CDA consisted of ninety-nine members, seventy-six of whom were selected through a rather tedious voting process, representing each of the seventy-six provinces. The remaining twenty-three were selected for their experience and expertise in particular fields. Although several ex-MPs were finally added to the CDA, the press's interests in the issue meant that parliament could not safely exclude all activists, particularly those from NGOs. Press coverage also mobilized enormous support for the DDC decision to reject any interference from theparliament in the drafting process, only allowing its control of the final say – by either accepting or rejecting but not amending the draft.

According to the results of the content analysis, the issue of constitutional reform was consistently covered by both *Matichon* and *Thai Rath* from November 1996 to October 1997 -- from the selection of the CDA members to the promulgation of the Constitution. *Matichon*'s coverage of political reform was far more extensive than that of *Thai Rath*. There were 224 articles on political reform in the selected issues of *Matichon*, but only 136 articles in the selected issues of *Thai Rath* over the same period. Moreover, as shown in Figure 1, about sixty-two per cent of political reform articles in *Matichon* occupied a space ranging from a quarter of a page to more than one page. The political reform articles in *Thai Rath*, on the other hand, tended to appear as factual reports in smaller columns. Sixty-four per cent of *Matichon*'s articles discussed political reform issues. Whilst the paper offered daily reports of the CDA deliberations on the draft on page two, most of its commentaries on the draft were written by university lecturers and public intellectuals on the following pages. Familiar names addressing the topic of political reform included Prawase Wasi, Nidhi Aeusrivongse, Kriengsak Charoenwongsak, Kasien Tejapira, Bawornsak Uwanno, and Likhit Dhiravegin, to mention only a few. Apparently, *Matichon* relied more heavily on the contributions

from these intellectuals, whom they regarded as accredited sources, those who had the authority to represent the voices of society.[64] These intellectuals employed newspaper space to influence the public, as they believed that public pressure would expedite state transformation.[65]

In contrast, *Thai Rath* had its own political columnists write most of the commentaries on political reform. Most columnists use pseudonym. According to McCargo, these columnists were: "adept at presenting themselves as 'in the know' on salient political issues, possessing both insider information about news stories and a capacity to represent the views of the public about those stories".[66] Consequently, they often wrote their commentaries using emotional language, which was sometimes even sleazy and abusive. Their sentences and wording were often riddled with metaphors and their messages were hidden between the lines. The following excerpts are from commentaries published in *Matichon* and *Thai Rath*, which illustrate the sharp distinction in style and content between the two. Both were written in similar contexts of a discussion about 'how to succeed in political reform'. *Matichon*'s commentary was written by a public intellectual, Dr. Prawase Wasi, who expressed his desire to see Thailand become a broad-minded society that could deal with a wide range of political reform issues. The commentary from *Thai Rath*, written by a political columnist under the pen-name '*Lom plien-tid*', aimed at inciting public support for the CDA's agenda, and attacking conservative politicians who tried to obstruct the reform process.

> *Matichon*: Thailand has a lot of serious and complicated problems to solve.
> Yet, these problems appear to be too difficult for anybody to solve. However,
> if they remain unsolved, the country cannot avoid crisis. Thus, it is necessary
> for the Thai society to learn how to solve these difficult problems. Political
> reform is one serious and difficult problem that challenges the capability of Thai
> society. To succeed in such a task, we need a big mind, not a small mind, and a
> big thinking frame enough to sustain many different kinds of ideas and thoughts.[67]
>
> *Thai Rath*: I believe that the direction the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA)
> is taking is the right one. You have to dare to reform, dare to to change the oppressed
> and corrupt political system to a principled and ethical one. The most important
> thing is that the CDA members and all mass media need to co-operate to promote

[64]   Interview with Suchart Srisuwan, Editor, *Matichon* on April 29, 1998.
[65]   Dr. Prawes Wasi, Personal Communication on July 5, 1999.
[66]   Duncan McCargo, <u>Politics and the Press in Thailand: Media Machinations</u> (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 139.
[67]   Prawes Wasi, "*Cha patiroop kan-muang hai samret dai yang rai*" (How to succeed in political reform), <u>Matichon Daily</u>, December 10, 1996, p. 2.

public understanding and participation in the process, and fight against vicious
politicians who obstruct the reform.[68]

In addition, on every Sunday the team from *Thai Rath*'s political news staff employed a
whole page, usually page 3, to feature their analyses of the progress of the political
events revolving around the drafting of the Constitution, under the pen name '*team kan-
muang*' (political team). In contrast to *Matichon*'s analysis, these analyses were written
in a clearer and simpler language, suitable for low brow, mass-market readers.[69]

Press coverage of political reform in November 1996 was overshadowed by the
1996 general election, in which the ex-General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh led a conservative
coalition to power. As a result, a conflict of ideas on political reform between reformers
and conservative politicians gradually emerged in December 1996. Attempts from
conservative groups to influence the constitutional drafting process were clearly evident
when they tried to insert their proxies into the 19,335 candidates applying for
membership to the CDA. These attempts were harshly criticized by a *Thai Rath*
columnist:

> Those with wicked minds have in many ways helped apply their proxies into the
> CDA. They hope that their proxies would help them gain more votes without
> knowing that they are imprinting their sin onto the society.[70]

After the ninety-nine CDA members had been selected and the first proposal had
emerged, there were constant reports of clashes between three dominant groups: the
conservatives, who did not want to lose their authority and privilege and warned of a
civil war or a possible *coup d'ètat*; the progressivists, mostly the elite and technocrats,
who were eager to change yet did not want change to be too radical; and the reformists,
who desired to oust corrupt politicians, get rid of pork-barrel and military politics and
under-the-table commissions. The press coverage closely monitored the disagreements
among these groups on the topic of rights, the introduction of new judicial and quasi-
judicial bodies, and particularly the discussion about electoral reform, in which the CDA

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[68]   Lom Plien-tid, "*Patiroop tong kla ta-tai*" (Reform requires a strength to challenge), *Thai Rath*,
February 27, 1997, p. 5.

[69]   For further discussion see Chapter 6: The Power of the Political Columnist in Duncan
McCargo, Politics and the Press in Thailand: Media Machinations, *op. cit.*

[70]   Sai Lo-Pha, "*Ya rerm duay sing sokkaprok*" (Don't start with foul), *Thai Rath*, December 9,
1996, p. 6.

proposed the introduction of a combination of a proportional representation system (or party list) and single-member constituencies. As reflected in the press coverage, the major disagreement was not so much about the new system. Rather, it involved crucial clauses that were aimed at raising the standard of politics by requiring that MPs hold at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent, by lessening vote-buying and allowing only elected MPs from party list ballots to become cabinet ministers, by prohibiting MPs from concurrently hold ministerial portfolios, and by establishing an election commission.

Press articles on electoral reform alone comprised about twenty-three per cent of articles in the selected issues of *Matichon*, and thirty-four per cent of articles in the selected issues of *Thai Rath*. The majority of these articles from both papers did not analyze or extensively discuss the new voting system. Rather, they focused on the number of seats in each ballot and the controversial clause (Article 204) that aimed to bar MPs from concurently holding ministerial portfolios. Both papers appeared to give full support to these clauses, though they were different in style and content. For example, *Thai Rath*'s editorials were highly opinionated and severely criticized conservative politicians who rejected the proposal. A *Thai Rath* cartoon, for instance, acutely portrayed a large group of vicious-looking politicians with long fangs, standing behind Prime Minister Chavalit under the banner "Politicians with Fangs Club", and laughing at the reform-oriented Chairman of CDA, Anand Panyarachun, who was trying to lift up a heavy copy of the draft. This cartoon was headlined "Heavy weapon against many enemies".[71] On the contrary, articles in *Matichon* were almost factual and featured quotes detailing the rationale of major political parties in objecting to the proposed clauses.

> *Thai Rath*: As for politicians, we know that they are more concerned with political privileges they are likely to lose as a result of the new Constitution, which attaches a clause about prohibition of MP to become cabinet minister. Moreover, they also dislike the proportional representation system, and single member constituencies, and hate to disclose their assets or declare their taxes. The clause applies to all levels of politicians - both national and local. Concern about losing privileges has been the real hidden agenda behind the local and national politicians' objections to the proposal which

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[71]   *Thai Rath*, February 27, 1997, p. 3.

they never stated directly.[72]

> *Matichon*: This clause has been a subject of controversy since the beginning of the drafting process. Attempts to remove it still exist and seem to continue. A number of political parties have submitted their objections to Head of the CDA. For instance, the New Aspiration Party stated, "objects to the clauses and suggests that a more open system is desirable". Chat Thai Party declared its objection: "the principle of these clauses is from the republic system, and not suitable in a parliamentary system under the constitutional monarchy"...These clauses reflect popular demands for a separation of power between MPs and cabinet ministers. This will eradicate a lot of problems, and create efficiency in the administration. As such, it is the time to separate the two posts.[73]

There were a small number of articles in *Matichon* and *Thai Rath* that used direct quotes from government officials. Twenty-seven per cent of articles in the selected copies of *Matichon* and nineteen per cent of articles in the selected issues of *Thai Rath* had direct quotes from government officials. There were several reasons for the press to be independent from government sources in covering political reform. Firstly, the major source of the stories were CDA members, who were independent from the government, as well as public intellectuals, NGO members, and other political commentators. As such, the press was as an active agent in setting an agenda by depending on unofficial and alternative news sources. At the same time, it narrowed down and simplified political discourse on the complicated issue for readers by framing and focusing on the controversial attached clauses rather than analyzing and debating the whole electoral system. This approach also reflects a local political culture that tends to center on conflicts rather than the repercussions of political issues.

Secondly, according to Suchart Srisuwan, *Matichon*'s chief editor, it is customary for Thai reporters not to quote either the names of their official sources or their positions, particularly on policy issues, but instead to use a phrase like 'according to a source (*lang khao*) within a department or party'. As such, direct quotes were often

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[72]   Sai Lo-Pha, "*Khaya kan-muang*" (Political garbage), <u>Thai Rath</u>, July 7, 1997, p. 6.

[73]   Boonlert Changyai, "*Chab cheepachorn phak kan-muang koranee sor.sor pen rathamontri*" (Checking political parties' pulse on the issues of MPs being cabinet ministers), <u>Matichon Daily</u>, June 27, 1997, p. 10.

Figure 3: Agendas of Political Reform Articles in Matichon (n=224), and Thai Rath (n=136) from November 1996 to October 1997

	Pro-reform	Anti-reform	Neutral
■ Matichon	52%	7%	41%
▣ Thai Rath	60%	2%	38%
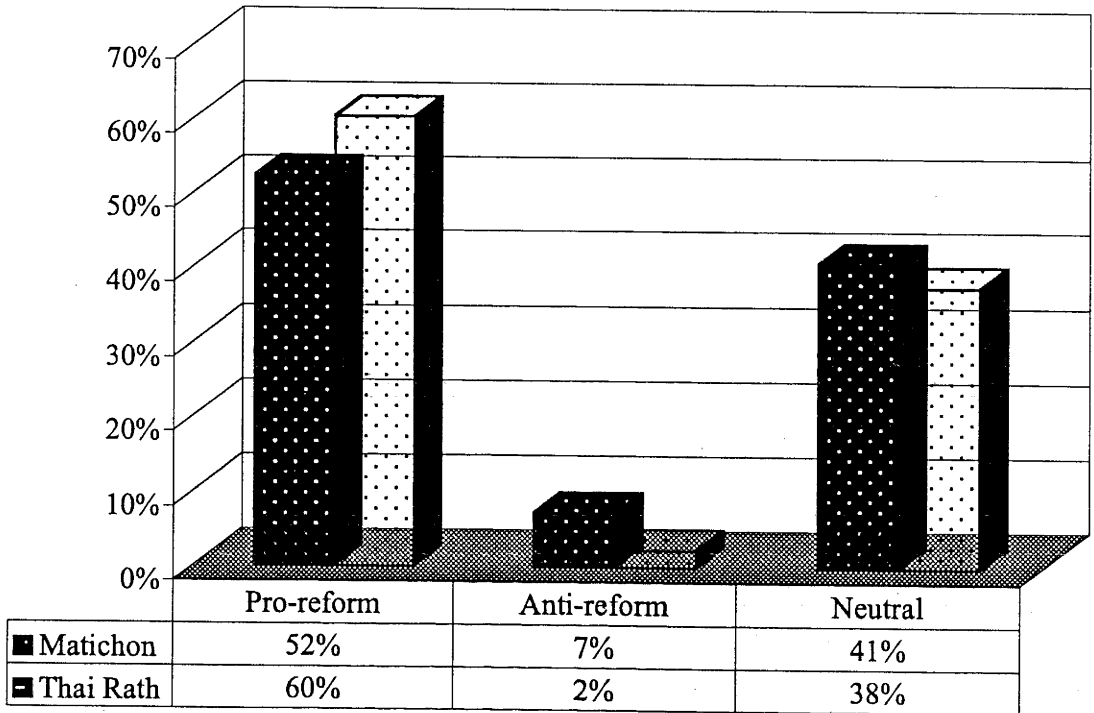
Figure 4: Priority of Reform Issues as Interpreted in Thai Newspapers from November 1996 to October 1997

	Providing the right direction for reform	Expediting the legislation process	Blaming officials or systems
■ Matichon	73%	11%	16%
▢ Thai Rath	58%	21%	21%
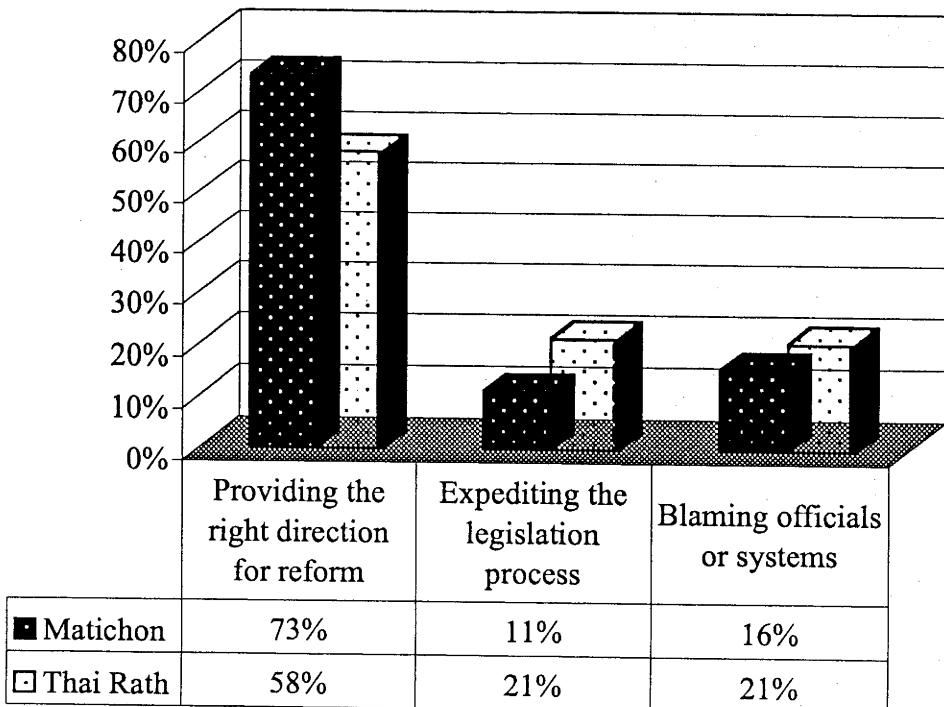
omitted because "the real political information is not easily accessible and these sources do not want to take any responsibility as the revealed information is confidential. They let you know only if they think they would gain something for themselves".[74]

As shown in Figure 3, most news articles published in *Matichon* and *Thai Rath* gave strong support for political reform. Evidence of biased comments suggested that both papers were not really committed to the concepts of neutrality and objectivity. Reformers and their ideas were often mentioned in a better light than conservatives and their criticisms. This biased coverage was obviously intentional and was so frequent that it drew a great deal of criticism.[75] However, *Matichon*'s coverage of the drafting of the constitution appeared to be more consistent in focusing on a wide range of issues than that of *Thai Rath*, which seemed to be driven fundamentally by political events. Indeed, as a quantity newspaper, *Thai Rath* was not primarily interested in policy per se, but rather in the controversy that political issues generated.

As shown in Figure 4, *Matichon*'s reports on political reform were more concerned with discussing the direction and details of the reform, whereas *Thai Rath* had a high percentage of coverage which emphasized the urgency to expedite the reform process, and attacked the conservatives who had tried to obstruct the change. In particular, the economic crisis and financial turmoil that was set off by the devaluation of the baht on July 2, 1997 further exacerbated *Thai Rath* condemnation of the conservative government's mismanagement of the economy, and its attempts to block the movement towards reform. Reports of the political divide between the reformers and conservatives were also accentuated when the constitutional draft was being finalized.

Thai Rath: A group of politicians was not satisfied with the constitutional draft which is now being polished by the members of the CDA before submitting to the parliament. Politicians from both camps, the conservative government and the progressive opposition, have voiced their objections to some articles, particularly to the clause which bars MPs from concurrently holding ministerial portfolios. In this

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74   Interview on April 29, 1998.
75   "Social critic urges press accuracy, Claiming charter report misleading", <u>Bangkok Post</u>,
        May 23, 1997 (on-line edition).

case, the conservative politicians will go against their principle if they vote for the passage of the Constitution. Yet they are not daring enough to vote against the passage, fearing outside pressure, and especially the public backlash. As a result, there has been a voice from the government camp suggesting that there will be attempts to make the draft aborted in the CDA before its submission to the parliament.[76]

During July and September 1997, the components of political divisions were in place to ensure an intensive period of press concern about the prospects for the new Constitution. Discussion about the passage of the Constitution became intensified right after the signs of economic downturn had appeared. The Constitution was, to a certain degree, portrayed by the press as a solution to the country's economic problems. Moreover, the conflict between the conservatives and the reformists heightened. A number of conservative movements to block the submission of the draft to the parliament dominated press coverage. These included: several demonstrations in front of the parliament by rural village headmen mobilized by conservative politicians to protest against the clause on administrative reform that would instantly dismiss them from local councils should the draft be enacted; a petition campaign run by conservative politicians and senators to submit a motion that would enable the parliament to alter the draft; and allegations made by senior politicians, such as Snoh Thienthong (interior minister), Samak Sundaravej (deputy prime minister), and Chalerm Yubamrung (deputy interior minister), against the architects of the reform such as Prawase Wasi, Thirayuth Boonmee, and Chairman of the CDA, Anand Panyarachun, for having a hidden agenda behind their reform movements. Some went so far as to suggest that the draft as a whole was too extreme, and characterized the reform movement as a part of communist plots against the nation.[77] Snoh, in particular, mobilized village officers under his command to Bangkok, and revived the village scout movement, which had orchestrated a campaign against communism in the 1970s.

Movements by the reformists were, on the contrary, more subtle. These included: a peaceful demonstration by white-collar employees in the central business

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[76] *"Team kan-muang fokus sor.sor.ror. rub phan khabuankan chonglang raththammanoon"* (The political news team focuses on the CDA's tactics to encounter attempts to abort the new Constitution), *Thai Rath*, July 6, 1997, p. 3.

[77] "Constitution showdown", Bangkok Post, September 27, 1997 (on-line edition).

district demanding a change of government and a passage of the Constitution; a petition campaign among university lecturers in support of the draft; and a successful green campaign that persuaded the general public to show their support for the draft and to pressure the parliament to accept the draft by attaching green stickers, ribbons, or flags to motor vehicles, or wearing green shirts or dresses. The press harshly condemned the conservative movement and its allegations, and manipulated them to emphasize a need for change. More significant was the part the press played in promoting the green campaign in support of the passage of the Constitution among the public.

> *Matichon*: The success of the political reform depends on the public's waving
> of the green flag to support the draft, to pass the organic laws, to accept some
> revisions, and to learn about their constitutional rights and liberties. The campaign
> to promote the real understanding of this Constitution among the public has
> been significant in building a groundwork of democracy, and permeating
> democratic spirits into public life.[78]

> *Thai Rath*: This constitutional campaign received supports from all the Thais in the
> country. Until this minute, there is no need to ask if the parliament will pass the
> Constitution. Today is so historically significant that we should remember. I would
> like to review how this Constitution has come about, how it has progressed, and
> how it has succeeded. Yet, the only answer to all of these questions is that politicians'
> wickedness is no longer acceptable by the public.[79]

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the nature of Thai journalistic practices in gathering, interpreting, and disseminating news often limits press coverage of politics to political events. The press coverage of political reform, which largely revolved around political events involving the drafting of the Constitution, also illustrated the same 'rule'. After the passage of the Constitution, the lack of political events concerning the Constitution reduced its news value, and thus, press coverage about the ongoing process of drafting organic laws and establishing various commissions subsided. Indeed, journalists, in general, are more likely to select and report the less complicated issues. As suggested by Deacon and Golding, "the less complex and ambiguous an issue is, the more readily it can be personalized and dramatized, shown to have clear and immediate

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[78]   Kriengsak Charoenwongsak, "*Kao to pai khong prachachon lung rub rang raththammanoon*" (The next step for the public after the passage of the Constitution), *Matichon Daily*, October 8, 1997, p. 17.

[79]   Chalam Khiew, "*Prawattisart*" (History), *Thai Rath*, September 27, 1997, p. 6.

implications, and is consonant with previous news frameworks, the more likely it is to be reported".[80]

It is clear in this analysis that both the quantity and quality press in Thailand were supporters of political reform. *Matichon Daily*, in this case, also indicated that the Thai quality press could become a means to increase public awareness and educate the public about the new Constitution, while also serving as a crucial platform for public debate on political reform and its broader implications. Yet *Matichon*'s limited circulation and target readers suggested that its campaign on political reform was largely urban, and mainly reached the middle-class. Nidhi Aeusrivongse, a well-known historian and public intellectual, also agreed that "the mass media directly captured the middle-class as the main supporter for the Constitution".[81] He further suggested that media attention responded well to demands from the middle class for political reform, which reflected their strong desire to re-negotiate their political power and social position.[82] The mobilization of the middle class opinion by the press can also be seen as the press's tactics to use the urban middle class force against the strong rural supports for the New Aspiration Party, which led the government at the time. The juxtaposition of 'urban' and 'rural' concerns, as suggested by Rungrawee, is often employed by the Thai press to prioritize political issues.[83] The discourse of middle class opinion in the press thus ensured that pressure was being put on the government to expedite the reform process.

The political reform campaign culminated in the parliamentary approval of the new Constitution on September 27, 1997, two days after a no-confidence debate against Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. The extent to which *Matichon* and *Thai Rath* increased public understanding of important basic principles embedded in the new

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[80] David Deacon and Peter Golding, Taxation and Representation: The Media, Political Communication and the Poll Tax (London: John Libbey & Co., 1994), p. 185.

[81] Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "*Thong khiew kab khon chan klang*" (Green Flag and the Middle-Class), *Matichon Daily*, October 24, 1997, p. 17.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] Rungrawee Chalermsripinyorat, "The Politics of Representation: The Assembly of the Poor and the Use of Media Space to Challenge the Hegemonic Discourse in Thailand", Paper presented at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, March 22-25, 2001.

Constitution cannot be determined by this content analysis alone. Yet, it is clear that both newspapers, along with other media, successfully campaigned for public participation and support for the passage of the Constitution by engendering the national sentiment for reform, and by setting 'a new Constitution as a key to political reform' as a public agenda.

5.3.2 Japan's Press Coverage on Political Reform: Agenda-setter or Servant of the State?

Following the 1976 Lockheed bribery scandal and the 1988 Recruit Cosmos shares-for-influence scandal, there was an immediate surge of demand from the public for political reform. Thereafter, political reform (*seiji kaikaku*) became a political buzzword. After the LDP's comeback in the 1990 general election, Prime Minister Kaifu made a serious effort to introduce electoral reform as a means to clean up the house and eliminate the roots of pork-barrel politics. However, the unpopular Prime Minister received little support from within the LDP, and his plan was soon swept under the carpet after he was replaced by Miyazawa Kiichi in 1991. The size of Shin Kanemaru's tax evasion and illegal funds, which came to light in 1992, added to the *Sagawa Kyûbin* scandal that revealed the involvement of LDP far-right groups in mainstream political funding. These events turned the argument from electoral reform to political reform, or from mere cleaning-up measures to wholesale restructuring. To this momentum was added the intense rivalry among LDP factions for the chairmanship of the Takeshita faction vacated by Kanemaru. An LDP faction led by revisionists, such as Hata Tsutomu and Ozawa Ichirô, left the LDP in 1993 after losing the contests, and formed a new party with the aim to realize political reform.

However, the Miyazawa government was brought down in Summer 1993 for failing to deliver on its televised promise of political reform. After the 1993 election, a seven-party coalition was formed led by the Nihon Shintô Party (or New Japan Party) leader, Hosokawa Morihirô, with political reform as its platform. Later that year, the Hosokawa administration submitted four comprehensive political reform bills to the

Diet: a bill to revise the Public Election Law to introduce a new lower house electoral system based on a combination of single-seat constituencies (250 seats), and a proportional representation system in a single national constituency (250 seats); a bill to establish a committee for the demarcation of the new single-seat constituencies; a bill to revise the Political Funds Control Law; and a political party subsidy bill. The government-endorsed bills faced a strong resistance from the LDP. Although the bills were passed by the Diet in late 1993, they were rejected in the House of Councilors. After a number of behind-the-scenes negotiations between the LDP and the Hosokawa-led coalition government, an electoral reform bill, which combined single-seat constituencies (300 seats) and a proportional representation system in eleven constituencies nationally (200 seats), was put to the Diet and approved in January 1994.[84]

The Japanese press gave large space and attention to the coverage of political reform for several reasons. Firstly, political reform was the main issue that had led to a split in the LDP and brought about the fall of the LDP after its thirty-eight years of uninterrupted rule, and it was central to the election campaigns run by most parties in 1993. *Asahi Shimbun*, for example, published a comprehensive table of contents listing each party's movements and policies on political reform during 1992-1993 prior to the 1993 election.[85] This is confirmed by an earlier study of election coverage in *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* conducted by Takeshita and Mikami, which revealed that political reform was the most prominent issue in the 1993 general election.[86] Secondly, when the LDP fell from power after the election, this signaled a major political change. Thus, the struggle between old and new power, that is, the LDP and the non-LDP coalition government, in shaping the direction of political reform was carefully monitored by the press. Lastly,

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[84]   For more details on Japan's political reform see Yamaguchi Jirô, *Nihon seiji no kadai: Shin seiji kaikakuron (Current Issues in Japanese Politics: A New Approach to Political Reform)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997); and Albert L. Seligman, "Japan's New Electoral System: Has Anything Changed?", Asian Survey, May 1997, 37(5), pp. 409-420.

[85]   "*Kono ichinenkan no seiji kaikaku wo meguru ugôki* (Movements towards political reform in the past one year), *Asahi Shimbun*, June 20, 1993, p. 7.

[86]   Takeshita Toshio and Mikami Shunji, "How Did Mass Media Influence the Voters' Choice in the 1993 General Election in Japan?: A Study of Agenda-Setting", Keio Communication Review, 1995, (17), pp. 27-41.

Prime Minister Hosokawa himself pledged to bring about political reform. In his first press conference after being appointed as Prime Minister, he stated that he would "take political responsibility" should political reform not be realized by the end of the year.

The close attention given by the press to political reform was evident in the large number of articles related to political reform in selected issues of *Yomiuri* and *Asahi*. The content analysis revealed that there were a total of 303 articles on political reform in the selected issues of *Yomiuri*, and 358 articles on political reform in the selected issues of *Asahi* from April 1993 to March 1994. This number easily outstrips the number of articles on political reform in the selected Thai newspapers.

The content analysis started with issues published in the first week of April 1993, when splits between a reform faction and a conservative faction within the LDP loomed, leading up to the actual splits in June 1993. In June 1993, the number of articles was high as they covered the legislative process of the LDP reform proposal, and the vote of no confidence that brought down the Miyazawa administration. However, in July 1993, the stories on political reform were overshadowed by the election coverage. Stories on political reform resurfaced in early August 1993 after Hosokawa had been appointed to the premier post. The number of stories on political reform reached a peak at the end of the year when the government-sponsored bills were submitted to the Diet and later rejected in the House of Councilors. Stories about party bargaining on political reform bills dominated the political issues in January 1994, as the position of Prime Minister Hosokawa was at stake. The number of articles concerning political reform clearly declined during February-March 1994. The 'political reform' agenda began to disappear from the press and was replaced by new agendas. *Yomiuri*, for example, began to heavily attack Prime Minister Hosokawa for his alleged corruption. *Asahi*, on the other hand, embarked on an editorial series about administrative reform in March 1994.

Figure 5: Size of Articles on Political Reform in Yomiuri (n=303) and Asahi (n=358) from April 1993 to March 1994

	Very brief < 1/8 page	Brief 1/8 - 1/4 page	Medium 1/4 - 1/2 page	Long 1/2 - 1 page
■ Yomiuri	10%	70%	17%	3%
☐ Asahi	18%	59%	22%	2%
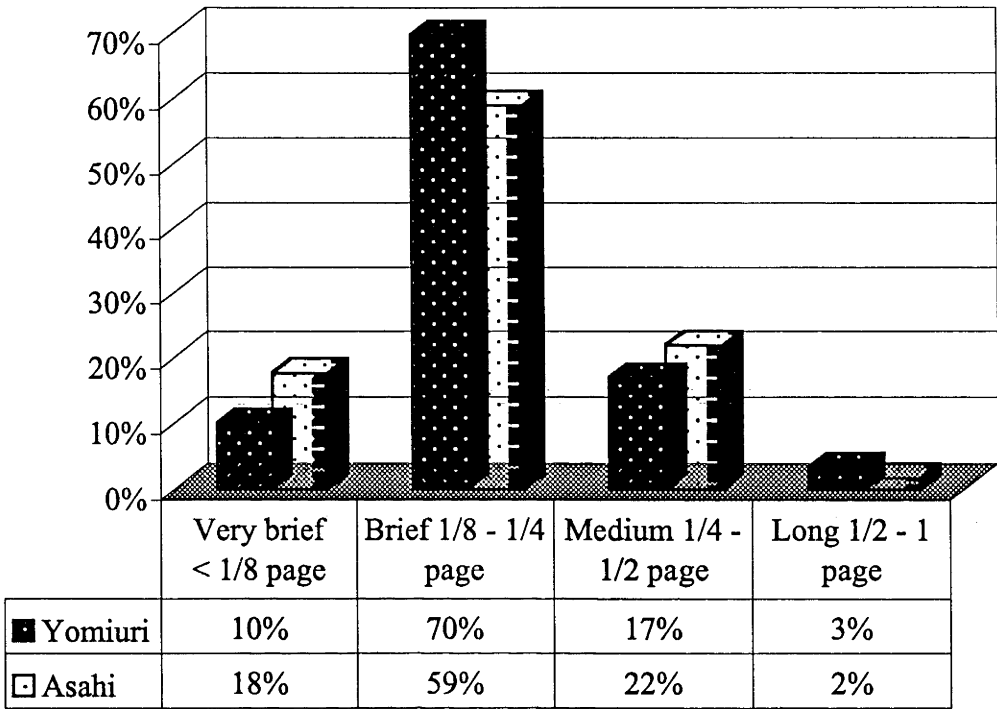
Figure 6: Topics of Headlines of Articles on Political Reform from April 1993 to March 1994

	Issue in the reform	Key decision-makers	Opposition to the reform	Timing of the reform
■ Yomiuri	31%	48%	7%	13%
☐ Asahi	36%	41%	14%	10%
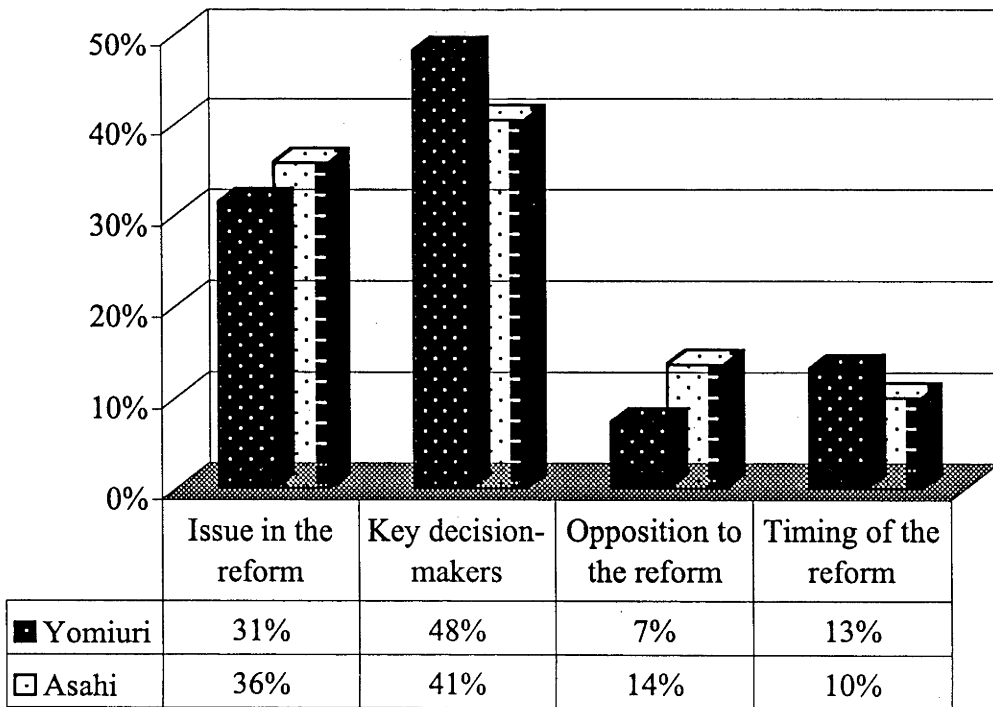
On average, there were two to three articles on political reform published daily in the selected issues of *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* from April 1993 to March 1994. As shown in Figure 5, fifty-nine per cent of articles in selected issues of *Asahi*, and seventy per cent of articles in selected issues of *Yomiuri* were not larger than a quarter of a page. Yet *Asahi* published more half-page articles on political reform than *Yomiuri*. As shown in Figure 6, the headlines of these articles suggested that the stories in selected *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* were dominated by comments and actions of key decision-makers involved in the reform. Moreover, fifty-five per cent of *Yomiuri*'s articles included direct quotes from government officials, whereas forty-nine per cent of *Asahi*'s articles contained direct quotes from governmental sources. *Yomiuri*, for instance, ran a series of interviews with various politicians about their views on political reform in May 1993. Noticeably, most of the ordinary news articles referred to their sources not by their names or exact titles, but by citing their general positions, such as a source (*suji*), a party executive (*kanbu*), a senior government official (*seifu shunô*), or a top LDP official (*jimintô shunô*). This reliance on governmental sources by both papers indicates that the government played a major role in setting the agenda of press coverage on political reform.

While the news stories, in general, were about conflicts and compromises between parties about the direction and details of political reform, and were based on press conferences, *kondan*, interviews, party policy meetings, and advisory council reports, a number of articles consisted of independent analysis by an editor or a political reporter based on a combination of previous information gathered, or a presentation of public opinion surveys conducted by the paper. Noticeably, *Asahi* tended to offer its own analysis of the progress of political reform and critical independent viewpoints. Fifteen per cent of articles in selected *Asahi* issues were in this category, and only eight per cent of articles in selected *Yomiuri* issues appeared as editorials or commentaries with by-lines.

Approximately eighty per cent of articles on political reform in selected *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* issues were about electoral reform. Stories on political campaign contributions

and political party subsidies accounted for only about twelve per cent. The remaining stories were presented in conjunction with issues of administrative reform and constitutional reform. Politically speaking, although issues of political campaign contributions and political party subsidies were equally as important as the electoral reform, they were not frequently discussed and debated by politicians, and this lessened their news value. Moreover, once electoral reform was discussed, Diet members of all parties were more concerned with how to change the electoral system so as to retain their seats than with wider issues like anti-corruption measures. A great deal of space in the newspapers was allocated to description and comment about various proposals for the new election system. For example, interview articles airing views of proposals held by various politicians in *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* were merely reflections of what these politicians thought would happen to them and their parties under each proposal, and how the proposals they favored would affect their interests.

Thus, most stories on electoral reform were presented as conflicts or compromises between the reform group (*kaikaku-ha*), and the conservative group (*shukyû-ha*). However, the terms -- reform group (*kaikaku-ha*), and conservative group (*shukyû-ha*) -- were not initiated by the press, but coined by a pro-reform politician, Ozawa Ichirô, who left the LDP to form the Japan Renewal Party (*Shinseitô*). Ozawa branded politicians who were in support of the introduction of the new single-set constituency system in place of the existing multi-member constituency system "the reform group", and those who were against the new system "the conservative group". The press copied these terms and applied them according to Ozawa's typification.[87] For the press, Ozawa was unsurprisingly an important source who offered a useful insight. Ozawa served as an adviser to the Prime Minister during the Hosokawa administration, and was also known as a "shadow shogun", or behind-the-scenes power holder who kept the coalition together. Therefore, in the case of political reform in Japan, it is

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[87]   Kurashige Atsurô, "*Seijikaikaku Hôdô*" (Reports on Political Reform), in Katsura Keiji et al. (eds.), *21 Seki no masukomi 01: Shimbun* (Mass Communication in the 21st Century: Newspaper) (Tokyo: Ôtsuki Shoten, 1997), p. 67.

arguable that politicians significantly set the press agenda on political reform, rather than the press itself.

Direct attacks by the press on politicians who were branded "conservative" (*shukyû-ha*, or the less direct term, *shinchô-ha*, meaning careful) simply by advocating an alternative route to the mainstream thinking on political reform was exemplified in the following excerpt from an *Asahi* editorial. The subject of this attack was the LDP Chief Cabinet Secretary to the Miyazawa government, Kajiyama Seiroku, who suggested that the political campaign contribution bill should be introduced prior to the electoral reform. This suggestion caused an uproar among the Opposition and the press, which had been portraying 'political reform' as a national urgency. *Asahi*'s editorial on May 11, 1993 harshly commented, "If Mr. Kajiyama has committed to any serious debate, it is not unreasonable to grasp his real intention as 'I wish to crash the reform of the electoral system'. However, it is desirable for us that he would stop his roundabout way of talking, and should instead engage directly to find a common ground".[88]

The majority of newspaper articles on electoral reform were overwhelmed by debates between the reform group and the conservative group, as well as many insights about behind-the-scene negotiations and lobbying. Few stories seriously discussed the main differences, or the advantages and disadvantages between the existing and the proposed systems. Most coverage was based on the logic that the old system of the multi-member constituencies penalized the small parties and necessitated candidates from the same party to fight for the same seat. In the existing system, there was no policy differentiation among candidates, election campaigns were focused on individual appeals, and therefore became costly as each candidate had to subsidize its own support group (*kôenkai*). This also became a source of corruption and pork-barrel politics. When the reform group within the LDP split, and all of the Opposition parties flagged political reform as the main agenda in their election campaigns, editors from both *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* reminded these politicians about the basic importance of political reform:

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[88]   *"Kusei kaikaku e setten wo motomeru michi"* (A road to seek a common ground in the reform of electoral constituency), *Asahi Shimbun*, May 11, 1993, p. 2.

> *Yomiuri*: It is clear that the 'political reform' slogan is flagged in every corner of the political world. But, as far as the various groups' with the LDP and the Opposition's movements or the whole reform group phenomenon, so to speak, are concerned, the substantial content in their claims of what will change and how become rather vague.[89]

> *Asahi*: Even if the new election system and political fund control measures were put in place, they would only constitute a step towards a long path of political reform. After long-term governing by the LDP, the financial and administrative reform must be next, and the question of how to tear apart the closed and suspicious relationship between political, bureaucrat, and business circles must be tackled.[90]

However, after seven parties won the election and formed the first coalition government, the political reform agenda was reduced to the mere topic of election reform. As mentioned earlier, while most news articles tended to cover the exchanges between the reform and the conservative groups, only a handful of articles tried to explain why the change of the electoral system was really important to the political reform process. Electoral reform, as portrayed by the press, represented an end in itself, rather than a means of achieving a better kind of party politics. A good illustration of this can be seen in these selected *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* editorials:

> *Yomiuri*: The single-seat constituency system that casts only a single candidate from a constituency will bring about the two-party system, and a possible power change. However, this system can be seen as only benefiting a large party, and causing a large number of unsuccessful candidates. But the proportional representative system, which distributes seats according to the proportion of the poll, has merits in that it accurately reflects public opinion, amplifies party policy differences, and brings about a political change.[91]

> *Asahi*: Some politicians might have said that the topic of the electoral system has occupied parliamentary sessions far too long. Although this may technically be true, the discussion in the parliament has not even touched the fundamental importance of the question of for whom and for what the election is contested.[92]

In contrast to *Yomiuri*, editorials in *Asahi*, albeit only a minority, reminded readers that political reform was an on-going process, and suggested that other aspects besides electoral reform should be taken into account.

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[89]   *"Kaikakuzô wo motto kutaiteki ni shimese"* (Show reform appearance more concretely), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 24, 1993, p. 3.

[90]   Moriyama Jirô, and Tomatsu Yasuo, *"Heiritsusei meguri kakutô ni zure"* (Gap in party policy concerning the mixed system), *Asahi Shimbun*, August 4, 1993, p. 7.

[91]   *"[Heiritsu] jikuni ikkatsu kaikaku no jitsugen isoge"* (Do hurry to realize the reform by using the mixed system), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 15, 1993, p. 3.

[92]   Ichigawa Masanori, *"Kihon wo wasurete imasenka"* (Do you forget the basis?), *Asahi Shimbun*, September 14, 1993, p. 1.

Asahi: First of all, political reform does not stop at the reform of election system and political funds control. Rather it should proceed to free the policy-making process from being heavily dependent on bureaucracy and political institutions.[93]

The view that election reform was tantamount to political reform was more pronounced in *Yomiuri* than in *Asahi*. A *Yomiuri* cartoon, published when negotiations between Prime Minister Hosokawa and the LDP leader on details of the new election system was intense, expressed this view well. Prime Minister Hosokawa in a traditional costume was shown being blindfolded, trying to catch a *geisha* who was running and holding a folding fan labeled 'political reform'.[94] More particularly, *Yomiuri*'s editorials appeared to focus on expediting the legislative process by making a claim to the public promise made earlier by Prime Minister Hosokowa. The content of these articles demonstrated an attempt to shore up public dissent against the slowness of the Hosokawa administration in realizing political reform.[95]

As shown in Figure 7, news articles in both *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* appeared to be neutral in covering political reform. Yet there were far more pro-reform articles than anti-reform articles. Press support for reform was obvious in most news coverage, especially when the type and details of a new election system were at the center of political debates. Both papers appeared to support the government proposal of the mixed system of single-member constituencies (250 seats) and a nationally-based proportional representation system (250 seats). Some observers suggested that the press gave positive coverage about the introduction of the mixed system due to the fact that several executives of these media organizations were members of the 8th Election System Council, which came up with a similar proposal in 1990. This Council was

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[93]   Hayabô Chôji, "*Seikansai yuchaku wo kaishô dekimasu ka?*" (Can the shady relationships between the political, the business, and the financial world be broken off?), *Asahi Shimbun*, September 16, 1993, p. 1.

[94]   *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 21, 1994, p. 2.

[95]   Such an attempt was exemplified in articles such as, "*Seiji kaikaku no nennai jitsugen wa kyûmu da*" (Realizing political reform by the end of the year is an urgent task), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 18, 1993, p. 3; "*Kaikaku jitsugen e jisha wa dakyôseyo*" (The LDP and the SDPJ should compromise in order to realize political reform), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 22, 1993, p. 3; and "*Dakyô kaikaku wo kecchakusaseyo*" (Compromise should occur so the reform will be settled),), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 27, 1994, p. 3.

Figure 7: Agendas of Political Reform Articles in Yomiuri (n=303), and Asahi (n=358) from April 1993 to March 1994

	Pro-reform	Anti-reform	Neutral
■ Yomiuri	47%	2%	50%
□ Asahi	46%	3%	51%
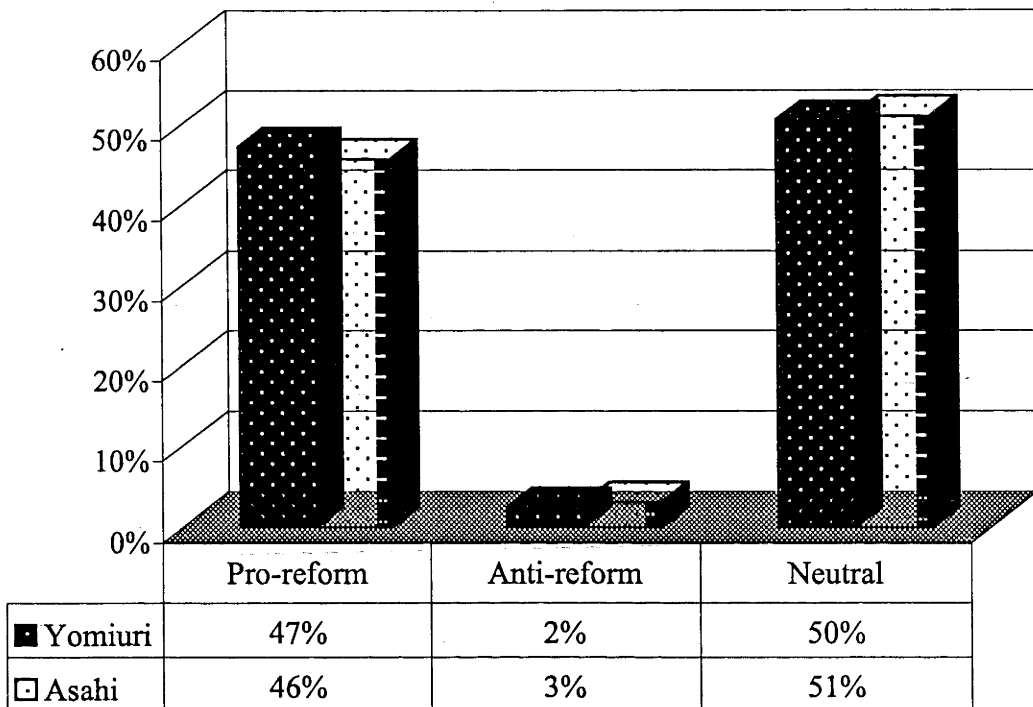
Figure 8: Priority of reform issue as interpreted in Japanese newspapers from April 1993 to March 1994

	Providing the right direction for reform	Expediting the legislation process	Blaming officials or systems
■ Yomiuri	47%	41%	12%
□ Asahi	52%	28%	20%
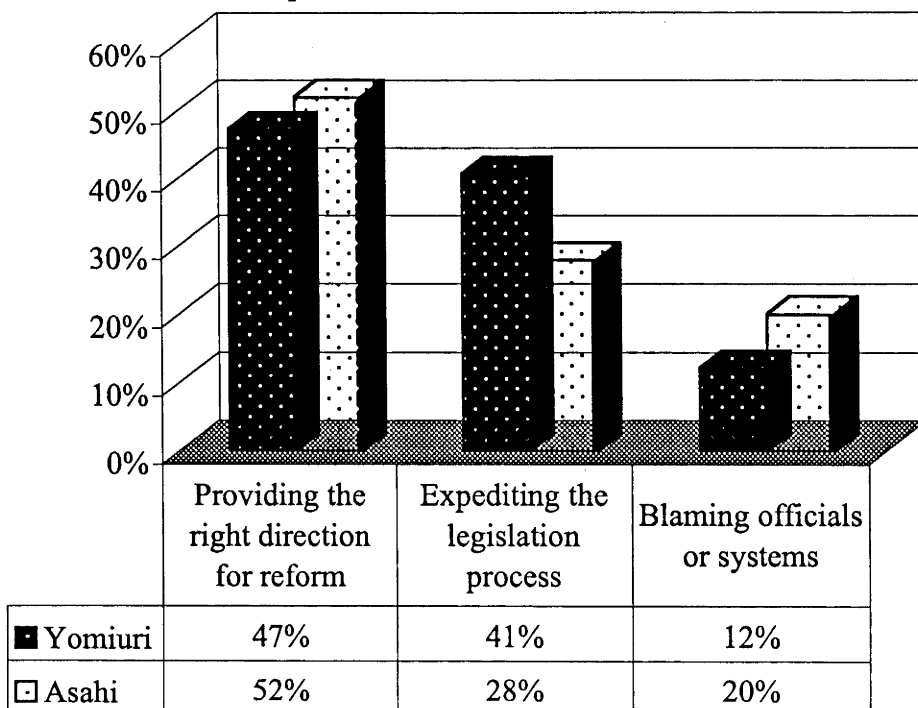
established during the Kaifu administration, and twelve out of twenty-seven of its members were presidents and directors of major media organizations.[96] Noticeably, there were very few articles in both papers that opposed the adjusted reform plan that resulted from the behind-the-scenes negotiations between Prime Minister Hosokawa, and Kono Yohei, the LDP leader. These negotiations eventuated in the selection of a mixed system of single-member constituencies (300 seats) and a regionally-based proportional representation system (11 blocs, 200 seats). The number of seats were reportedly changed to accommodate LDP demands so as to get the bill through the House of Councilors.

As noted above, the Japanese press put priority on the direction of electoral reform. However, as shown in Figure 8, *Yomiuri* gave almost equal coverage to discussing electoral reform and forging an agenda of public dissent to expedite the legislative process, while assigning only twelve per cent of its articles to blaming officials or public systems for obstructing the legislative process of the political reform bill. *Asahi*, on the other hand, was more critical of the officials and systems than *Yomiuri*. Yet, when comparing these results with the priority of issues on political reform covered in the Thai press, it is clear that the Thai papers were far more intent to assign blame to particular politicians or public officials whose comments or conduct were regarded as anti-reform. In contrast, the Japanese press seemed to try to give a balanced coverage and maintain its objectivity. At the same time, the Japanese press had a greater tendency to be a passive agent by transmitting official information uncritically. News about political reform became reports of what prominent people say about the reform, rather than reports of the reform process itself. The Japanese press tended to legitimize their official sources. Neither did it ask why politicians narrowly focused their comments on electoral reform, nor set a useful alternative agenda for political reform. Important issues were selected and pursued by the press after decisions or agreements had been reached in backroom negotiations among key politicians. The main agenda it set out during the coverage was to put pressure on the government to fulfill its

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[96]   Kurashige Atsurô, *op. cit.*, p. 68. See also Tanaka Shûsei, "*Seiji to medeia*" (Politics and Media), *Hôsô Repooto*, 164, March 2000, p. 4

promise of completing the task of political reform. As such, the Japanese press did not successfully play the role of an agenda-setter, but functioned more in the role of a servant of the state.

5.4 News Frames Contested and Other Roles of the Press in Politics

The foregoing discussion suggests that the Thai press is more likely to play the role of agenda-setter than the Japanese press. In agenda-setting, a linear and reciprocal interaction between state, media, and the public is common and anticipated. However, there are often circumstances in which the state, the media, and the public interact more dynamically in the formation of political discourses. An example of such a situation is where the government of the day, as a powerful news source that can alter its tactics and agendas as the intense political situation unfolds, and the media which have developed a hostile attitude towards the government, compete to exert their influence over the framing process of political information, and the public opinion and feedback are constantly exposed and manipulated as media messages by either side. According to Gitlin, political information is framed by a journalistic process of selecting, interpreting, and excluding before being conveyed to the public:

> Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation,
> and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which
> symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual.
> Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information
> quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to
> cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences.[97]

These frames also resonate within the professional and political culture of the news media. Wolfsfeld asserted that as the political and cultural base of the news media varies, media frames thus offer a brief glimpse of the political symbols, myths, and stories that are popular at a particular time and place.[98] Examples of common news frames in Japan and Thailand are press coverage of the rape of a local girl in Okinawa by US military officials in 1995 that was located within the frames of the problem of US

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[97]   Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 7.

[98]   Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 32.

military base in Okinawa and the re-armament of Japan. The peasants' movements in Thailand, on the other hand, were often portrayed by the press as political smear campaigns against the government rather than being discussed within the frame of the inequality of development between urban and rural sectors.

News frames are thus important because they highlight some aspects of political information, make them more meaningful to the public, and lead to specific public reactions.[99] News frames, or story themes, are tools in presenting news stories which journalists employ to draw readers' and audiences' attention to certain meanings of news stories, while ignoring others. Accordingly, the state contests the meanings of news frames in order to maintain public support on specific political issues. The main task of journalists is to maintain the autonomy of their news frames by including non-governmental voices, independent viewpoints, and alternative materials, as news sources in political stories.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the professional culture of Thai and Japanese press reports is largely based on strategic power games between political factions or groups rather than differences in policy or ideological positions. As a result, newspaper headlines of political articles often reflect and demonstrate the shifting alliances of key power brokers and keep track of winners and losers. Political events are centered on the activities of political leaders, and the political climate reflects how these leaders create and manage political events, and sometimes how the public responds to these events. In this section, a content analysis of newspaper headlines in Japan and Thailand is conducted to look at how the media frame the issue of 'premiership', and how related political discourses are constructed. The extent to which the state and the media struggle to exert influence on the media frame, how the press employs expert or legitimate strategies in the framing of political news, and how the public responds to such contestation are also addressed. In analyzing the media frames on crucial events that

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[99]   Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", Journal of Communication, Autumn 1993, 43(4), pp. 51-58.

involve the Prime Ministers in both countries, the political role of the press in reporting these events will also be gauged.

The content analyses in the sections below were conducted on the headlines of three Thai newspapers, including *Naew Na*, *Matichon*, and *Thai Rath*, and three Japanese newspapers, including *Asahi*, *Yomiuri*, and *Mainichi*. The selected editions were the morning issues of the last month of office of recent Prime Ministers in both countries. In the Thai case, the morning editions of newspapers during the last month in the office of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (October 1-31, 1997) were selected. For the Japanese case, the morning editions of newspapers during the last month in the office of Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryûtarô (June 12 -July 14, 1998) were selected. These two Prime Ministers were chosen for a reason that they had been in power for a considerable time (approximately a year or more). In countries like Thailand and Japan where the occupant of the Prime Minister position changes on the average of fewer than eighteen months, this indicated a certain degree of policy continuity and stability in the government.

In both cases, the headlines of articles on either front page or political page were recorded and translated (see Appendices 11 and 12). Coding sheets were used to obtain details of headlines about the Prime Minister in the news articles (see Appendix 10). The article was selected when its content was oriented towards domestic political matters. The dominance of the article was measured by considering first whether the Prime Minister was featured in the headline. If the Prime Minister was absent from the headline, then attention was turned to other main political actors including cabinet members, the opposition, and the public. The topic of the headline was categorized according to its general meaning, such as the Prime Minister's failure in administration, the Prime Minister's activity, the coalition disarray, opposition to the Prime Minister, opposition to the coalition party, or support for the Prime Minister.

5.4.1 The Thai Press and the Premier: A Typical Guard Dog

The Prime Minister has always been a readily available target of the Thai press since the revocation of Decree No. 42 in 1991, which allowed the state unilateral power to close down any newspapers that criticized the Prime Minister and his ruling party. Moreover, in the 1990s, the premier's post was no longer at the pinnacle of power as it had been during the 1960s-1980s. In fact, Thailand had seven different Prime Ministers over this last decade.

Cultural factors that contribute to the public attitudes towards leaders in Thailand include the concepts of *decha* (power), and *khunna* (moral goodness). It is generally believed that a legitimate leader must have a combination of these two qualities, though the combination can vary from one leader to another.[100] Chavalit Yongchaiyudh became Prime Minister after his party, the New Aspiration Party (NAP), had won the November 1996 general election. Allegations about the NAP's extensive vote buying originated in foreign journals[101] and newspapers, which covered the issue extensively. The Thai press held back, waiting to ascertain Chavalit's probable fate before it attacked him. This can also be explained by the common phenomenon of a 'honeymoon period' usually given by the press to a new administration. However, a flood of critical coverage began to surface within six months. Scandals involving the NAP's deep involvement with 'money politics' were publicized. Chavalit's leadership in appointing unpopular ministers and his capability in economic management was largely questioned after the Thai Reserve Bank announced the flotation of the baht in the beginning of July 1997. Thus, for the Thais and particularly for the urban voters,

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[100]   Niels Mulder, Inside Thai Society: An Interpretation of Everyday Life (Bangkok: Duang Kamol, 1992), cited in James Ockey, "Thai Society and Patterns of Political Leadership", Asian Survey, April 1996, 36(4), p. 350.

[101]   Michael Vatikiotis reported that about US$ 1 billion was spent on vote buying in the November 1996 election. Michael Vatikiotis, "Tilting at Windmills", Far Eastern Economics Review, April 3, 1997, p. 18.

Figure 9: Main Actors in the Headlines of Articles in Matichon, Thai Rath, and Naew Na during October 1-31, 1997

The Army
3%

Technocrats
2%

The Public
14%

The Opposition
1%

Prime Minister
34%

Prime Minister's
cabinet members
46%
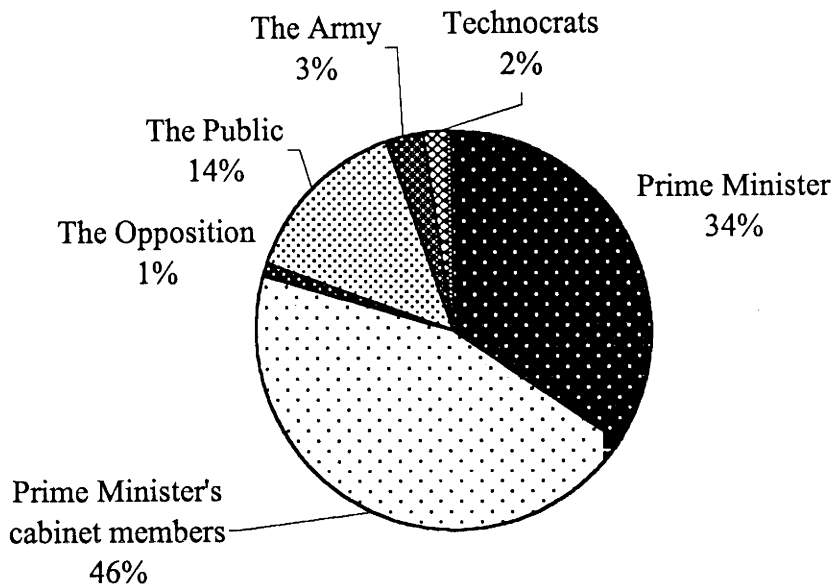
Figure 10: Topics of Headlines Featured in Matichon, Thai Rath, and Naew Na during October 1-31, 1997

Support for the
Prime Minister
2%

Prime Minister's
failure in
administration
14%

Opposition to the
Coalition Party
11%

Prime Minister's
personality/
activity
11%

Opposition to the
Prime Minister
28%

Party/Coalition
disarray
34%
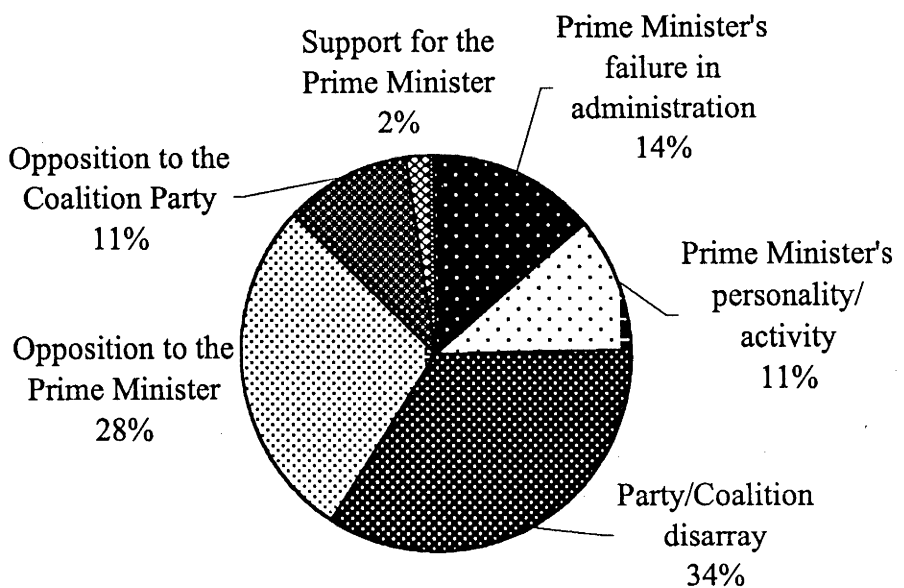
Chavalit had only *decha*, which suited a traditional Thai leader, but obviously lacked *khunna* - an ingredient essential for a legitimate leader of present-day Thailand. As the Thai press was fixated on these leadership qualities, Chavalit became a target of constant press criticism. Figure 9 shows that Chavalit and his close cabinet members were the main political actors featured in the headlines of the major Thai press.

The attacks in the major Thai newspapers focused on objections to the Prime Minister, his unattractive personality, and the failure of his administration. The press reports rarely went beyond his personal qualities focusing on allegations that the PM had Alzheimer's disease, that the PM's wife was obsessed with astrology, and that his party was struggling with internal disarray. The press coverage appeared to ignore investigation of the real reasons behind the economic turmoil, or discussion of potential policy solutions. As Marger has noted, "rarely do the mass media subject the dominant political economy to serious scrutiny and criticism".[102] One of the fundamental problems of the Thai economic downturn involved the irresponsibility, mismanagement and corruption within the Reserve Bank of Thailand. Nevertheless, the Bank scarcely made headlines in the Thai press. Instead, there were headlines using abusive languages attacking the Prime Minister such as, *"Jiw nak pan din ouk pai"* (Jiw (Chavalit), a wastrel, get out!) (see Appendix 11).[103]

To explain the hostility of the press coverage given to the Chavalit government, it is necessary to mention distinctive roles played by advocates in shaping the media frame. The government's mismanagement of the economy and frequent change of finance ministers attracted a swathe of criticism from both private and public sectors. Moreover, they were sceptical about attempts by conservative members of the government to block the passage of the new Constitution. All three newspapers analyzed here published articles written, or interviews given, by several influential individuals in the Thai politics and the economy. If the Thai press did have an impact

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[102] Martin N. Marger, "The Mass Media as a Power Institution", in M. E. Olsen, and M. N. Marger (eds.), <u>Power in Modern Societies</u> (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 243.

[103] "Jiw" is the nickname of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.

on public attitudes, then it was most likely to have been in articulating and reinforcing this public scepticism. As demonstrated below, the persistent antipathy of the public was highlighted by reporters and columnists as a crucial contextual factor in shaping their own perceptions of the legitimacy of the Chavalit government. The sentiments the press expressed, as it argued, were in tune with those of the public:

> *Matichon*: The public antipathy against Chavalit and his government is increasing. If General Chavalit listens to public opinion, he will realize that the public has suffered badly from the poor economic conditions.[104]

> *Thai Rath*: The grand movements by businessmen, public intellectuals and the middle class since yesterday on the Silom Rd. to drive this goverment out signified the overwhelming public antipathy against this government. In the past we saw students protesting against the military governments, but in the new age in which Thailand became a financial colony we have witnessed protestors wearing suits.[105]

> *Naew Na*: The public closed the business area and the Prime Minister's office to pull Jiw down from the premiership, since he has destroyed the nation for nearly a year. The military also watched closely, declaring that it has sided with the public.[106]

Severe criticisms of Chavalit and his government were consistently made throughout the paper ranging from headlines, news items, and commentaries, to editorial cartoons. Relationships between those in the press and those in government were inevitably strained. Snoh Thienthong, the interior minister, responded to the press scrutiny by setting up a media-monitoring center to rebuke the press and issue warnings. He also sought to use extralegal measures against directors and columnists of these papers (see Chapter Two). His rationale behind the establishment of such a center was that newspaper companies were opposed to the government because they suffered economically when their overseas debts doubled overnight as a result of the government's decision to float the baht. Deputy Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej even

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[104]   "*Thueng waela Chavalit siasala perd thang khon meephimue kobkoo chat*" (It's time for Chavalit to open a way for a better hand to recoup the nation), *Matichon Daily*, October 21, 1997, p. 2.

[105]   "*Scoop na nueng*" (Page one scoop), *Thai Rath*, October 21, 1997, p. 17.

[106]   "*Khon Thai ruam soon khoo chat*" (The Thai people unites to recoup the nation), *Naew Na*, October 21, 1997, p. 1.

Figure 11: Percentage of Topics in the Headlines of Articles in Matichon, Thai Rath, and Naew Na during October 1-31, 1997

Percentage
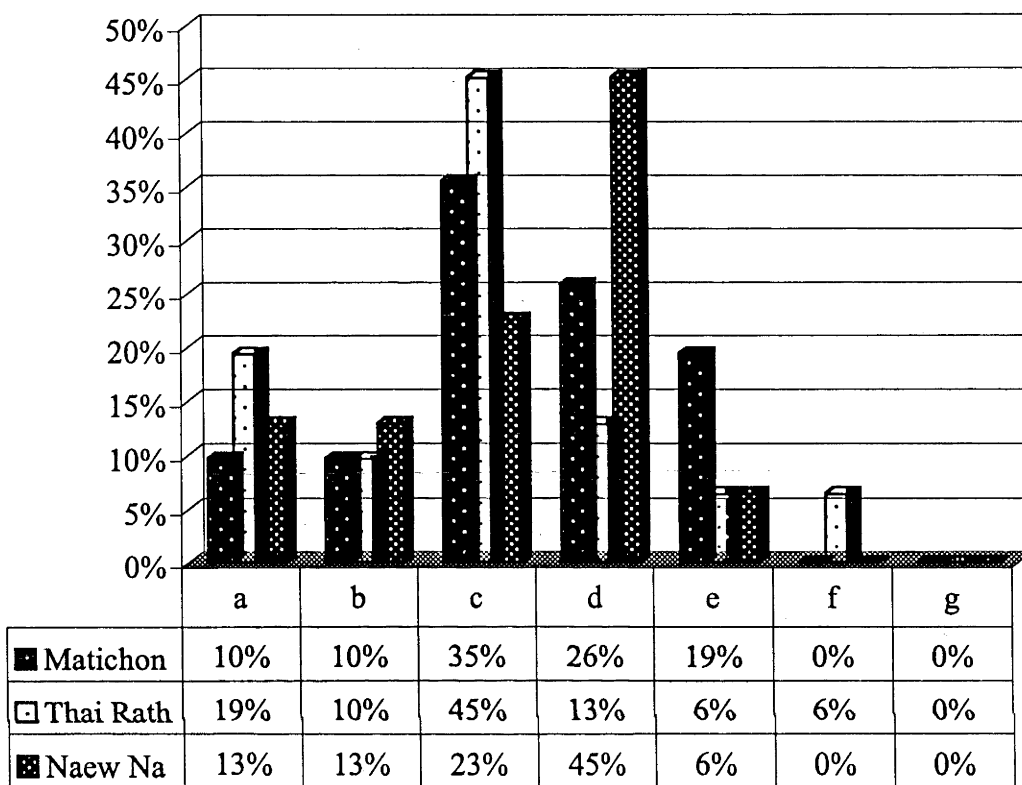
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Matichon	10%	10%	35%	26%	19%	0%	0%
Thai Rath	19%	10%	45%	13%	6%	6%	0%
Naew Na	13%	13%	23%	45%	6%	0%	0%

a = Prime Minister's failure in administration
b = Prime Minister's personality/activity
c = Party/Coalition disarray
d = Opposition to the Prime Minister
e = Opposition to the Coalition Party
f = Support for the Prime Minister
g = Others

claimed that the media were the root cause of the country's problem.[107] Although the Thai press rejected these claims, Surin Maisrikrod, an ex-journalist and currently a lecturer in Thai politics at James Cook University, offered this insight: "it is not surprising to see these newspapers feeling angry and turning to attack individuals in the government, since they lost lots of money as a consequence of the economic downturn".[108]

Further contestation over media frames by the government was evident in its attempt to launch a public relations campaign on state-run radio stations. Manipulation of the truth was clear when PM Chavalit made claims that there were reports from the Thai Intelligence Agency that public demonstrations were parts of a ploy initiated by a group of people with their own political ambitions, who funded the demonstrations and campaigned to drive him out.[109] Although such claims gained a certain degree of media attention, the press quickly reported that sixty per cent of the demonstrators at the rally on Silom Road had a bachelor's degree, and were not likely to have been paid for attending the rally.[110] Quotes of criticisms made by the foreign press, and various public polls concerning the Prime Minister and his cabinet that were conducted by tertiary educational institutions were used by the major papers to counteract Chavalit's claims.[111] The results of these polls mostly indicated a strong negative public feedback on the Prime Minister and his administration.[112]

There are two interesting aspects of the three newspapers that emerged from the analyses of their headlines. Firstly, it is noticeable that the headlines used in *Matichon*

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[107] "Samak vents his frustration at freedom of the press", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, September 11, 1997 (on-line edition).

[108] Dr. Surin Maisrikrod, James Cook University. Interview on November 10, 1997.

[109] "*Jiw choe buang lung mob 1 por 1 chor and 2 Khunying Chor*" (Jiw disclosed the truth behind the rally - backing by one male with initial P., another with initial C., and two ladies with initial C.", <u>Matichon Daily</u>, October 22, 1997, pp. 1-2.

[110] "*Perd krong sang mob 21 tula*" (Reveal the structure of the October 21 rally), <u>Phujadkan Daily</u>, October 22, 1997, p. 4.

[111] "*Thai-thet muen kor.ror.mor. Jiw 4 yee yeu nakwichakan-thurakit phid wang samsak*" (Both Thai and foreigners were dissatisfied with the cabinet reshuffle, Intellectuals and businessmen were disappointed again and again), <u>Naew Na</u>, October 26, 1997, p. 1, 7.

[112] For example, a survey by Suan Dusit Poll on the attitudes of business proprietors in Bankok towards the government showed that more than fifty per cent of respondents wanted the Prime Minister to resign.

were strong but tactful. Although the majority was directed at the government, some expressed great concern regarding the effects of inflation on the people. The headlines in *Naew Na*, on the other hand, consisted of abusive and derogatory terms. As indicated in Figure 11, about forty-five per cent of its headlines directly opposed to the Prime Minister. They used derogatory terms to brand the Prime Minister, such as a *torarat* (a traitor), *nhak pan din* (a wastrel), and *khattakorn Jiw* (Jiw (Chavalit), the murderer). Furthermore, the discussion in its news columns did not corroborate the headlines. Not surprisingly, *Naew Na* was the main target of the government established media monitoring center. Opposition to the government seemed to permeate the entire structure of *Naew Na*. It was reported that the publishers of *Naew Na* newspaper appeared to be the main organizers of the major demonstration on Silom Road on October 21.[113] Thus, it can be argued that the personal relationships between the newspaper publishers and the powerful politicians was significant here. Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, a director and a columnist of *Naew Na*, is a close ally of General Prem Tinsulanonda, and was a Foreign Minister during Prem's premiership. The newspaper also repeatedly sent pro-Prem messages to people in its news columns. For example, frequent messages included: "if we don't change the Prime Minister, if we don't change the cabinet, and if we don't have a person like General Prem as the Prime Minister, we will be facing bankruptcy like many other countries".[114] Prasong's close relationship with the major opposition party, the Democrat Party, became clear when he was made an adviser on security when the Party replaced Chavalit's New Aspiration Party to lead the government in late 1997. A long time animosity between Prasong and Snoh, Chavalit's interior minister, also had a great influence on how *Naew Na* covered Chavalit and his close cabinet members during their last month in office.

Secondly, the concentration of press attacks after the float of the baht and during the decline of the government is indicative of how the Thai press in general recognizes the significance of power held by certain political figures at a particular point of time. The press will not attack certain figures should they have enough power to take revenge.

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113   *Phujadkan Daily*, October 22, 1997, p. 4.
114   "*Khwam hen Naew Na*" (*Naew Na*'s opinion), *Naew Na*, October 20, 1997, p. 1.

Instead, they will wait until the influence and popularity of these dominant figures are in decline. These characteristics of the Thai press are reflected in comments made by Boonrak Boonyakhetamala of Thammasat University:

> When a man is at the pinnacle of his power, no one will attack him,
> but when he begins to slide from power and is vulnerable, journalists
> go after him like a pack of dogs.[115]

Boonrak also suggested another reason why the press severely attacked Chavalit and his cabinet members: "it's easier and quicker for the press to frame the story. Rather than finding out what has gone wrong in the system, it's somehow more convenient to pick an individual in the system and point a finger at him that he is a wrong-doer".[116] This feature of the Thai press is similar to that described in the 'guard dog' thesis, where the media are generally viewed as being loyal to their owners and siding according to the owners' political inclination. However, when the welfare of the system is threatened, these guard dogs will bark and attack the individuals in power roles rather than the power structure.[117] These 'guard dog' media will report this challenge on individuals in a way that is often regarded as a media attack. Indeed the reporting can portray its subjects as renegades or villains, even when they are part of the power structure. Indeed, when the Thai economic crisis intensified, the press portrayed Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh as an incapable PM, one with Alzheimer's disease who always forgot what he had said and changed his mind, one with a level of intelligence not so much different from the comedians performing at cafés and nightclubs, and one who was always accompanied with MPs who only wanted to make money and profit from what they spent on vote-buying. Chavalit's reluctant support for the passage of the Constitution was underlined by the press as a threat to the country's democracy. In the face of these press criticisms and negative urban opinion expressed through the press, Prime Minister Chavalit resigned on November 6, 1997.

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[115] An interview with Boonrak Boonyaketamala cited in Jon Vanden Heuvel and Everette Dennis, The Unfolding Lotus: East's Asia Changing Media (New York: Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, 1996), p. 173.

[116] Thawatchai Jaranai, "*Boonrak Boonyakhetamala wikhroe nungsuphim Thai thammai tong khayom Jiw*" (Boonrak Boonyakhetamala's analysis on why the Thai Press attacked Jiw), *Matichon Sudsapda*, October 21, 1997, pp. 68-9.

[117] George A. Donahue, Phillip J. Tichenor, and Clarice N. Olien, "A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of the Media", Journal of Communication, Spring 1995, 45 (2), p. 122.

5.4.2 The Japanese Press and the Premier: A Reluctant Guard Dog

The distinctive difference between the Thai and Japanese Prime Ministers is the fact that the Japanese Prime Ministers do not need to acquire as strong individual images to gain public popularity to ascend to the top.[118] A crucial reason lies in Japan's system of leadership recruitment, wherein factional politics essentially determines the selection of the LDP president, who, in turn, becomes a legitimate leader by virtue of his party's majority of votes in the Diet. Three conditions of this legitimate leader are being a senior leader of one of the five major factions within the LDP, having a strong intra-factional support, and being committed to building inter-factional alliances. None of this has anything to do with popular appeal.

Consequently, the Japanese Prime Minister is merely a front man who articulates a policy consensus, and who is needed for factional power-sharing arrangements on which his selection to the top rests. Clearly, he is in a weak position *vis-a-vis* both party factions and the bureaucracy. As such, the prime ministerial style in Japan has been branded as "reactive leadership".[119] The Japanese press generally pays much attention to its 'reactive' premier. Therefore, such attention was not focused on his policy initiative, but rather on how he would achieve a consensus of opinions from his faction, and how he would avoid conflicts among factions to achieve policy resolution. An earlier examination of illustrations of the Japanese Prime Minister in editorial cartoons has suggested that the Prime Ministers were often portrayed as weak,

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118   This also reflects the difference of the position of political parties in both countries. Thai political parties, unlike their Japanese counterpart, tend to confine themselves to parliamentary activities, rather than establishing themselves as mass organizations engaging public movements and activities. McCargo suggested that this was due to Thai popular perceptions which generally distrust political parties of their political motives. See further discussion of Thai political parties in Duncan McCargo, "Thailand's Political Parties: Real, Authentic, and Actual", in K. Hewison (ed.), <u>Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation</u> (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 121.

119   Hayao Kenji, <u>The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy</u> (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1993).

Figure 12: Main Actors in the Headlines of Articles in Asahi, Yomiuri, and Mainichi from June 12 to July 14, 1998

The Public
9%

The Opposition
11%

Prime Minister
53%

Prime Minister's
cabinet members
27%
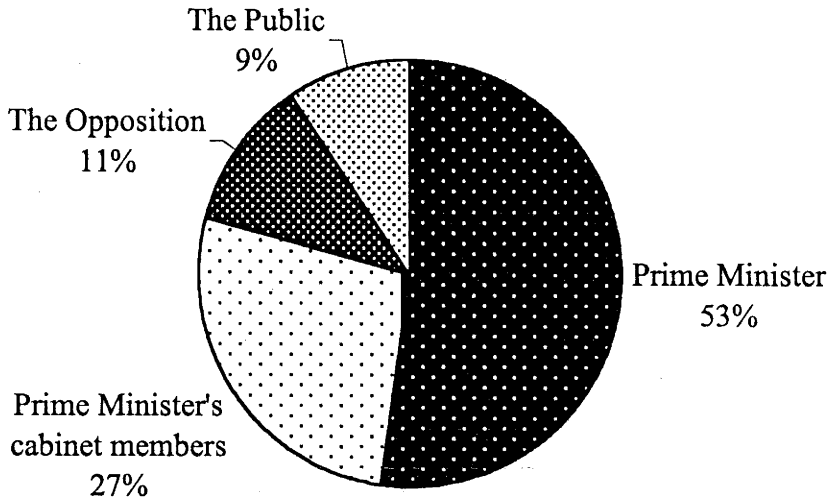
Figure 13: Topics of the Headlines Featured in Asahi, Yomiuri, and Mainichi from June 12 to July 14, 1998

Others
14%

Prime Minister's
failure in
administration
14%

Support for the
Prime Minister
3%

Prime Minister's
personality/
activity
27%

Opposition to the
Coalition Party
27%

Opposition to the
Prime Minister
10%

Party/Coalition
disarray
5%
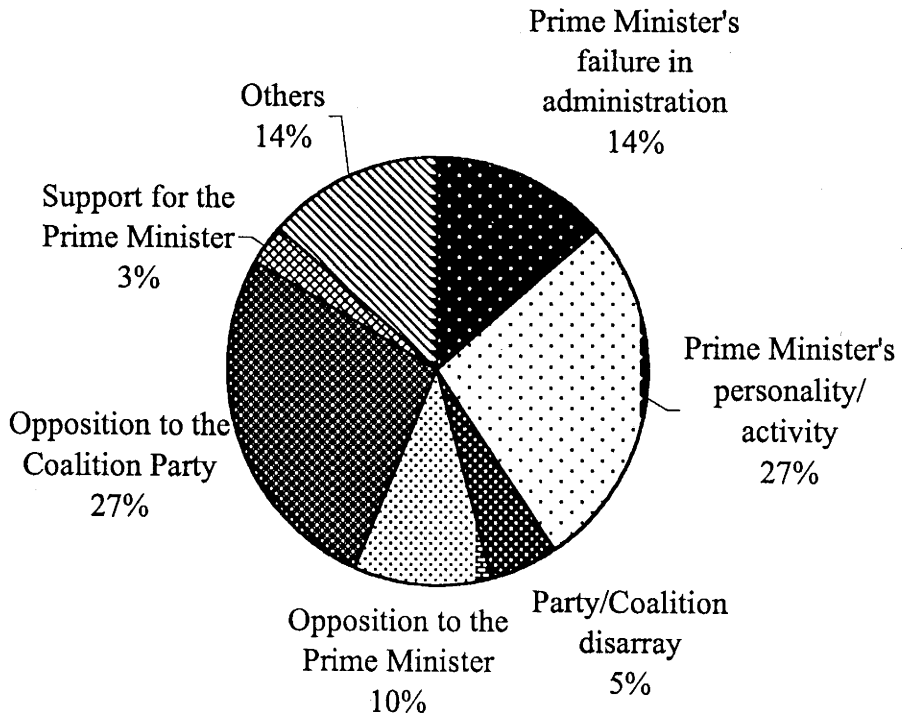
confused, and lacking in confidence -- a combination of qualities which detracts from being a charismatic leader.[120]

When Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryûtarô came into power after the general election in 1996, he was faced with a host of pressing issues: administrative reform, economic reform, reform of the financial system, and problems of a rapidly ageing society. In April 1997, Hashimoto raised the national consumption tax from three to five per cent, and repealed a special income and residential tax cut to reduce the fiscal deficit. As a result, the recession deepened and unemployment soared. The public's antipathy increased when the vice-minister of health and welfare was arrested on suspicion of conspiring with companies that built nursing homes. Soon after, mismanagement and corruption within the Ministry of Finance was exposed following the collapse of Yamaichi Securities, one of the nation's four biggest securities houses in Japan. These scandals obliged the Hashimoto administration to tackle administrative reform that had been unpopular among old-guard politicians, bureaucrats and vested interest groups, who were in no hurry to challenge the arrangements that had served them well. In 1998, Hashimoto announced some measures aimed at promoting economic recovery, including tax reductions and reform of the banking system. However, the economy reacted negatively to the announcement, as the LDP appeared to be too slow in addressing the problem of bad loans burdening financial institutions. It was only before the Upper House election in July 1998 that the LDP came up with several drastic measures, including the establishment of a bridge-bank, and a permanent tax-cut package. However, the press saw the responses as too little too late, and became strongly critical of Hashimoto's inept handling of the economy. In the July election, the majority of voters decided to vote against the LDP and Hashimoto resigned.

As shown in Figures 12 and 13, fifty per cent of the headlines of the three major newspapers in Japan focused on the Prime Minister. Yet, unlike the Thai case, only ten

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[120]   Ofer Feldman, "Political Reality and Editorial Cartoons in Japan: How the National Dailies Illustrate the Japanese Prime Minister", Journalism Quarterly, Autumn 1995, 72(3), pp. 571-580.

per cent of the general meanings of the headlines in the major Japanese press were directly opposed the Prime Minister. Particularly, there was no single headline from *Asahi Shimbun* that could be categorized as directly attacking the Prime Minister. Instead, most headlines seemed to focus on his activities and policies, particularly on the economic measures he was considering to pursue (see Appendix 12). Wordings and terms used to address the Prime Minister were much more formal and straightforward than those used by the Thai press, yet puns were often used. For instance, a headline of *Asahi*'s political article on June 12, 1998, the day that the opposition parties submitted a no-confidence motion to the Parliament, featured, "*ryûtô dabi? nobori ryû*" (literally meaning a dragon's head with a snake's tail or a rising dragon, or a tame ending or a bright start). The Chinese character *ryû* used here was the same character as *ryû* in the Prime Minister's name, Ryûtarô.[121]

In contrast to the Thai press, which appeared to reflect and reinforce the public criticisms of Chavalit's policies and his mismanagement of the economy, the Japanese press seemed to have organized public opinion in forming dissent against Prime Minister Hashimoto and his government. While most headlines were focused on economic policy direction and complications, editorials in the major press were confined to attacking the government's slow responses to the economic problems, and urging the indecisive Hashimoto to take on radical economic policy. The permanent tax reduction plan initiated by Hashimoto was framed by the major press as merely an election promise in what was called by a *Mainichi* columnist a "*genzei senkyo*" (tax reduction election).[122] Similar criticisms were:

> *Mainichi*: The policy on permanent tax reduction is aimed at shoring up the stock market and yen value, and at the same time, the Prime Minister focuses on his visit the United States at the end of the month. It seems that the Prime Minister has tried to avoid discussing any concrete policy during the election. The permanent tax reduction policy is merely a political speculation that is based on a hasty conclusion that it would ease the people's economic burden, and the country's financial problem.[123]

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[121] *Asahi Shimbun*, June 12, 1998, p. 6.

[122] *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 7, 1998, p. 2.

[123] Komatsu Hiroshi, "*Shushô no kôkyû genzei yônin: Seiji teki omowaku ga sakibashiri*" (The acceptance of the Premier's permanent tax reduction plan: A mere political speculation), *Mainichi Shimbun*, Junly 2, 1998, p. 2.

Figure 14: Percentage of Topics in the Headlines of Articles in Yomiuri,
Mainichi, and Asahi from June 12 to July 14, 1998
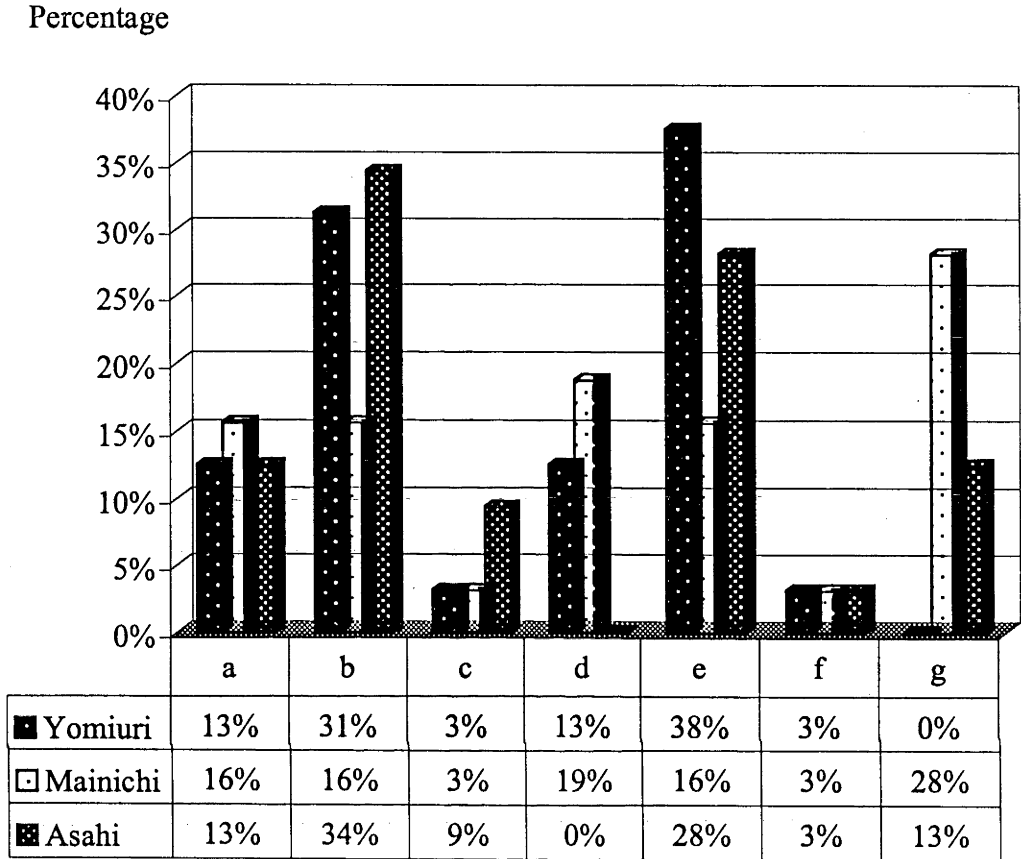
Percentage

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
■ Yomiuri	13%	31%	3%	13%	38%	3%	0%
□ Mainichi	16%	16%	3%	19%	16%	3%	28%
▨ Asahi	13%	34%	9%	0%	28%	3%	13%

a = Prime Minister's failure in administration
b = Prime Minister's personality/activity
c = Party/Coalition disarray
d = Opposition to the Prime Minister
e = Opposition to the Coalition Party
f = Support for the Prime Minister
g = Others

> *Asahi*: At the press conference after meeting with the LDP study group
> on the tax system last week, the Prime Minister suggested that, "this
> is not a special tax reduction, but I intend to introduce a permanent
> tax reform scheme". Katô Hiroichi, the LDP secretary, also said that
> the amount of tax cut will be at least two trillion yen. But how are we
> going to finance this at the time of rapidly ageing society. The government
> did not even say how we are going to support the health and welfare system
> after the tax cut.[124]

> *Yomiuri*: Prime Minister Hashimoto announced that a permanent tax reduction
> plan for income tax, residential tax will commence next year. The corporate
> tax will also be reduced to the level equal to the international standard. However,
> one can wonder why the Prime Minister suggested such a plan after the election
> campaign has started, and yet denied his suggestion directly afterwards. The Prime
> Minister seemed to continue to change his mind on the subject. But we cannot
> allow him to change his mind again. Rather, we should ensure that he will put
> in place the permanent tax reduction plan, which would assist in the
> economic recovery.[125]

However, it is noticeable that *Yomiuri*'s attacks on Hashimoto and his administration in its editorials were generally more subtle that those of *Asahi* and *Mainichi*. This had parallels with a series of its front-page editorials in June 1998 on economic problems and political solutions that did not directly criticize Hashimoto's mismanagement of the economy. Rather, these articles made various economic and political suggestions to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.[126] In comparison with *Asahi*, although *Asahi*'s headlines did not directly attack the Prime Minister, its editorials and cartoons seemed to address the Prime Minister in a more aggressive fashion than usual. For instance, it published an editorial cartoon characterizing Hashimoto as a sheep being chased around by two sheep dogs - one with "USA" written on it barking "permanent", and another with "Upper House Election" written on barking "tax reduction".[127]

The major press also framed the Upper House Election as an election that centered on voters' judgement of the government's performance on the economy.

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[124]   "*Shushô e no shingi no ba da*" (It's the place to judge the Prime Minister), *Asahi Shimbun*,
        July 9, 1998, p. 5.

[125]   "*Defure kaihi ni ato modori wa dekinai*" (Reversing the plan to avoid deflation cannot be done),
        Yomiuri Shimbun, July 9, 1998, p. 3.

[126]   See, "*Keizai kiki seiji e no teigen*" (A suggestion to politics on economic crisis), *Yomiuri
        Shimbun*, June 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 1998, p. 1.

[127]   *Asahi Shimbun*, July 10, 1998, p. 4.

Asahi's editorial published ten days before the poll suggested that voters should turn up to show their dissatisfaction with Hashimoto's indecision concerning the permanent tax cut.[128] *Mainichi*'s headline on July 11 suggested that Election Day would be the day that both Hashimoto and the LDP would be judged by the public.[129] Press condemnation of the government's economic policies was also reinforced by the use of a public polls undertaken by each newspaper on a nearly monthly basis to measure the public support for the government. The *Mainichi* poll published in September 1997, for instance, suggested a seven point drop in support for the cabinet in comparison to the previous month, and thirty-three per cent of respondents thought that Hashimoto's weakest point was his inept economic policy.[130] The *Yomiuri* poll in June 1998 even showed even less support for the cabinet.[131] Notably, public opinion polls that were featured prominently in *Yomiuri*, *Mainichi*, and *Asahi*, a few days before Upper House election all suggested that the public had developed a sense of crisis and insecurity towards the LDP, and predicted that the LDP would lose its seats. In this case, the press not only underpinned and supported the viewpoints already in circulation, but also articulated and organized ones that were consistent with their own viewpoints.

In this case, the newspapers' viewpoints were based partially on inside information, dispersed within the cosy information loop of factional reporters prior to the election, that Hashimoto was perceived within the party as a political loner, who commanded no particular faction in the party. As such, his leadership was undermined by not having strong intra or inter-factional supports. The Takeshita faction, the largest faction of the LDP at the time, wanted its leader, Obuchi Keizô, to be the next Prime Minister, and had already lobbied for the move.[132] Hashimoto also made a lot of enemies, especially amongst the old-guard LDP, who far from agreed with the need and direction of his reform plans, by designating his entire cabinet as the Government

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[128]   "*Warusa kagen wo kurabe tara*" (How about comparing the degree of badness), *Asahi Shimbun*, July 2, 1998, p. 5.
[129]   *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 11, 1998, p. 1
[130]   *Mainichi Shimbun*, September 10, 1997, p. 1.
[131]   *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 17, 1998, p. 3.
[132]   Interview with Iwamura Tatsurô, Deputy Chairman Editorial Board, *Asahi Shimbun* on November 17, 1998.

Administrative Reform Headquarters, and by putting the heat on ministers, particularly those with portfolios such as Construction, Housing, Health and Welfare, and Agriculture, who were all known to be wary of reform. Although such information was categorized as 'leaked information' and printed in some weekly magazines, it was never printed in major newspapers due to the reporters' club sanctions on publishing leaked information, and perhaps the strong adherence to the concepts of impartiality and nonpartisanship of the press. This open secret of the Prime Minister's weak position within his party perhaps encouraged *Mainichi* and *Asahi* to target the Prime Minister and critically attack him. However, for *Yomiuri*, despite having figured out that the Prime Minister would certainly lose his seat after the election, it reserved strong criticism against the Prime Minister and his administration due to its close relationships with the LDP.

Another reason that perhaps underpinned the reluctance of Japanese newspapers to directly attack the inability of the administration and ineptness of the Prime Minister was their concerns about the deregulation of newspaper industry. The industry derives more than half of its income from subscriptions, underpinned by a price maintenance system that requires all retailers to sell newspapers at a fixed price everywhere in the country. Moreover, these national newspapers also receive special tax privileges and the lowest postal charge by the Postal system and the Japanese Railway System.[133] The deregulation of these services would have inevitably meant more production costs for the newspapers. A threat of radical deregulation thus became a powerful weapon in the hands of the government of the day. To protect their control on the resale price of their publications and maintain the status quo, newspapers used their news pages to campaign against deregulation, most notably during the Hashimoto government's move towards administrative reform and deregulation.[134] The role of the Japanese press in this case could thus be branded as that of 'a reluctant guard dog'.

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[133]   Katsura Keiichi, *Gendai no Shimbun (Newspapers at Present)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997), pp. 87-88.

[134]   Ôta Hiroko, "Sharing Governance: Changing Functions of Government, Business, and NPOs", in Yamamoto Takashi (ed.), Deciding the Public Good: Governance and Civil Society in Japan (Tokyo: Japan Center of International Exchange, 1999), p. 137.

5.5 Comparative Remarks

Despite the decline in newspaper readership in Japan and Thailand during recent years, the press still retains an important position as the medium that actively interacts with the state and events produced by political actors, as well as reflecting the political opinions, ideologies, and values of the public. This was evident in the case study of Thai press coverage of political reform, in which the press framed the passage of a new Constitution as an agenda for political reform, and successfully articulated and reinforced public sentiment for reform. However, news about political conflicts revolving around the drafting of the Constitution dominated the entire press coverage. News about policy debates was only emphasized in the Thai quality press, which limited its target group to the urban readers, and reflected only the opinions of the better-educated Thai middle class.

The role of the Japanese press in covering political reform is perhaps more conformed than that which characterized the Thai press's coverage of the political reform. The heavy reliance of the Japanese press on quotes and comments from the official sources suggests that the Japanese state had more control over political information than the press. This argument was supported by the results of the content analysis, which showed that the majority of coverage on political reform was about conflict and compromise between opposite camps of politics. The domination of electoral reform coverage over the entire period of political reform packages suggests that journalists seemed to spend most of their time reacting to an agenda already set by politicians, rather than initiating it. In this context, the Japanese press was much more restrained in setting an agenda for reform independent of the government.

The content analyses of the press coverage of the premiers in both countries demonstrated how the press interacted with the state and public opinion more dynamically. The press struggled with the state by constructing its own discourse of political events, and inventing frames that offered guidance on how the stories would be

told. In the case of the Thai press coverage of Prime Minister Chavalit, the press was successful in the battle over media frames by focusing on public dissent against the government and the mismanagement of economic policy by the Prime Minister. Although the state attempted to promote its political frame to the press and other media, the Thai press adhered to its own frame and never hesitated to directly assign the blame to the Prime Minister and his close aides. However, the partisanship of the Thai press characterized these active roles as those of a mere guard dog. The Japanese press, on the other hand, was more reluctant to target the Prime Minister. It only did so after ensuring that he was unlikely to be at the pinnacle of power, or to have sufficient authority to jeopardize the status-quo.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTESTS AND THE POLITICAL ROLE OF

TELEVISION NEWS

*iTV does not want to see any low-ranking police officers
becoming a scapegoat. Rather iTV's venture against police
corruption is aimed at persuading the Police Commander
and the Minister of Interior to demonstrate their courage
and seriousness to punish any officers who involve in
corruption.*

Editors of *iTV*[1]

*Since commercial stations are regulated by the licensing
system, they fall into the whims of the MPT. They are
weak and trembled by any calls from the Communication
Council to appear before them. In such an instance, the only
support that commercial stations have in order to contest with
the authority is the public support. In the case of
TV Asahi's problem this time, we achieved an unexpected result.
This was all due to the overwhelming public support.*

Tahara Sôichirô[2]

The ownership structure of television broadcasting in Thailand and Japan, as

well as the licensing systems of television broadcasting services, as discussed in Chapter

Three, have been the manifestation of coercive and reward strategies which both Thai

and Japanese states employ to control political information dissemination. However,

recent changes in the television broadcasting marketplace in both countries -- the results

of liberalization and increased competition -- have given the television medium an ability

to compete for control over political information by presenting alternative discourses

and interpretations of political events. The extent of these political information contests

and the extent of the power relations that were exercised between the television medium,

the state, and the public, as well as its impact and influence on the political roles of

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[1]   Statements by the Editorial Board of *iTV*, broadcast on *iTV* evening news on April 24, 1998.
[2]   Extracted from an interview withTahara Sôichirô, a TV journalist regularly hosted a current
affairs program - *Sunday Project* -, by a Mainichi Reporter in *"Kenryoku no hôdô kainyû"* (The
Power of Intervention in Reporting), <u>Mainichi Shimbun</u> (evening edition), March 18, 1999, p.
3.

television are the core of this chapter. However, this will be limited to the realm of television news. Current affairs programs, political discussion programs, and special editions of election campaign coverage, though relevant, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

In recent years, television has gained a position as the prime source of political information for both the Thai and Japanese public. In Japan, despite having the highest volume of newspaper circulation in the world, television has become a preferred source of political information.[3] The rapid increase in television penetration in Thailand has brought similar results. In particular, technological and regulatory changes and increased competition have increased TV viewership in both countries. In Thailand, a new news channel -- Independent Television or *iTV* -- has gained a reputation for its investigative style of news reporting, and its watchful gaze on the state's wrongdoings. In Japan, evening news bulletins and late night news programs such as *News Station* and *News23* have pluralised media content, increasingly challenged mainstream political discourses, and engaged public opinion. What were the forces which made this contestation possible, what was the nature of TV news coverage, and what role has the television medium assumed in Japanese and Thai politics? To answer these questions this chapter will outline the evolving nature of the television marketplace, the changing dynamics of news programs in both countries, and significant news events where the TV media strongly contested state interpreted meanings of political situations, and the extent to which these challenges determined the shifts in the political role of the TV news media.

6.1 The Marketplace for TV News

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[3]   According to NHK public opinion surveys in 1985 and 1993, there was a shift to relying on television as a major source of political and social information among the Japanese public. In 1985, the Japanese people relied more on newspaper (46%) than television (43%) for information; whereas in 1990 television (52%) replaced newspaper (37%) as a major source of information. See Okamura Reimei, *Terebi no asu (The Future of Television)*, Iwanami Shinsho Booklet No. 283 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 70; a similar survey conducted nationally by *Yomiuri Shimbun* in 1995 also showed that people relied more on news programs on television (54%) than newspapers (40%) for information on political parties and current political situation. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 21, 1995, p. 3.

In Thailand, the television penetration rate has rapidly increased over the last ten years. Whilst 50.1 % of total households had at least one television in 1989, that figure climbed to 94 % of total households in 1997.[4] In these households the most watched programs on television are news programs, and free-to-air TV news has been the main source of political information for the Thai public.[5] According to a public opinion poll conducted in Bangkok and metropolitan area in 1999, television ranked first as the public source for news and information.[6] This has also led to the widespread use of television for political campaigning in recent elections. The results of the 1996 election, for example, indicated a strong correlation between the amount of money spent on television advertising by political parties and voting results.[7]

As television audiences have increased since 1994, the total daily newspaper circulation has remained steady. Indeed, the Thai public consumes a relatively low amount of print media, as indicated by paper consumption rate. According to a 1999 UNESCO report, there was only 13.1 tons of paper consumed annually per 1,000 people in Thailand, whereas people in Singapore and Hong Kong consumed up to 98 tons per 1,000 people. As Nidhi Aeusrivongse argues, conventional methods of reading which interpret and understand the core meanings of written words have never been a part of Thai culture.[8] Before newspapers were introduced, most Thai materials written for mass consumption were either aesthetic poetry or literature, and were written mostly for recitation and theatrical performance. The Thai tradition actually emphasized auditory and visual modes of communication. Old Thai sayings such as *'au hoo tuan lom'* (thrusting your ears against the wind), and *'sib pak wa mai thao ta hen'* (one

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[4]   National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Report of the Mass Media Survey (Radio and Television) 1989 (Bangkok: National Statistical Office, 1989), p. 6; Far East Advertising Company, Media Guidebook: Thailand' 97-98 (Bangkok: Far East Advertising, 1997), p. 12.

[5]   Far East Advertising Company, Media Guidebook: Thailand' 97-98, p. 19.

[6]   See the results of ABAC poll in "Economic news out-votes politics", The Nation, September 27, 1999 (on-line edition).

[7]   The New Aspiration Party, which was the biggest spender on television advertising in the 1996 campaign, won the election. The total amount of money spent on TV advertising by political parties in the 1996 campaign almost trippled from what was spent in the 1995 election. See "*Yuthakan chaiseu hasieng*" (Media Strategy for Election Campaigning), *Prachachart Thurakit*, November 26-29, 1998, p. 3.

[8]   Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "*Watthanatham kan'an* " (Reading Culture), *Matichon Sudsapda*, April 25, 2000, p. 47.

sighting is worth more than ten rumors) reflect such traditions. The public's reliance on hearing and seeing as ways of receiving information ensured the success of television - a medium which offers both sight and sound.

From its advent, television has been an important part of Thai society. However, its primary role has been to convey official news and information to the Thai public. The evening news bulletins of early broadcasts merely focussed on the Prime Minister and his aides.[9] Fifty years later, the Thai television news formats remained the same, but its content had become more sensationalized. Thus, the government of Anand Panyarachun felt the need to emphasize the importance of television in providing necessary and impartial news and information in the 1992 plan to liberalize UHF channels. This emphasis was clearly reflected by the requirement for one channel to allocate seventy per cent of broadcast time to information.

Table 8: Comparison of Percentage of Program Content Broadcast on Six Stations in Thailand between 1999 and 1979* (in brackets)

Channel	Information (%)	Entertainment (%)	Advertisement (%)	Broadcasting Hour (seconds per day)
3	23.10 (14.10)	61.58 (67.48)	15.32 (17.27)	75,285 (46,654)
5	30.93 (22.44)	52.27 (56.44)	11.8 (19.17)	86,400 (33,540)
7	37.26 (19.01)	52.27 (63.64)	10.47 (16.61)	71,400 (30,026)
9	60.84 (42.53)	27.07 (42.78)	12.09 (13.11)	74,314 (36,231)
11	96.71 (N/A)***	3.29 (N/A)	0.0** (N/A)	60,900 (N/A)
iTV	81.64 (N/A)	10.78 (N/A)	8.18 (N/A)	69,171 (N/A)

* The 1979 data is based on a content analysis of programs broadcast during September 1-7, 1979 conducted by Boonlert Supphadilok. The 1999 data was based on data gathered in May 1999 by the Public Relations Department.
**Only government commercials are allowed on Channel 11, and these are considered "information".
***N/A = Data not available, since Channel 11 was established in 1987, and iTV in 1996.

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[9]   Sinith Sitthirak, _Kamnerd thorathat thai phor sor 2493 – 2500 (Inception of Thai Television 1950-1957)_ (Bangkok: Kled Thai, 1992), pp. 226-236.

The official permission to broadcast 24 hours, which was given in 1991, had already induced existing channels to increase the ratio of information to program content. The emergence of an information channel added a new strength to the competitiveness in news and information programs among existing TV broadcasters. As shown in the above table, the percentage of news and information programs has dramatically increased during the twenty-year period. More substantially, the liberalization brought changes and competitiveness in style and format of television news coverage, which had long been designed and operated within the confines of official standards.

Thai television had twice experienced changes in news broadcasting styles. The first time was in 1975 when a television guru, Sampasiri Wiriyasiri, introduced a news update program at Channel 9 that aired an uncensored non-official news bulletin every hour. However, the program was banned soon after its coverage of the brutal killings of students by right-wing extremists and the police and military in October 1976. The second change in style was when Somkiat Onwimon, who had graduated from the US education system with a PhD in communication, joined Channel 9 in 1985. He tried to adopt an American broadcasting format that emphasized the news anchor, live broadcasts, expert comments, and musical backgrounds. Somkiat extended news time from a half an hour to one hour and a half. He broadened coverage beyond state issues and introduced criticism and commentary.[10] He also refined foreign news segments by adding items broadcast via CNN satellites. Soon after these changes Channel 9's viewership soared, which prompted the government under the leadership of General Prem Tinnasulanondh to suppress the innovations. Prem publicly criticized Somkiat for airing a news item that contrasted urban and rural infrastructure spending. A few months later, Somkiat disappeared from the station but was soon attending the courses

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[10]   For relevant materials see Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "Television and the Emergence of Civil Society in Thailand", in D. French and M. Richards (eds.), Contemporary Television: Eastern Perspectives (New Delhi: Sage, 1996), pp. 181-99.

run by the National Defense College, which instructed businessmen and civilians about the importance of the army and national security.[11] Somkiat later moved to produce news for the Army-owned Channel 7 and Channel 5, and gained a concession to run a 24-hour traffic radio channel on one of the Army's frequencies.

The style of presentation in Thai news programs had been refined by Somkiat, but the content of news and complexity of stories needed further enhancement. Although all news producers in the early 1990s learned to draw the line between the touchable in the political realm and the untouchable in the royal circle by putting political and royal news into separate segments, political news was still mundane and shallow. Its content was limited to supporting the status quo. Investigative stories on political corruption and scandals were usually follow-ups to press reports. The press was actually a major source of news stories for TV news programs until the advent of *iTV*. Independent Television, or *iTV*, was the first UHF channel, privately operated under a concession given by the OPM. After its launch on July 1, 1996, *iTV* gained a reputation for its innovative reporting and in-depth news analysis. This was largely because one of its controlling consortium members was the Nation Multimedia Group.[12] The expertise in newspaper journalism that the Nation Group brought to the TV market undercut the traditional style of news reporting, which emphasizes straightforward newsreading with a few background pictures. For the first time with *iTV*, television news actually became the source of press reports. The channel did not present news in hierarchical order but started with the headline of the day, and often intertwined political and social issues whilst highlighting public concerns. Lead stories combined straight news details with documentary-style reports, graphics, pictures, sound bytes, and sometimes live broadcasts. One of *iTV* executives, Suphap Kleekhachai, claimed that *iTV* looked to CNN as a prototype, and presented news in a language that was easy for audiences to understand.[13] The CNN style of reporting -- including live, exclusive and

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[11]   Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, <u>Thailand Economy and Politics</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 372.

[12]   In May 2000, Shin Corp. bought forty per cent of *iTV* shares and became the major share holder. The Nation Multimedia Group, on the other hand, left *iTV* and bound for the new news channel on cable TV.

[13]   "*Raikankhao iTV young tong nuai to*" (News Programs: More struggle for *iTV*), <u>*Phujadkan*</u>

investigative news (locally known as *khao sod, khao jo,* and *khao tid*) -- quickly emerged as a tradition for *iTV* newsmakers. The station's emulation of the CNN style of news reporting certainly met with approval and increased audiences.

Table 9: Rating of TV Audiences of Five Broadcasting Stations in Thailand between May 1997 and May 1998 (excluding *iTV*)

Station Time	Ch 3	Ch 5	Ch 7	Ch 9	Ch 11
16.00-18.45	47.0	8.3	31.5	10.2	2.9
18.45-22.30	38.3	12.4	43.2	4.4	1.7
22.30-24.00	34.5	14.8	38.5	9.4	3.8
08.00-16.00 Mon-Fri	34.5	14.8	38.5	9.4	2.8
08.00-16.00 Sat-Sun	26.1	11.1	43.8	16.7	2.3
06.00-24.00 Everyday	36.8	12.1	40.3	8.5	2.3

Source: Prakit & FCB Ltd., Media Dynamics cited in *"Pholsamruad rating TV chong 3 bi chong 7 soodman TV phuakhun young champ"* (Survey TV Ratings: Channel 3 is close to Channel 7, which remains the top), *Prachacart Thurakit*, July 23-26, 1998, pp. 17-18.

ITV's success also influenced market leaders such as Channel 7 and Channel 3. Both stations increased their scoop to story ratio, and interspersed news programs between prime-time drama series.[14] As shown in Table 9, Channel 7 retained its position as a market leader of news programs during prime time (18.45-22.30) in 1997 and 1998. This was largely due to its large coverage area. The success of *iTV* also inspired the Army-run Channel 5 to launch its Global Network Broadcast in 1998, which was designed to carry more foreign news items as well as coverage of economic and financial matters. During the same year, the state-owned Channel 9 upgraded its

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rai supda , March 3, 1997, pp. 35-36.

14   *"Wig jet si thuang champ yok khruang prime time chon chong sam"* (Channel 7 overhauls
      its prime time programs to compete with Channel 3), *Prachachart Thurakit*, April 26, 1998,
      p. 21.

news programs to include more scoops, live broadcasts, and sports coverage.[15] Channel 11 refocused its programs since mid-1996 to emphasize exclusive news and regional coverage.[16] According to the Director of Program Production at Channel 11, *iTV*'s success prompted Channel 11 to set up its own news team after having solely relied on news provided by the Thai News Agency since its establishment.[17] Following the 1997 economic crisis, an associated downturn in advertising revenue, marketing factors and audience reach were also entrenched as key determinants of competitiveness for TV news coverage in Thailand.[18]

In Japan, television consumption spread earlier and more rapidly than it did in Thailand. From 1953 to 1962, television penetration rose from 0.1 per cent to 45.8 per cent of the total population.[19] In particular, television became a subject of mass consumption in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympics, and by that time it had outstripped cinemas as the prime source for entertainment.[20] Since the television penetration rate reached nearly 100 per cent in the early 1980s,[21] the Japanese public has relied on television not only for entertainment, but also for information. According to the NHK national survey on time-use that was conducted every five years from 1970 to 1995, both Japanese men and women spent increasingly more time watching television for information.[22] For instance, during 1995 Japanese men spent an average of

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[15]   *"Fai lon kon TV rath phueng tuen Chong kao Chong sibed prab 'dtalud"* (Backburning State-run TV: Channel 9 and Channel 11 just revamped", *Prachachart Thurakit*, November 2-4, 1998, pp. 17-8.

[16]   *"Perd kolayut iTV-Chong sibed ching TV khaosan"* (Disclosure of *iTV* and Channel 11's strategies to lead in television news), *Krungthep Thurakit*, July 1, 1996, pp. 7-8.

[17]   Interview Tuenchai Sintuwanick, Director of Program Production of Channel 11, on July 18, 2000.

[18]   In 1997, gross television advertising expenditure was 24,603 million baht. In 1998, it dropped to 21,164 million baht, which was approximately fourteen per cent decline. See Pocket Thailand in Figures (Bangkok: Alpha Research, 1999), p. 172.

[19]   Shiga Nobuo, *Shôwa terebi hôsô-shi (jô) (The History of Television Broadcasting in the Shôwa Period I)* (Tokyo: Hayagawa Shobô, 1990), p. 259.

[20]   Marilyn Ivy, "Formations of Mass Culture", in A. Gordon (ed.), Postwar Japan as History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 248-249.

[21]   From 1983 and 1993, the penetration rate of colour television in Japan was ranging between 99.0 to 99.4 per cent. See Iyoda Yasuhiro et al (eds.), *Terebishi Handobuggu (Television Handbook)*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Jiyûkokuminsha, 1998), p. 130.

[22]   Mitsuya Keiko and Yoshida Rie, *"Seigatsu jikan no toki keiretsu henka - 1970 nen ~1995 nen no kokumin seigatsu jikan chôsa no toki keiretsu bunseki"* (Change in Time Use: Analysis of NHK National Time Use Surveys from 1970 to 1995), *NHK Hôsô Bunka Chôsa Kenkyû Nenpô*, 1997, (42), pp. 190-193.

thirty minutes reading newspapers on weekday, while spending up to three hours and fifteen minutes watching television. This time spent watching TV had increased by half an hour since 1990.[23] This change coincided with the reduction of working hours in Japan which commenced in the early 1990s. According to Table 10 below, news programs comprised approximately twenty per cent of total program content aired on Japanese commercial televisions in the 1990s.

Table 10: Average Daily TV Program Content Broadcast by Commercial Broadcasters in Japan in 1994 and in 1998*

Types of Program	1994 (Percentage)	1998 (Percentage)
News	20.7	19.6
Education (Coursework)	12.9	12.0
Culture and Education	24.7	25.4
Entertainment	39.4	39.2
Advertising	1.2	2.5
Others	1.1	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0

* The 1994 data is based on data collected between January and March 1994. The 1998 data is based on data collected between October 1997 and March 1998.

Source: Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, 1998 White Paper Communications in Japan (Tokyo: General Planning and Policy Division, MPT, 1998), p. 69; The National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan, Japan NAB Handbook 1994/95 (Tokyo: NAB, 1995), p. 67.

Equally important was the increasingly significant function of television as a central device in political campaigns in Japan during the 1990s. The 1996 election campaign, in particular, was regarded by all political parties as a 'media-centered campaign' in which television advertising played a prominent role.[24] Organized media campaigning via TV advertising as well as news coverage has become the main strategy for success in electoral politics. However, expert analysis and not straight reportage has become the foundation of news coverage in this era of 'mass-mediated elections'.[25]

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[23]   Ibid.
[24]   Todd Joseph Miles Holden, "Commercialized Politics: Japan's New Mass Mediated Reality", Japanese Studies Bulletin, 1999, 19(1), pp. 33-46.
[25]   Ibid., p. 37.

In Japan, NHK's *sôgô terebi* has dominated the TV marketplace as a news and information provider for the public since its initial broadcast in 1953. It was largely developed under the guidance of President Maeda Yoshinori (1964-73) who was directly involved in strengthening and expanding the news bureau. Since then, NHK news has become a flagship for its organization.[26] On the other hand, commercial channels, which emerged between the 1950s and 1960s, have focused their resources and funding on producing drama series and entertainment programs, and relied largely on their affiliated newspapers for news. They reasoned that they would never be able to beat NHK in news reporting, because NHK was often granted exclusive coverage of governmental functions and meetings. Moreover, NHK has had more staff and better equipment for these purposes than the other channels. By 1997, NHK had established 3,478 relay stations around the country and its staff had reached 12,986 people.[27]

In 1962 NHK's monopoly of news and information was challenged when TBS launched a 7 pm anchor-type news program called "*News Koopu*". This program deviated from the NHK's formal news reading pattern to provide news plus comments offered in a language that was easy for general audiences to understand.[28] The program focused on investigative stories, particularly those concerning social issues. However, the famous anchor of the program, Den Hideo, was forced to resign after he criticized U.S. policy during the Vietnam War.[29] In 1974, NHK marked a turning point in television news reporting by launching a 9 pm program that was aimed at late-shift working urban viewers. This was an anchor-type news program called "*News Center 9*", or *NC9*. The program gained high popularity among viewers, largely owing to its creative visual and sound presentation, as well as to its famous anchor, Isomura Naoki, who became known as Mr. NHK.[30] Yet *NC9* lost its popularity after Isomura left in

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[26] For further details on President Maeda Yoshinori and his contribution to the development of NHK news, see Ellis S. Krauss, <u>Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 127-30.

[27] Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai-hen, <u>'98 NHK Nenkan (1998 NHK Radio&Television Yearbook)</u> (Tokyo, NHK, 1998), p. 1, 58.

[28] Tahara Shigeyuki, <u>Terebi no uchigawa de (The inside of Television)</u> (Tokyo: Sôshisha, 1995), pp. 77- 78.

[29] Shiga Nobuo, <u>Shôwa terebi hôsô-shi (ge) (The History of Television Broadcasting in the Shôwa Period II)</u> (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobô, 1996), pp. 133-64.

[30] Tahara Shigeyuki, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

1977. NHK withdrew the program in 1988, and redirected its efforts towards the news at 7 pm, which has maintained its audience rating in the top five until today (see Table 4). However, NHK *News 7* strictly adheres to the rigid formats of factual reporting and relies heavily on governmental sources.[31] This new program reflects NHK policy, which closely adheres to the political impartiality required by the Broadcast law. As such, no critical comments are allowed from newscasters. This situation has opened the way for the direct and indirect interference of authorities, and has reinforced a policy of self-censorship in news production at NHK. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter Three, any attempts from the commercial stations to screen news programs that offered views contrary to those of governments, or even provocative comments, have often been met with reprimands from the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT).

Table 11: Japan's Top Ten News Programs for November 16-22, 1998 by Audience Ratings

Programs	Channels	Date	Time	Ratings
News 845	NHK	17-11-98	8.45-9.00 pm	22.0
News 7	NHK	22-11-98	7.00-7.20 pm	20.0
Weather Forecast News	NHK	21-11-98	6.45-7.00 pm	18.4
News	NHK	20-11-98	4.53-5.23 pm	16.9
Shutoken Network	NHK	20-11-98	6.02-7.00 pm	16.0
Weather Forecast news	NHK	22-11-98	8.45-9.00 pm	15.2
News Station	TV Asahi	16-11-98	10.00-11.20 pm	14.9
News Plus 1	NTV	18-11-98	5.55-7.00 pm	14.4
News 9	NHK	18-11-98	9.00-9.30 pm	14.4
News no mori	TBS	21-11-98	6.30-6.55 pm	13.0

Source: Video Research Co., Ltd., 1998, 47, November 16-22, 1998;
http://www.videor.co.jp/index.html

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31   A comparative study of the uses of news sources between NHK and four commercial networks in 1995 found that NHK's sources were usually government agencies, political parties, and organizations related to governments. Although, commercial stations also largely relied on their governmental sources. They also used non-routine channels including public and grassroots organizations more frequently than NHK. See E. Gwangho, "*Nihon no TV nyusu ni okeru nyusu sousu no bunpu: NHK to minpô no hikaku wo chûshin toshite*" (TV News Sources and Channels in Japan: A Comparative Analysis of NHK and Commercial Broadcasters), *Masu Komunikeshon Kenkyû*, July 1996, (49), pp. 82-95.

The marketplace for television news in Japan became increasingly competitive after the emergence of a prime-time news program called 'News Station' on TV Asahi. This late night program was primarily aimed at capturing the middle-aged audiences who had distanced themselves from television.[32] Launched in October 1985, the program still airs at 10 pm and lasts about 80 minutes. The style of this unusually long presentation is a mixture of factual reports, interpretation of news stories by a team of news anchors led by Kume Hiroshi, and comments from experts who are usually from the editorial board of the Asahi Newspaper. Kume Hiroshi's non-conventional and forthright opinions, blunt questions, and unhesitating reactions to news stories, quickly gained a wide audience.[33] Kume often interviewed politicians live to gauge real reactions to his un-scripted questions. Kume offered the audience 'the true meanings' (*honne*) of politics, which were rarely discussed explicitly in the mainstream press. Kume's live interviews bypassed the system of reporters' clubs, which had dominated the news-gathering system and filtered the outflow of political information for more than a century. As discussed in Chapter Two, interviews of politicians at these clubs are undertaken in form of the *kondan* (chatting), in which most of the conversations are stated 'off-the-record'. However, the fact that interviews with politicians are usually conducted live prevents them from intervening in the editing process and airing schedule.

Moreover, the co-operation between TV Asahi and CNN in news coverage and production assistance in the 1987 also gave News Station a greater comparative advantage in terms of technology and expertise.[34] The foresight of TV Asahi's management in forging links with an international news network was in direct contrast to the traditional views held by NHK senior staff, who saw CNN as a 'cultural invasion'. In the view of Kanagawa Tomiyuki, director of international development for

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[32]   Tahara Shigeyuki, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[33]   Sherman, for example, suggested that Kume Hiroshi is one of the most-watched news anchors in the world. See Spencer A. Sherman, "Hiroshi who?", <u>Columbia Journalism Review</u>, July/August 1995 (on-line edition).

[34]   Okamura Reimei, "<u>*Terebi no asu* (The Future of Television)</u>, Iwanami Shinsho Booklet No.283 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), pp. 62.

NHK, for instance, "CNN is edited by Americans and their views are forced on us. Asian editors should produce and edit Asian news".[35]

The success of *News Station* in gaining high ratings of an average of seventeen per cent since 1985[36] prompted other stations to launch anchor-type news programs during prime time (7-11 pm) -- a period traditionally reserved for entertainment alone. However, these programs were short-lived. For instance, when their 10 pm news program failed to gain high rating, TBS decided to move out of primetime to 11 pm slot. The station hired Chikushi Tetsuya, a former Asahi newspaper editor and host of *News Desk* on TV Asahi to launch its *News 23* program. This program has been broadcast for more than eleven years now, largely due to Chikushi's liberal viewpoints and vast political knowledge, and has captured a more mature audience than that of *News Station*.

Other programs that emulated *News Station* but aired at 11 pm included '*kyô no dekigoto*' (Today's events) on NTV (1988), '*Dateline*' (1988), '*News Com*' (1993), and '*News Japan*' (1994~) on Fuji TV.[37] These programs rapidly fostered a new reporting style known as '*waido nyuusu*' (wide news), which emphasized a variety of long documentary-style news items, plus anchors' interpretative and personal comments. Not only the national news networks switched to this new style of news reporting, a number of local stations also adopted this style of 'wide news' reports in their local coverage.[38] The success of 'wide news' has challenged the domination of the factual news reading style of NHK, which has not particularly been successful in the late night time slot.[39] By the mid-1990s, NHK had not launched a news program in direct competition with *News Station*, but had filled the gap in foreign news by launching '*News 9*', which carried mainly foreign news stories at 9 pm. However, in March 2000,

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[35] M. Scott, "News from Nowhere", Far Eastern Economic Review, November 23, 1991, p. 34; cited in John Aboud, "Japan as a TV Culture", Japanese Studies Bulletin, September 1992, 12(2), p. 37.

[36] Tahara Shigeyuki, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[37] Okamura Reimei, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-60.

[38] Iyota Yasuhiro, "TV Nettowaaku to chihô seiji" (The Networkization of TV and the reporting of local politics), *Masu Komyunikeeshon Kenkyû*, July 1996, (49), pp. 25-35.

[31] For further discussion see Ellis Krauss, "Changing Television News in Japan", The Journal of Asian Studies, 1998, 57(3), pp. 663-692.

NHK launched 'News 10', which directly competed with *News Station*. The use of soft musical backgrounds and a panel of news anchors similar to that of *News Station* is intended to soften the stringent image of NHK. However, this softening strategy has apparently been in stark contrast to the composed, and rather bland news anchors, who rarely comment and adhere strictly to the NHK's straightforward newsreading format. Not surprisingly, *News 10*'s ratings during its first two months of broadcast were far outstripped by those of *News Station*.[40]

The popularity of these late night programs has also increased competitiveness among the earlier evening news programs on commercial networks. As shown in Table 4, NHK still dominates the ratings in these timeslots. Indeed, competition for high audience ratings and hence high commercial revenue is very intense among commercial networks.[41] In the case of the evening news bulletin, the broadcasting hour has been extended and more human-interest stories have been added to the programs. Hard news topics such as politics, economics and international relations are only mentioned briefly as the topics are too serious for viewers, most of whom are pensioners, housewives, and children. Such heavy topics are usually dealt with in the late night news programs, which are designed to cater for urban young and working audiences.

Major domestic crises, such as the Great Hanshin earthquake and the sarin gas attack in Tokyo subway in 1995, and the numerous cases of airplane and bus hijacks in the late 1990s prompted competitiveness in news and "wide show" programs[42] and

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[40]   The monthly average rating for *News 10* was 8.5 per cent, whereas *News Station*'s monthly rating stood at around 11-15 per cent. See Maruyama Noboru, "*Nyuusu Suteeshon ni kampai de mietekita, NHK ryû seiji hôdô no akumi kansô [nyuusu 10] no nikagetsu wo otte*" (The defeat of the NHK's style of tasteless and dry political reporting to *News Station* was evident in the examination of two months of its broadcast), *Hôsô Repooto*, July 2000, (165), pp. 10-14.

[41]   There are two major companies that measure ratings of television audience viewership in Japan, and provide information commercially: the Japanese-owned Video Research Co., Ltd., and the American-owned A.C. Nelson Co., Ltd. All four networks - NNN, ANN, FNN, and JNN - have a stake in Video Research Co., Ltd, and thus rating results are supplied on a weekly basis. However, some networks use both companies, as there has been criticism against small sampling groups used and unreliable survey methods conducted by Video Research Co., Ltd. However, audience ratings are the key determining factor of the success and failure of TV programs in Japan despite the dubious nature of the way in which the results are collected. Okamura Reimei, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-100.

[42]   Wide shows can be categorized as current affairs programs. However, the topics covered in the programs are considered "wide", as they range from crime news, political news, entertainment news, sports news, to news about the Imperial Family, and particularly emphasize scandals.

created a boom in live broadcasting. This boom was also marked by two separate incidents of TV helicopter crashes.[43] Recording of these live broadcasts are regularly recycled in the station through news and wide show programs in various formats, from specials to short announcements to news segments. Competitiveness also increased with the development of information technologies that has drawn heavily investment from both public and private sectors as a part of the informatization (jôhôka) industrialized schemes.[44] These schemes started to bear fruit in the mid-1990s when satellite television, cable television, and multi-channel broadcasting began to take market share from the existing terrestrial broadcasters. For instance, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation commenced the satellite broadcasting of a 24-hour news channel called 'JNN News Bird' in 1998.[45] As a result of such incursions, news programs have fiercely competed for ratings. They have become increasingly segmented and highly competitive. In most cases, special reports, interviews and live broadcasts have been unnecessarily added to the programs. As revealed by Adachi Hisao, a news producer at NTV, the key success of Japanese news programs consists of 'genba' (site) and 'tôjisha' (concerned people).[46]

The technology of communication (CS) and broadcasting (BS) satellites has also facilitated the instant transmission of live broadcasts. It has heightened competitiveness, and ushered in a qualitatively new stage of newsgathering and news reporting in Japan. The launch of communication satellite technology in Japan in the 1990s has facilitated the use of SNG (satellite newsgathering) to cross live from anywhere in the world. This

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Presentation style of wide shows is highly sensationalised, often blurring the line between reportage and entertainment. They usually occupy the day-time slot, as their main audience viewers are housewives. For further reading, see Tahara Sôichirô, "Terebi shusai ni manuaru wa nai" (There is no manual in television news-gathering), Bungei Shunjû, June 1996, pp. 128-136.

[43] In April 1997, helicopters of Television Shunshu Broadcasting and Nagano Broadcasting Systems crashed, killing journalists and cameramen on board. Similar incidents also happened in October 1994 when helicopters of Asahi and Mainichi crashed in Osaka. Murakami Shikemi, "General Trend of the Japanese Press in 1996~1997", The Japanese Press' 97 (Tokyo: NSK, 1997), p. 14.

[44] For further discussion see Ito Yôichi, "Japan", in G. Wang (ed.), Treading Different Path: Informatization in Asian Nations (Norwood, NJ: Albex, 1995), pp. 68-98.

[45] Asian Mass Communication Bulletin, January-February 1998, 28(1), p. 9.

[46] Interview with Adachi Hisao, Editor, News Program, Nippon Television Network Corporation on October 29, 1998.

satellite technology has accommodated a program featuring the live broadcast of daily
parliamentary debates and deliberations in Japan, known as *kokkai terebi*. This program
was televised on *Perfect TV* via a communication satellite (CS) to subscribers around the
country in January 1998.[47] Although live broadcasts of parliamentary debate had been
first televised since 1990 on cable television, these broadcasts had been limited to
featuring parliamentary deliberations on important legislation and budgetary issues, and
had only been able to yield a small audience.[48]

6.2 Pluralism in TV News

The transformation of news reporting in Thailand and the increased competitiveness
amongst Japanese news programs has markedly increased the level of pluralism in
domestic reporting, or in other words, the differences in news selection and presentation
among television channels. The high degree of pluralism in TV news is evident in the
following content analyses of television news stories. Twelve evening bulletins that
were aired during the main evening broadcast on six channels in Thailand on May 13-14,
1998, and ten bulletins broadcast on NHK and four commercial networks in Japan on
November 25-26, 1998 were taped and analyzed. The analysis of Japanese news is
longer than the Thai news as the former was inclusive of the comparison between two
popular late night news programs and the NHK's 'News 7'. The absence of comparable
late night news program in Thailand prevented similar analysis.[49] Nonetheless, the
overall content analysis was aimed at categorizing the types of stories covered by each
station to map out the news policy of each station, and to gain some indication of
convergence, diversity, and the interpretation of meanings invested in certain events (see
Appendices 11 to 14). According to Gurevitch et al., the comparison of convergence and
diversity of news stories offers:

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[47]   As noted in Chapter Three, cable television had a limited number of subscriptions when it was
         introduced in the late 1980s. Moreover, as according to Kurashige, audiences of these programs
         were limited to the Diet members, relevant bureaucrats, and reporters, who taped and watched
         the programs later for their own use. See Kurashige Atsurô, "*Kokkai terebi ga hôdô wo
         kaeru!?*" (Will the live broadcast from the Parliament change the way the news is reported?),
         Sôgô Jaanarizumu Kenkyû, 1996, (163), pp. 30-34.

[48]   *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[49]   Although some TV channels in Thailand had late night news programs, they were truncated
         versions of early evening news programs.

a very useful opportunity to compare the meaning in the
stories of the same events, and thus to examine comparatively
whether and how such diverse meanings are constructed.[50]

Evening news bulletins broadcast on six channels in Thailand on May 13-14, 1998 lasted between one and two hours. The news hour was relatively long when compared to evening news bulletin in other countries such as Australia, which generally lasted about half an hour, and the U.S., which lasted about twenty-two minutes. This peculiarity was due to two reasons. Firstly, evening news hours broadcasts in Thailand were modelled after the CNN's concept of 'news magazine' by including various documentary-like features. As shown in Figure 15, these documentary features are categorized into a life style section which accounts for around ten to fifteen per cent of the total news hours, and generally includes stories on tourism, agriculture, public services, infrastructure, and historical ceremonies and artifacts. Moreover, the news bulletins observed on commercial channels, with the exception of *iTV*, were aired between two drama series. As a result, some leading news items in both the before-drama and after-drama bulletins overlapped. The before-drama news bulletins were broadcast between 5.30 and 6.30 pm., primarily to cater for housewives and students who would be home earlier than blue and white-collar workers. The latter group usually arrives home in time for the main bulletin at 7 pm. The anchors of these bulletins were both males and females, although female anchors seemed to appear more frequently than their male counterparts.

50   Michael Gurevitch et al., "The Global Newsroom: Convergences and Diversities in the Globalization of Television News" in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds.), Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 204-5.

Figure 15: Type and Percentage of Evening News Content Broadcast on Six Stations in Thailand on May 13 - 14, 1998

Channel 3

Commercial 13%
Lifestyle 12%
Weather 1%
Sports 12%
Finance 1%
News 61%

Channel 5

Commercial 20%
Lifestyle 13%
Weather 4%
Sports 14%
Finance 2%
News 47%

Channel 7

Commercial 19%
Lifestyle 17%
Weather 1%
Sports 13%
Finance 1%
News 49%

Channel 9

Commercial 8%
Lifestyle 15%
Weather 1%
Sports 6%
Finance 1%
News 69%

Channel 11

Commercial 2%
Lifestyle 9%
Weather 2%
Sports 6%
Finance 1%
News 80%

iTV

Commercial 12%
Lifestyle 10%
Weather 3%
Sports 4%
Finance 2%
News 69%

News items were divided into 'hard news' and 'soft news'. This categorization of news was proposed by Tuchman in 1978, who suggested that journalists differentiate news when they approach and write stories by using 'time' as the main criterion.[51] 'Hard news' includes stories that need to be factually accurate and speedily published; whereas 'soft news' stories are less urgent with less emphasis on facts. However, organizational application of this typification, particularly in assigning works to individual journalists, has tended to depend on the estimation of time and efforts that journalists must invest to produce news stories. As such, 'hard news' stories are defined as complicated stories in which journalists must put a greater effort in pursuing them than in dealing with 'soft' news stories. By using the latter definition, 'hard news', as defined here, included politics, economics, and foreign coverage of events, and 'soft news' focused on crime, social problems, the environment, and society.

Figure 16: Style and Type of News Content on Thai TV Channels

	HARD NEWS	**SOFT NEWS**
INVESTI GATIVE	*ITV*, **CH 11**	**CH 3**
STRAIGHT	**CH 5, CH 9**	**CH 7**

Yet the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' news was not absolute in the Thai case, because the presentation of investigative stories often blended political and social issues. All channels tended to carry similar news items, although they provided different lead stories. Still, the collected data showed that *iTV*, Channel 5, Channel 9 and Channel

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[51]   Gay Tuchman, Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality (New York: Free Press, 1978).

11 carried more hard news stories, whereas Channel 3 and Channel 7 concentrated on crime, and social and life-style issues. The data showed a clear demarcation between 'investigative' news stories and 'straight' news stories. *iTV* and Channel 11, in particular, carried a number of investigative political and economic stories. Channel 5, on the other hand, featured mostly straightforward and informative political and foreign news, whereas Channel 9 carried more economic news, such as stories related to the economic crisis. Channel 11 devoted half an hour at the beginning of the program to live regional news from its eight network stations around the country. Channel 7 also crossed live from its regional centers, although most of the stories aired were related to crime and traffic accidents. The high diversity in news stories on different channels signals a considerable degree of nonconformity in news values and news policies among different channels (see Appendices 13 and 14).

In comparison with *iTV*, political news content on other channels seemed to center on official stories and sources. *iTV* tended to feature political stories, particularly those about protests, which were not reported by other channels. While presenting similar stories on social issues to those shown on other channels, *iTV* provided more detailed analysis. For example, when reporting on the transfer of seven police superintendents for breaches of conduct, *iTV* named all the officers and their charges, but other channels did not. Such a brave venture can be explained by organizational factors, and a reaction to the traditional 'gatekeeper' role of journalists. In 1998, most *iTV* journalists and producers were former members of the press. The Thai press is a medium that, until 1992, has always been a target of closure by the police because of its negative portrayal of authoritarian governments. Thus, the model of 'newspaper journalism' adopted by *iTV*'s producers might have compelled the station to release names rather than withholding them in the role of 'gatekeeper'. On the other hand, the fact that other stations are owned or run by the state might have compelled them to voluntarily impose self-censorship when reporting such a scandalous issue.

Opinionated news on Thai TV news channels was rare, but not totally absent. Thai journalists generally upheld the journalistic principle taught in the early years of journalism school that news is always factual. No simplification and elaboration of journalists' opinion or emotion can be incorporated into news reportage. Therefore, a distinct line is drawn between news and comment. This condition is best described by the distinction between editorials and news in the press. Like the press, *iTV* allocated five minutes at the end of the domestic news to a '*wikroe khao*', or 'analyzing news' section that was presented by an editor of the Nation newspaper. The channel also added an half an hour interview program (similar to the *7.30 Report* on the Australian ABC) to its evening news bulletin. This program was called '*iTV talk*', which aired interviews with politicians, academics, police, or members of public who were involved in the daily issues.

Next, evening news bulletins broadcast on NHK and four commercial networks in Japan on November 25-26, 1998 were analyzed (see Appendices 15 and 16). As shown in Figure 3, these news bulletins included the NHK '*News 7*', the NTV '*News Plus 1*', the TBS '*News no mori*', the Fuji TV '*Super News*', and the TV Asahi '*Super J Channel*'. Evening news broadcast on Tokyo TV was excluded because it does not have national coverage. NTV, TBS, and Fuji TV broadcast their bulletins at 5.55 pm, whereas NHK broadcast its evening bulletin at 7 pm. TV Asahi had the highest number of news stories because it ran a two-hour bulletin, which started at 5 pm. As illustrated in Figure 3, a large proportion of news stories on commercial networks in Japan were personal and human-interest stories. These stories belong to the 'life style' category. The content analyses (see Appendices 15 and 16) show that both NHK and commercial networks tended to carry similar lead stories. However, NHK featured the highest number of foreign news stories (as the dates of collection happened to coincide with the visit of China's President Jiang Zemin), and the commercial networks carried more stories about social issues. The lead political news in Japan on November 25-26 1998, as covered by most channels except *Fuji TV*, was the alignment of a new coalition

Figure 17 : Type and Percentage of Evening News Content Broadcast on Five
Networks in Japan on November 25 - 26, 1998

NHK News 7

Lifestyle
0%
Commercial
0%
Weather
10%
Sports
13%
Finance
1%
News
76%

TBS News no mori

Commercial
22%
News
42%
Lifestyle
18%
Weather
9%
Finance
0%
Sports
9%

NTV News Plus 1

Commercial
13%
Lifestyle
23%
News
46%
Weather
9%
Sports
7%
Finance
2%

Fuji TV Super News

Commercial
19%
News
39%
Lifestyle
26%
Finance
0%
Weather
6%
Sports
10%

TV Asahi Super J Channel

Commercial
20%
News
48%
Lifestyle
19%
Weather
4%
Sports
9%
Finance
0%
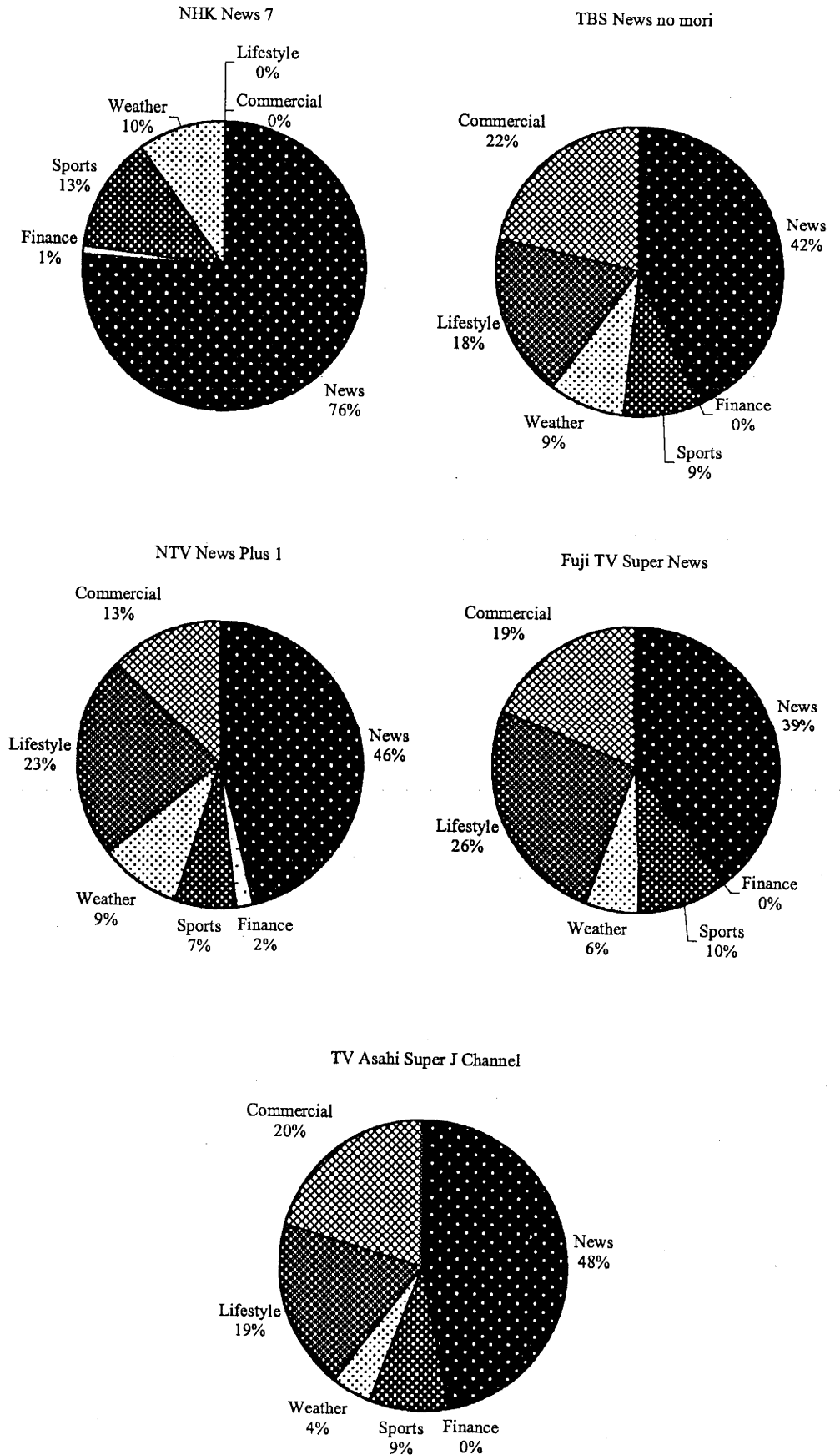
between the LDP and the Liberal Party (*Jiyûtô*), and subsequent protests from some factions within the LDP. As the alignment decision was announced a week earlier, the stories presented in the collected data featured the subsequent meetings between the law-makers of both parties. However, the related news scripts were short, and the visuals covered only the formal introduction between members of the two parties.

Except on NHK, the number of male and female anchors presenting these evening news bulletins was approximately equal. Yet male anchors seemed to dominate the reporting of hard news and weather forecasts; conversely, female anchors tended to deliver human-interest stories.[52] This role difference heightened in the 'on-location' stories of political reporters of the commercial channels. Moreover, in contrast to NHK 'News 7', which was presented by a solo female news anchor, commercial channels preferred to use as many anchors as possible. NTV's *News Plus 1*, for example, used six anchors to present different types of news. The presence of a panel of news anchors on commercial networks, as mentioned by Miller, is relevant to the Japanese concept of visual balance.[53] In Japanese variety and talk shows, for example, panels of male and female hosts are preferred, and a solo host is rarely used. In addition, TV Asahi's 'Super J Channel' also included a commentator, an editor from *Asahi Shimbun*, who commented on social issues. The selection of this editor, who came from the social section (*shakai-bu*), sharply contradicted to that of *News Station*, the popular late night news program on the same channel: the latter program included an editor from the political section (*seiji-bu*), or from the editorial board, who commented on political stories. Although broadcast on the same channel, it was clear that these two programs had markedly different target audiences.

In comparison to the collected data from Thai evening news bulletins, there was more diversity in Japanese television news. As shown in the Figure 18 below, NHK and TV Asahi emphasized hard stories and covered more politics, foreign, and economics

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[52]   This division between male/female anchoring in Japan was also consistent with earlier findings. See Jay K. Miller, "Broadcast News in Japan: NHK and NTV", Keio Communication Review, 1994, (16), pp. 77-103.

[53]   *Ibid.*, p. 92.

news. In contrast, NTV, Fuji TV, and TBS offered more news stories on crime, social issues, and society. NTV spent more time than other channels in investigating social issues: a murder case in Wakayama that involved food poisoning and an insurance swindle dominated coverage. However, the story that included long interviews with victims and murder suspects was presented in such as way that could be described as 'sensationalist'. As for hard news, stories screened on TV Asahi were generally better analyzed and more investigative than the same stories broadcast on NHK.

Figure 18: Style and Type of News Content on Japanese TV Networks

	HARD NEWS		SOFT NEWS
INVESTI GATIVE	TV ASAHI		NTV
STRAIGHT	NHK		TBS, FUJI TV
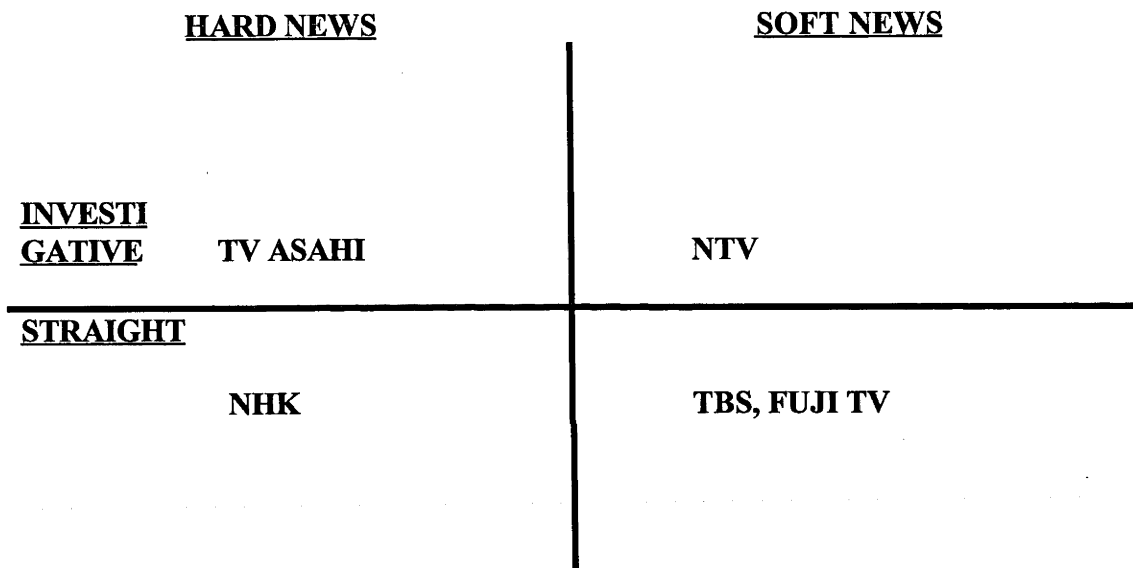
Further examination of coverage of the same events by different stations supports the characterization of these news networks. For example, the coverage of Christmas lights in Paris by Fuji TV and Asahi TV was markedly different. While Fuji TV only screened pictures of Christmas lights in the streets of Paris, TV Asahi mentioned the lighting up of streets in Paris, and referred back to the Christmas lighting festival in the Omote Sandô area of Tokyo, which has drawn increasingly larger crowds in recent years and has caused disquiet amongst local residents. In this story, TV Asahi directly applied the concept of site and concerned people (*genba* and *tôjisha*) by sending a reporter to the site to interview residents and shop owners, as well as local public officers in charge of the festival. The discrepancies in news policies between TV Asahi and other channels are a result of the channel's new position as a *News Station*

(*hôdô no terebi asahi*), and not an entertainment station, since the success of launching *News Station* in 1985.

In particular, the discrepancies in news policies and approaches between TV Asahi and NHK were evident when comparing TV Asahi's popular late night news program, *News Station*, and NHK *News 7*. According to Krauss's study of comparative coverage of these programs broadcast in 1996, there were marked differences in news policies between both programs.[54] For instance, whilst *News 7* tended to carry more news items on government and advisory councils attached to the bureaucracy, *News Station* placed emphasis on local government and the Cabinet. However, as Krauss concluded, the major difference between the two programs was not so much in the subjects covered, but in the news approaches. Specifically, news anchors on *News Station* gave their comments on news items far more often than their counterparts on *News 7*.[55] Clearly, opinionated journalism is a dominant value at *News Station*, whereas objective journalism is strongly upheld at *News 7*. My own examination of the convergence and diversity of news content between *News 7* and *News Station* and between *News 7* and *News 23*, which were broadcast on the same day, offers a clearer understanding of the different type of news approaches employed, and the extent to which these programs framed the same news differently.

As demonstrated in Table 12 below, news items that were covered by *News 7* but not covered by *News Station* were those related to NHK, an advisory body, and human-interest stories. However, *News Station* and *News 7* considered the news about a new coalition being formed between the LDP and the Liberal Party as their headline of the day, whilst treating President Clinton's visit as a minor story. In covering the major story on the coalition, both programs gave long background stories. Although the selection of, and value placed upon, what news came first appeared to be the same on both programs, there were some differences. NHK's coverage was quite descriptive and

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[54]   Ellis S. Krauss, "Changing Television News in Japan", The Journal of Asian Studies, August 1998, 57(3), pp. 663-692.

[55]   *Ibid.*, p. 673.

focused on the chronological development of the new coalition. However, the same

coverage on *News Station* highlighted the serious conflict between the LDP Chief

Cabinet Secretary, Nonaka Hiromu, and Ozawa Ichirô, who formerly a leading LDP

member but now headed the Liberal Party. Records of earlier press conferences given by

Nonaka attacking Ozawa were shown repeatedly, and added to by Kume's remarks of

his surprise that Nonaka could shake off his anger towards Ozawa very quickly to

embark upon this new coalition. Moreover, TV Asahi's reporter, who crossed live from

the *Nagata kurabu*, also reported the anti-coalition faction, which was forming within

the LDP. Other leading stories that were covered by *News Station* were also directed at

the opposition and protesting groups. Clearly, political news on *News 7* was selected

within the confines of official activities and development within the government. In

contrast, the presentation of political news on *News Station* contested NHK's version of

political reality by covering the non-governmental area of politics and various political

groups, thus representing a different political reality and institutional order of Japanese

politics.

Table 12: News Content Broadcast on NHK *News 7* and TV Asahi's *News Station* on
November 19, 1998

(underline: stories unique to the program)

NHK News 7 (7:00-7:53 pm)	Time (m: s)	TV Asahi News Station (10:00-11:15 pm)	Time (m: s)
1. Policy planners from the LDP and the Liberal Party met, outlining policies for the new coalition government	18:39	1. Obuchi and Ozawa signed an agreement to form a coalition government	10:10
2. The Long Term Credit Bank of Japan and its subsidiaries	4:17	2. Kan Naoto's responses to stories about his alleged affairs	1:00
3. Bribery charges against Nakajima, an LDP MP	3:00	3. Clinton's visit to Japan	1:25
4. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	1:36	4. Director of Self-Defense Force Agency apologized for his agency's hiding evidence implicating corruption	4:38
5. Clinton's visit to Japan	5:00	5. Bribery charges against Nakajima, an LDP MP	1:01
6. Director of Self-Defense Force Agency apologized for his agency's hiding evidence implicating corruption	1:30	6. Kobe's new international airport project and public referenda	8:25
7. Heavy snowfall in Northern Japan	1:42	7. Life style: Canoeing	14:09
8. Dated utensils made of copper was found at a digging site in Kyûshu	1:30	8. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	1:04
9. New member of Japan's Art Council	0:34	9. Launch of stickers signifying organ donor status attached to driver's licenses	0:17
10. NHK organized a symposium on NHK and the educational role of broadcasting	1:26		

Table 13: News Content Broadcast on NHK *News 7* and TBS's *News 23* on November 11, 1998

(underline: stories unique to the program)

NHK *News 7* (7:00 - 7:53 pm)	Time (m: s)	TBS *News 23* (11:00 - 11:55 pm)	Time (m: s)
1. Policy planners from the LDP and the Liberal Party met, outlining policies for the new coalition government	1:20	1. Three big department stores are running 5% discount campaigns, calling for government reduction of consumption tax	0:53
2. Former party secretary of the LDP, Kato Koichi, opposed to the new coalition	4:01	2. Policy planners from the LDP and the Liberal Party met, outlining policies for the new coalition government	4:53
3. Chief Cabinet Secretary, Nonaka Hiromu, announced a date for special Diet session	1:03	3. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	1:18
4. Obuchi left Haneda for Moscow	1:24	4. Osaka government announced its first budget deficit	1:21
5. Live from Moscow	2:56	5. Changes in local administration	12:59
6. MHW considered to re-list types of approved medicine used in emergency room	2:38	6. No changes in human rights and social problems	4:57
7. Waste dumping problem in Fukushima	3:32	7. Chikushi's debate "Continuation of wasteful spending"	1:52
8. A group of Chinese people came to search for their parents in Osaka	1:53	8. Student's demonstration in Indonesia	0:35
9. Bribery charges against a former university professor and a medical company	1:34	9. Obuchi left Haneda for Moscow	0:20
10. APEC's meeting in Kuala Lumpur will start on November 14	1:13	10. Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting	1:18
11. New plan to reform superannuation schemes	1:11		
12. Osaka government announced its first budget deficit	2:30		
13. Falls of shooting stars over Japan's sky next week	4:09		
14. Policy concerning announcement of earthquake prediction	4:46		
15. Farmers were asked to produce more vegetables to match with the demand	1:51		
16. Nagano Olympics Committee was sued by a man who missed the game because of bus delay	0:48		
17. UN's withdrawal from Iraq	0:26		
18. World meeting on Green Gas Emission in Buenos Aires	2:39		
19. JCP demanded the government to reduce consumption tax	0:30		
20. Minister of MPT met with the newly appointed head of International Telecommunication unit	1:02		
21. Increase in a number of new mansion built in the city of Tokyo	0:34		
22. Three big department stores are running 5% discount campaigns, calling for government reduction of consumption tax	0:31		

The analysis of diversity and convergence in program content broadcast on NHK's *News 7* and TBS' *News 23* also yielded similar results. The selection of and order

placed upon news items on both programs appeared to be the same. However, *News 7* clearly carried more news on the government, and its bureaucracies, while *News 23* featured news stories on local administration and social problems. The most apparent difference in the news approaches was that *News 7* carried more items in a shorter time than *News 23*, which spent more time reporting each item. *News 7* carried more foreign items than *News 23*, but some news stories on *News 7* were read without film background. More interviews and sound bytes were added to the domestic stories on *News 23* than *News 7*. On *News 23*, Chikushi Tetsuya, the leading news anchor, gave a two-minute commentary as well as strong criticism on an important issue of the day in a section called *tajisôron* (eventful debate), which was evidently popular with viewers. The topic presented in *tajisôron* was often of a controversial nature and subsequently taken as an editorial topic by newspaper or television journalists. For instance, a scoop on changes in local administration broadcast on November 11 1998 explored the way in which some local administrations initiated their own cost-cutting and reduced the scope of public projects. The story was presented as a policy alternative that the public preferred to the heavy spending of the central government. The fact that this topic on 'changes in local administration' was taken as a lead story on TV Asahi's *Sunday Project*, was ample evidence that the program has successfully set a news agenda.[56]

There are marked commonalities in the way in which the Japanese TV news and the Thai TV news cover politics. Political news is mainly about political information, such as stories about how political alliances are being formed or broken. Interview subjects in the political stories, such as party and factional leaders, are the main interlocutors of TV news. As such, political news has become a stage where politicians can send messages to gauge reactions from enemies and allies, and where politics is played out. Coverage of policy information is scarce, and is often limited to the deliberations surrounding legislation, rather than debates or discussions of policy issues.

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[56]   This program was broadcast on October 18, 1998.

Table 14: Similarities and Differences in News Presentation in Thailand and Japan

	Similarities	Differences	
		Thailand	Japan
News content	Emphasis on political information rather than policy information	Diverse news for mass audiences	Selective news for segmented audiences
		More coverage on foreign news	Less coverage on foreign news
News style	Anchor - type news	Informative news	Interpretative news
	CNN - style journalism (Live broadcast and interview)	Separation between news and comments	Opinionated news and sensationalized stories

Some characteristics of visual presentation in Thai and Japanese TV news were also different. Japanese political news often used visuals featuring staged events such as press conferences, and meetings between politicians. In contrast, Thai political news mostly captured relevant politicians or officials giving interviews in front of their offices, or sometimes in motion. All Japanese channels regularly used news titles, or a three or four worded summary of the topic being discussed, which were often absent in Thai TV news. However, both Japan's commercial and NHK news programs only included a few selected pieces of foreign news, mostly from England, France, and the U.S., whereas the Thai news programs had much wider and longer coverage of foreign news. With regards to opinionated journalism, *iTV* news in Thailand and evening and late night news programs in Japan offered commentaries by members of their associated press. However, Japanese news producers appeared to have different journalistic values from their counterparts in Thailand and other countries. In Japan, news anchors were also encouraged to offer their own comments. They were implicitly used as 'proxies' to create what Andrew Painter called a 'televisual quasi-intimacy' with the audiences.[57] By using personally attractive presenters and relaxed formats, popular daytime talkshow programs in Japan are claimed to have established this 'quasi-intimacy' with the audiences. As for the news programs, casual comments and opinion by anchors

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[57] Andrew Painter, "Japanese Daytime Television, Popular Culture, and Ideology", Journal of Japanese Studies, Summer 1993, 19(2), pp. 295-325.

encourage audiences to establish a familiar and intimate relationship with the news programs. Unanimity and playful spontaneity such as the props and gags often used by Kume Hiroshi are, for example, useful tools to establish quasi-intimacy with audience. Within this comfortable atmosphere, anchors like Kume react with news stories and the comments by experts on behalf of the audiences at home. The success of this kind of program is seen in its capacity to influence the public, and in gaining access to influential leaders of political parties during elections and times of crisis.

6.3 News Frame, Contesting Discourse, and Expert/Legitimate Relations

The marketplace competitiveness of television news in Thailand and Japan, in tandem with the pluralism in TV journalism established by *iTV* and Japanese late night news programs, have enlarged the platform from which the TV medium can contest state discourse. This development has also motivated TV journalists and news producers to put the best of their abilities into gaining access to, interpreting, and disseminating political information. In doing so, TV journalists have attempted to construct 'news frames', or story themes which attract audiences' attention, that are different from those of their competitors, and to a certain extent different from those of the state.

The fundamental question of how well the Thai and Japanese journalists can perform these tasks has been answered in Chapter Four. Indeed, the ability of both Thai and Japanese journalists to contest state control of information is severely constrained. The ownership factor, the close relationship with sources, the lack of information, and certain normative practices of the journalistic profession can force the TV journalists in both countries to employ a legitimating strategy of relying entirely on official sources, and accepting the way in which the state has framed political information. The following comparative case studies are aimed, firstly, at clarifying aspects of political news in which Thai and Japanese television journalists tended to interpret political information and extend the boundaries of official discourses; and secondly, identifying aspects of political news in which the legitimating state versions of a political situation became imperative.

6.3.1 *iTV* News: Investigative News

The following analysis of political news compares evening news bulletins broadcast on Channel 7, which covered almost 100% of Thailand and had the highest ratings among the six stations from 1997 to 1998 (see Table 9), with those broadcast on *iTV*. Analyzed were video tapes of news broadcast on *iTV*'s evening news program between 7.00 pm and 8.30 pm, and on Channel 7 news between 6.00 pm and 6.30 pm and 7.30 pm to 8.30 pm from December 14 to 31, 1998. As shown in Figure 19, stories broadcast on *iTV* and Channel 7 are categorized into eight types: politics, foreign, economics and finance, social issues, society, sports, weather forecast, and commercials.[58]

In comparison to Channel 7's evening news bulletins, *iTV* contained more coverage of politics. Channel 7 emphasized news stories on social issues, and society, covering special royal activities, including overseas trips. As shown in the following table, political stories reported on both channels were categorized into five types: investigation including investigative stories which were generally longer than two minutes, and involved complicated issues; the politics of inter and intra-party struggle, and the organizational disarray within the coalition; celebrity issues including campaign activity, and attacks on, or ridicule of, public figures; the airing of opposition party claims and attempts to set a political agenda, as well as public protest; and news on the passage of important legislation. As demonstrated in Table 15 below, news about important legislation and policy was rarely featured by both channels. Moreover, these stories were often limited to questions of what and when, but not how? This raised

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[58]   'Politics' stories concern government, Cabinet, bureaucracy, policy, and protests. 'Foreign' stories cover foreign relations, and news about other countries. 'Economics and finance' stories include issues on trade, economic policy, industries, and financial markets. 'Social issues' are stories about crime, corruption, poverty, human rights, environment, and the courts. 'Society' stories include reports on the royal family, national and religious ceremonies, entertainment news, and human-interest stories. The remaining includes sport news, weather forecast, and commercials.

Figure 19: Type and Percentage of Evening News Content Broadcast on Channel 7 and iTV during December 14 - 31, 1998

	Politics	Foreign	Economics and Finance	Social issues	Society	Commercials	Sports	Weather forecast
iTV	15%	13%	8%	17%	10%	15%	20%	1%
Channel 7	12%	9%	8%	12%	26%	15%	18%	0%
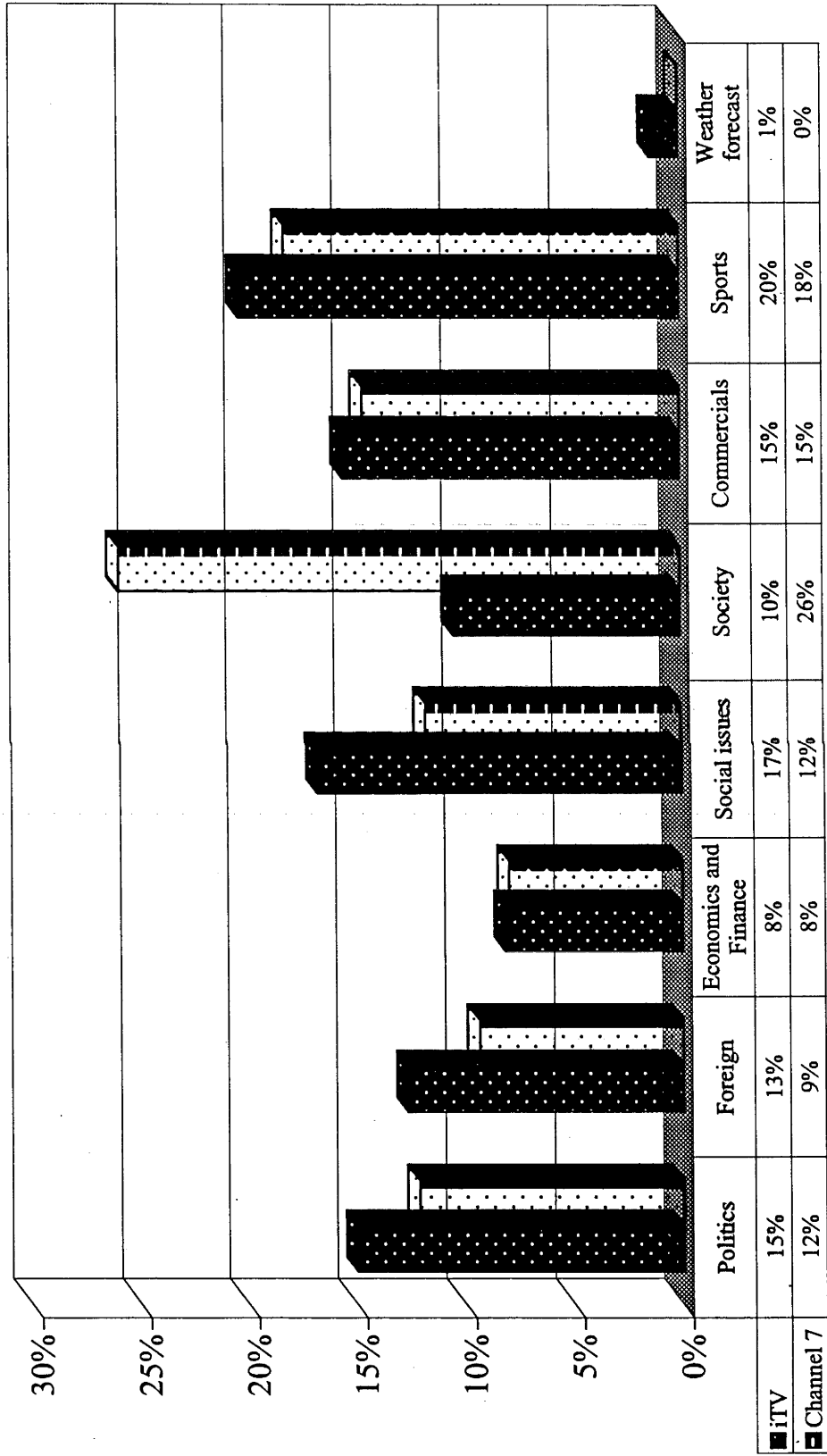
the key issues of journalistic competence in gaining access to and interpreting information, and the availability of that information. The lack of 'specialized' knowledge among Thai journalists, as discussed in Chapter Four, has a bearing on this area. Although the lack of information may also play an equal part in determining the coverage on government policies and legislation, more information has been made available in Thailand as a result of the Official Information Act of 1997.[59] However, the Act has not greatly affected journalistic competence or the willingness to gain access to political information.

Table 15: Type and Percentage of Political Stories in Evening News Programs Broadcast on *iTV* and Channel 7 from 14 to 31 December 1998

Political Stories	*iTV* (%)	Channel 7 (%)
1) Investigation	45	24
2) Struggle	13	17
3) Celebrity/Campaign	13	37
4) Crusade/Protest	22	16
5) Passage of law	6	5

During the three-week broadcast period, political news coverage on Channel 7 was mostly framed on the basis of politicians' activities, their personal images, their constituencies, and their campaigns. For instance, Channel 7 carried a scoop on December 30, 1998, which detailed the nicknames that the Government House reporters gave to the ruling party -- a yearly tradition at Government House. Channel 7 also had less live coverage, and crossed live from location less often than *iTV*. News stories on Channel 7 were shorter than those of *iTV*. Not many news stories on Channel 7 carried soundbites, and most were read out by the news anchors. *iTV*, on the other hand, added two new features to its evening bulletin. A documentary section called 'A New Chapter of Thai Politics' (*Choam na kanmuang mai*), which featured the changes in Thai politics

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[59]   This legislation will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

that resulted from the constitutional reform of 1997, was added once a week to its regular bulletin. Moreover, news analysis presented by Prachak Mawongsa, an *iTV* political editor, was broadcast once a week in a section called, 'News from the Political Desk' (*Chak toa khao kanmuang*). According to Prachak's assistant, *iTV* has committed itself to providing political information, comment and analysis at a new level for television stations in Thailand.[60] In covering policies and political currents, *iTV* has demonstrated its journalistic expertise by including more background information and commentaries in the story, by interviewing non-official sources, and by offering a more active and less reportorial style of journalism.

However, in covering scandals, *iTV* tended to reproduce official discourses rather than maintaining the distance that might have allowed it to be more critical of the stories covered. During the period of study, the most covered political story was the revelation of links between the Minister of Interior and three luxurious villas built in the conservation area around Sri Nakkarin Dam in Kanchanaburi. *iTV* spent more time investigating the issue than Channel 7, and included coverage dedicated to a five-minute editorial section called '*Wikhroe khao*' (Analyze news). However, the nature of both the *iTV* and Channel 7 coverage of the story was confined to the debate between the government and the opposition that started the allegations. Although raised by the opposition party, government officials were the main sources for this story once it became an urgent issue. Consequently, news content was framed and confined to questions of whether the houses were or were not built in the conservation area, and who should be in charge of making a clear ruling -- the Land Office, or the Office of Forestry. Most coverage featured interviews with the Minister of Interior, his wife who was seen visiting one of the villas, and the officers in charge of the Land Office and the Office of Forestry in Bangkok. The question of how a local official who has a close relationship with the Minister could secure a large piece of land that had originally been allocated to local peasants was overlooked and under-emphasized. Within such a news frame, politicians and bureaucrats of the central government became dominant news

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[60]   Interview with Anchaleeporn Kusum, Assistant to Political Editor, *iTV*, on May 9, 1998.

sources, and alternative sources of information essential to the story, such as local officers and peasants living in the area became rare. As Tuchman has argued, the heavy reliance on centralized bureaucratic sources helps to present "a politically-legitimated reality".[61] By adhering to the beat system and relying on government sources, *iTV* legitimized the official views of the scandal, and constructed a news frame wherein state officials dominated the news text.

6.3.2 Late night news programs in Japan and the 2000 Election

In *Terebi hôdô ron* (Discussion on Television News), Tamiya Takeshi presented the results of several surveys conducted between 1993 and 1995 on patterns of news watching and its criteria among university students. Of 1,372 respondents, the most important criteria in deciding which news program to watch was the news anchor (better known as *nyuusu kyasutaa* in Japan), and his or her comments made about the news stories.[62] The most-watched news program was *News Station*, and the second most-watched news program was *News 23*. Hence, the most popular news anchors were Kume Hiroshi of *News Station* and Chikushi Tetsuya of *News 23*.[63] According to the survey results, the students liked watching *News Station* because firstly, of Kume Hiroshi; secondly, because the news interpretation which was easy to understand; thirdly, because of interesting comments; fourthly, because of investigative stories; and lastly, because of the airing time. As for *News 23*, the program was frequently watched by students because firstly, of Chikushi Tetsuya; secondly, because of good comments; thirdly, because of Chikushi's debates in the section called *tajisôron*; fourthly, because of the intention to compare it with *News Station*; and lastly, because of the airing time.[64]

Clearly, the success of both programs was largely due to the ability of the anchors to deliver political stories to the public. By using simple language, visual aids,

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[61] Gaye Tuchman, "Myth and the Conscious Industry: A New Look at the Effects of the Mass Media", in E. Katz and T. Szecskö (eds.), Mass Media and Social Change (London: Sage, 1981), pp. 88-89.

[62] Tamiya Takeshi, *Terebi hôdô ron* (Discussion on Television News) (Tokyo: Meishi shoten, 1997), pp. 196-235.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 222-227.

examples, live interviews, and commentaries, they extracted 'true meanings' (*honne*) out of ambiguous, 'stated principles' (*tatemae*) of politics.[65] In so doing, they framed the meanings of the text with issues that they thought were most 'relevant' to their audiences, and hence subjected the audiences to their views of political reality. The following analysis of political news stories reported on *News Station* and *News 23* on the eve of the 2000 Lower House election will discuss the extent to which these two programs framed political news, and the aspects of political news in which the anchors tended to legitimate state political discourse. Thirty-six bulletins of *News Station* and *News 23* were analyzed, all of which were broadcast from June 2, the day that the parliamentary was dissolved, to June 26, the day after the election.

As demonstrated in Figure 20, stories broadcast on *News Station* and *News 23* were categorized into eight types.[66] Whilst *News Station* clearly had more coverage of political and foreign news than *News 23*, it had less coverage of social issues. *News Station*'s emphasis on political reports and Kume's ability to comment quickly and authoritatively was clearly demonstrated in the program's first edition of election coverage. A qualitative analysis of this edition will give a clear picture of how Kume's comments could have established a political discourse.

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[65]   According to Itô, 'extracting information' plays an important function in Japanese personal communication which tended to avoid using direct expression, or personal confrontation. See Itô Yôichi, "The Future of Communication Research: The Japanese Perspective", <u>Journal of Communication</u>, Autumn 1993, 43(4), p. 70.

[66]   As already mentioned, these types include 'politics', 'foreign', 'economic and finance', 'social issues', 'society', 'sports', 'weather forecast', and 'commercials'.

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Figure 20: Type and Percentage of News Content of TV Asahi's News Station and TBS' News 23 during June 2 -26, 2000

	Politics	Foreign	Economics and Finance	Social issues	Society	Commercials	Sports	Weather forecast
News station	27%	14%	2%	13%	2%	18%	20%	3%
News 23	25%	8%	2%	22%	4%	19%	18%	1%
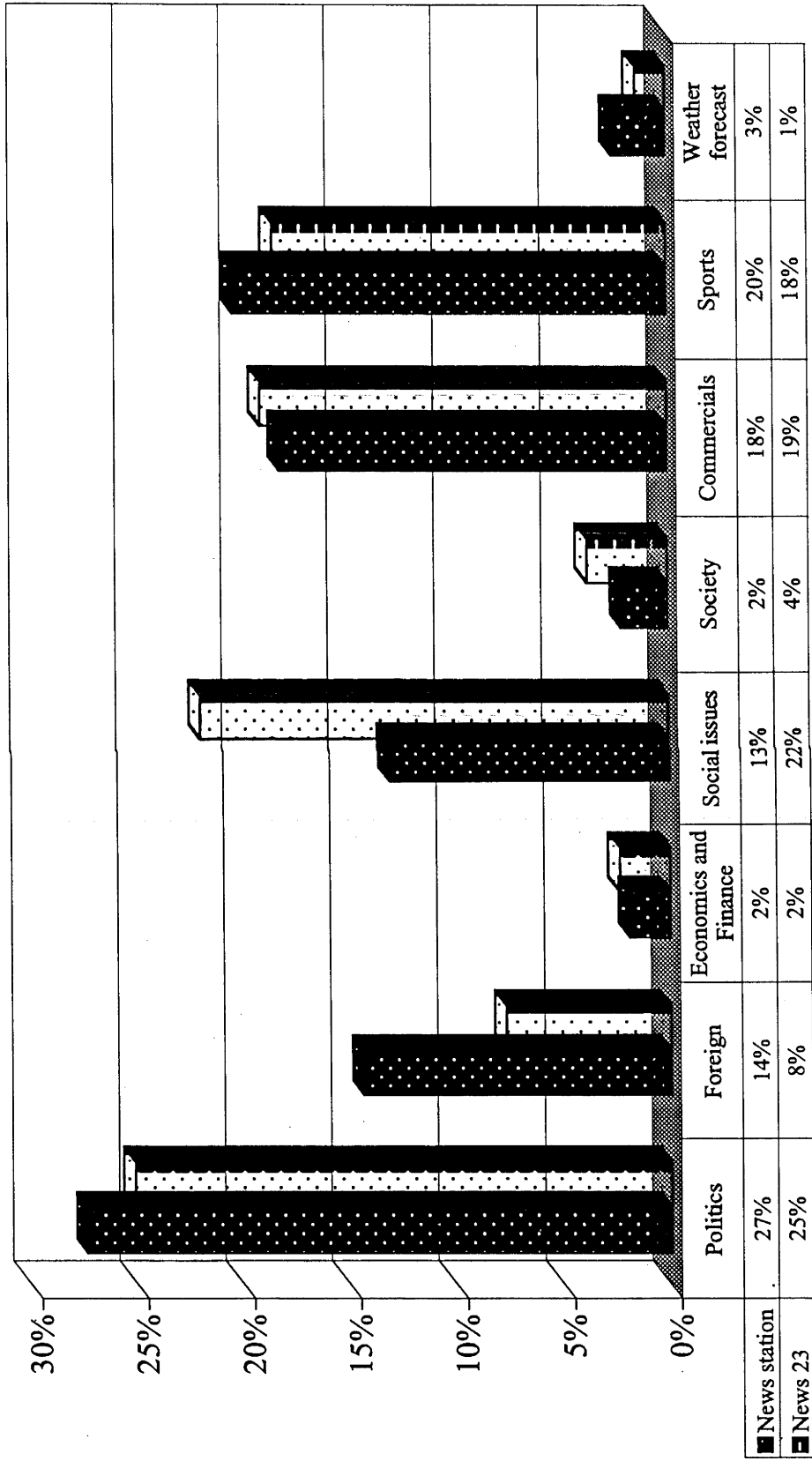
On June 2, 2000 Kume conducted a thirty-minute live interview with then LDP secretary Nonaka Hiromu, and the leader of Democratic Party Hatoyama Yukio. After the interview, Kume offered his view: "in contrast to NHK *'News 7'* today that told you that there were seven parties, or seven alternatives in this election. I would like to give you instead two alternatives and three possibilities for this election". He then introduced two dolls with faces bearing the likeness of leaders of the LDP and the Democratic Party. The first doll was placed on building blocks bearing the names of the LDP-led (*ji-kô-ho*) coalition,[67] and the second doll was put on the next set of building blocks which bore the names of the Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party of Japan. Kume paused and said that "this is not all". He then pulled out another building block painted red with the name *'Nihon Kyôsantô'* (Japan's Communist Party) written on it. While adding this red piece to the second set of building blocks, he declared that if the voters chose the Democratic Party-led coalition, they had to inevitably have the Communist Party in the coalition. Another doll -- which was later introduced as the third possibility should neither the LDP nor the Democratic Party win the majority of seats -- wore a paper mask bearing a question mark. The doll was put on another set of LDP-led coalition building blocks, as Kume asked a political commentator from *Asahi Shimbun* about the likelihood of this alternative, and who might be the man behind the mask. The suspension of the identity of the man behind the mask was revealed by the commentator as Mori Yoshirô, the LDP leader.

Within fifty minutes of the first edition of election coverage, Kume entertained and informed the public about the upcoming election by framing the election as nothing but a horse race between the LDP and the Democratic Party. Emphasis was placed on potential winners and losers, and the number of seats expected to go to each party. The news frame that was being drawn by Kume dominated the entire political discourse. Subsequent editions of campaign coverage were directed towards the competitiveness of the campaigning between both parties. Content was preoccupied with poll results, rather than policies. Coverage of smaller parties such as the Liberal Party, and the

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[67] 'Ji' stands for 'Jimintô', or the Liberal Democratic Party. 'Kô' stands for 'Kômeitô', or the Clean Government Party, whereas 'ho' stands for 'hoshutô', or the New Conservative Party.

Japan's Communist Party, was scarce in virtually all editions of election coverage. Although earlier studies of electoral campaigning in Japan have emphasized the limited effects of Japanese media on voting decision,[68] and evidence to prove any direct link between Kume's comments and how the audiences vote is unavailable, the results of the 2000 election were indeed reminiscent of the third possibility that Kume had suggested. Despite losing seats, the LDP formed a coalition with the help of votes from *Komeitô*, and Mori continued to be the Prime Minister.

Not only could these late night news programs determine political discourse, they also had the capacity to inform the electorate. *News 23*, for instance, elevated and ridiculed Prime Minister Mori's remarks that "people who have not decided to whom they'll give their vote may sleep in on the election day". Later that night, Chikushi put up a sign reading '*Okirô yo Baby*', or 'let's get up (and vote)', as a challenge to Mori's remarks. He severely criticized Mori, condemned the LDP for not debunking their leader's ideas, and commented that "there may be a number of LDP politicians whose thoughts are similar to Mori".[69] Although there is no evidence of a direct correlation between the impact of *News 23*'s coverage of Mori's remarks and the LDP's loss of seats in the election, pre-election poll results that were released after the coverage indicated a sharp drop in support for the Mori administration, as well as for the LDP.[70]

In understanding how journalists frame election issues, Patterson uses the psychological term 'schema' to refer to frameworks that journalists and the public audience employ to understand the political world.[71] Schemas are cognitive structures that help individual make sense and simplify the complexity of information to which they are exposed. Patterson argues that journalists prefer to employ what he calls 'a

[68]   For example, Akuto Hiroshi has suggested that the Japanese media has a limited effect on the voting decision of the Japanese public, which depends more largely on personal connections and political organization networks. See Akuto Hiroshi, "Media in Electoral Campaigning in Japan and the United States" in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 313-337.

[69]   *News 23*, TBS, June 22, 2000.

[70]   Kobayashi Yoshiaki, "*Sôsenkyo yûkensha no tôhyô wo yomu*" (Readings of voters' voting behavior in the general election), Sekai, August 2000, pp. 42-47.

[71]   Thomas E. Patterson, Out of Order (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

strategic game schema' when reporting on elections, whereas the public employ 'a governing schema' in relation to campaign politics.[72] The strategic game schema focuses on political aspects of the election such as who is leading in the polls; whereas the governing schema focuses on debates of public policy issues and problems. Table 9 and 10 list emphases on 'politics' or 'policy' aspects of election coverage featured in a special series on election coverage on *News Station* and *News 23*. Each coverage was about ten to fifteen minutes long. The results suggested that the series on both programs tended to employ 'strategic schema' by focusing on the horse-race aspects of the campaigns, although attention was also given to candidates' arguments on issues of public policy.

Table 16: Emphases of *News Station*'s Special Series on the Lower House Election 2000

Date	Topics	Politics	Policies
June 7	Second generation politicians	X	
June 8	Candidates' campaign strategies in most competitive districts	X	
June 9	Public opinion poll	X	X
June 12	Changes in the new election system and campaign tactics	X	
June 13	Earlier voting and voting from overseas	X	
June 19	Public projects and agricultural politics		X
June 20	Stop deregulation on small and medium enterprises		X
June 21	Economic and financial reform		X
June 22	Social welfare and superannuation		X
June 23	Political debates (Live)	X	X

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[72]   *Ibid.*

Table 17: Emphases of *News 23*'s Special Series on the Lower House Election 2000

Date	Topics	Politics	Policies
June 13	Voters	X	
June 14	Election issues	X	X
June 15	*Kôenkai* (political support groups)	X	
June 19	Rivalries between Hatoyama's brothers	X	
June 20	Co-operation and conflicts between the LDP and the New Komeitô Party in their campaign strategies	X	
June 21	Second generation politicians	X	
June 22	Wake up! or Sleep in! on election day	X	
June 23	Political Debates (Live)	X	X

As seen in the above tables, both *News Station* and *News 23* focused more on the political aspects of the election by featuring stories on party strategies and the personal traits and ambitions of politicians than differences in policy platforms among the parties. As a result, politicians became dominant news sources in these stories. However, when it came to reporting policy issues, both programs presented investigative reports gathered from the concerned public and labor groups, and bureaucrats. Yet most reports carried a negative connotation about the LDP's poor performance in solving the economic problems, and mass spending on public projects. On the eve of Election Day, both programs invited representatives from all parties to participate in the live broadcast of policy debates. In that broadcast, differences among party policies were made clearer, as party representatives were given equal time to talk about their major policy issues. Interestingly, all party leaders, except that of the LDP, participated in the live debate at *News Station*. The fact that the LDP chose to send its major power broker Nonaka Hiromu, rather than its gaffe-prone leader Mori Yoshirô indicates that these politicians realized how much impact TV news programs had on the public opinion. In this sense, it also points to an urgent need for a new breed of politicians in Japan, one that is more telegenic, younger, and more tactful in handling *ad hoc* questions than its predecessors. As Altman has observed, "the triangular

relationship between television, politics, and election that characterizes American politics was beginning to emerge in Japan".[73]

6.4 TV News and Changes in Its Political Roles

It should now be clear that the style of broadcast journalism elicited by *iTV*'s evening bulletin in Thailand and late night news programs in Japan has constituted a new way of communicating politics. This new style has broken away from the traditional newsreading format by adding live broadcasts, interviews, and commentaries; and these additions have had a profound impact on politics. Yet, how has this impact been manifested? Let us now employ the *Political Information Contest Model*, and consider the extent to which the media and the state have vied for control of political information, as well as the extent to which the roles of Thai and Japanese television news has presumed in politics.

6.4.1 *iTV*

The foregoing analysis suggests that *iTV* has positioned itself as an investigative news channel that undercuts the more traditional style of political news presentation in Thailand. Yet to what extent has its investigative reporting had an impact on politics, as well as the public at large? A case study of *iTV*'s scoop on traffic police corruption, which rocked the entire police department, will elaborate this point.

TV watchers who tuned in to *iTV* shortly after 7.00 pm on the night of 21 April 1998 saw images that they would never have imagined appearing on Thai national television. Real-time footage from a hidden camera showed overloaded express-way motorists being stopped and asked to pay for their passsage by traffic policemen. Subsequent footage captured other drivers throwing banknotes on to the tarmac, and the traffic policemen later picking them up. The images themselves were rather unsteady, and carried the connotation that the police's actions were dubious. *iTV* reporters added

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[73] Kristin Kyoko Altman, "Television and Political Turmoil: Japan's Summer in 1993", in S.J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), <u>Media and Politics in Japan</u> (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 177.

flavor to the story by interviewing angry motorists in the area. The evening news ran a headline, "*suai thang duan*" or "Expressway police's levy", on the right hand corner of the screen. A female anchor summarized the story by asking whether this was an individual act, or a part of a major corruption scandal within the traffic police force.[74] The next day, several national newspapers featured *iTV*'s coverage on the front-page. Two days after the story broke, five traffic policemen arrived at *iTV*'s head office with more than fifty signatures to plead with *iTV* that this was not an individual act but that they were ordered to do it by their seniors, who played important roles in a major graft ring within the traffic police force.[75]

On the night of 24 April 1998, *iTV* ran a scripted two-minute editorial that called for a transparent investigation from the Police Department and the Minister in charge.[76] A week later, two polls were conducted in Bangkok on how the public reacted to the problem of police corruption. The public's anger reflected in these polls was so intense that some members of the opposition parties demanded an immediate response from the government. A leader of one right-wing party even made the far-fetched claim that *iTV* colluded with the Democrat Party to create stories that would reflect well upon them should the problems in the police department be quickly solved. Such conspiracy theories unexpectedly magnified the agenda to the extent that a parliamentary advisory committee even considered bringing the issue into parliamentary session.[77]

Ten days after the story broke, six high-ranking officers were dismissed and charged for their actions. This was the quickest internal investigation in the history of national police force. The Police Department also underwent an extensive reform and was reconfigured as the National Police Office later in the year. Nevertheless, *iTV* did not stop there, but continued the pursuit of justice and found that other levies were being collected, such as those illegally imposed on black smoke from exhaust pipes (*suai*

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[74]   *iTV* Evening News, 21 April 1998; see also "*Talk kab iTV: Buang lhang choe khao pua pen suai kwan dam*" (Talk with *iTV*: Investigative story on 'black smoke levy' ", <u>Prachachart Thurakit</u>, May 4-6, 1998, pp. 35-6.

[75]   *iTV* Evening News, April 23, 1998.

[76]   *iTV* Evening News, April 24, 1998.

[77]   *iTV* Evening News, April 25, 1998 - May 4, 1998.

kwan dam), from trucks using the national highway (*suai thang lhuang*), and from motorcycle taxis (*suai motersai*).[78] Most of these stories were guided by public concern, and the role of *iTV* was evidence that television news in Thailand had moved beyond its traditional role as a conduit of information, to become a watchdog that guarded against any wrongdoing, and an agenda-setter in politics. *iTV*'s campaign to attack police corruption was not an isolated event. During a local election in February 1999, *iTV* also captured footage of a group of unauthorized men stuffing ballot boxes with marked papers. *iTV*'s broadcast of this footage led to the cancellation of election results, and a new election.[79]

The coverage of police corruption and electoral fraud contained powerful images that appeared to be both spontaneous and credible, which almost every viewer in Thailand could easily associate with his or her own experience. Indeed, successful television news programs usually draw viewers into the text and establish a position for them to occupy.[80] The images of police collecting banknotes from the tarmac, and a group of men stuffing ballot boxes were repeatedly used to relate to viewers the notion of 'the public as victim'. These images provided *iTV* journalists with an opportunity to introduce the question of the state's commitment to reform.

iTV has certainly demonstrated an ability to construct narratives that challenge official definitions of rightful conduct of police and politicians, and that push for change. The overwhelming public response, as reflected in the above-mentioned poll, confirmed a positive public attitude towards *iTV*. It was in this condition, wherein the medium could act as an *expert* that watched out for the state's wrongdoings and received *positive reference* from the public, that it could function as a *watchdog* in Thai politics. However, as argued in Chapter One, the political role of media is *fluid* and *changeable* depending on relationships that the media formed with other political actors. According to the following case study, commercial constraints have forced *iTV* to shift its course to

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[78]   *iTV* Evening News, May 5, 1998 - May 14, 1998.
[79]   "TV Channel denies links to election fraud", The Nation, February 6, 1999 (on-line edition).
[80]   Ian Ward, Politics of the Media (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1995), p. 77.

functioning as a guard dog, guarding its own interests, and sometimes legitimizing official discourse.

By 1998, *iTV* had been broadcasting for two years and constantly gaining viewers from other channels, but had failed to make its first royalty payment.[81] The station claimed that this failure related to the loss of revenue caused by delays in the installation of transmitters at provincial network stations owned by the Public Relations Department (PRD). The mid-1997 economic crisis and the subsequent devaluation of the baht worsened the situation and made necessary *iTV*'s requests for a deferral of the Bt 300 million payment.[82]

This failure led to numerous attacks by the largest daily newspaper, *Thai Rath*, which was part of another consortium that had failed in its bid for a UHF television licence. The daily launched a massive campaign to discredit *iTV* by running damaging headlines and abusive editorial comments.[83] Allegations were laid that *iTV* had acted as a government mouthpiece in exchange for a deal which deferred the payment, and that it subsequently colluded with Minister in charge of the OPM, Khunying Supatra Masdit (1997~2001), to waive the concession payments.[84] In response, *iTV* broadcast news and editorial programs to rebut the *Thai Rath* claims, accusing the daily of having a hidden agenda, as well as attacking its record of journalistic impropriety. This war of words lasted about a month, until the mass-circulated daily finally vowed to prevent *iTV* from "using journalism as a pretext for breaking a contract to pay a concession fee to the state coffers".[85]

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[81] *"iTV Roong Kanan Niyom Poong 'ndub-sam"* (*iTV* became the third in ratings), *Than Wikroe*, March 31, 1997, p. 18.

[82] "Cabinet May Ponder *iTV* Plea Today", *Bangkok Post*, June 30, 1998 (on-line edition).

[83] The first round occurred at the beginning of 1998, when *iTV* for the first time sought cabinet approval for a deferral of royalty payments. See, for example, *Thai Rath*, January 4, 1998, p. 1, 13; January 8, 1998, p.1, 3, 11, 17; and January 9, 1998, p. 1, 10, 19.

[84] "*Thai Rath* Says *iTV* Attacks are in the Public Interest", *Bangkok Post*, June 10 1998 (on-line edition); Ruch Komolbut, "*Thai Rath - iTV*"", *Matichon*, June 24, 1998, p. 3.

[85] "Thai Rath - *iTV* Fray Enters Round Two", *The Nation*, June 10, 1998 (on-line edition).

Interestingly, most media coverage of this controversy portrayed the story as an internecine fight, and there was no attempt to unravel the truth. This reflects the tendency of Thai journalists to focus on conflicts rather than on the investigating and processing of information. The *iTV* and *Thai Rath* saga highlighted the influence of commercial factors and the competition between media on the role of television in Thai politics. Both factors forced *iTV* to act as 'a guard dog', in a condition wherein the state had *rewarded* it by allowing the payment deferral, and *iTV legitimized* the state's discourse on this issue by denying the allegation. In this instance, *iTV* received neither positive nor negative reactions from the public, who were distanced from the issue.

Indeed, the controversy between *Thai Rath* and *iTV* was ample evidence that the reward relations between the Thai state and *iTV* formed had shifted the course of *iTV*'s political role from being 'a watchdog' -- watching for abuses of power, facilitating political participation and demands, and providing a channel for the voiceless in the society -- to being 'a guard dog', which legitimizes certain official discourses for the sake of guarding its own interests and interests of those with whom it has patron-client relations. Significantly, concerns among television entrepreneurs about protecting their commercial interests became much greater after the 1997 economic crisis, which led to a sharp decline in advertising revenue. One *iTV* news producer admitted that this constraint now has serious repercussions in news selection, as negative coverage of major sponsors was carefully avoided.[86] *iTV*'s news slot was shortened and commentary section such as '*Wikhroe khao*' was revoked to give way to the longer broadcast of sponsors' activities and beauty contests.[87]

The takeover of *iTV* by a political party leader, Thaksin Shinawatra who became a Prime Minister in February 2001, has introduced ideological divisions within the station. Tephachai Yong, the news director who was famous for his investigative stories on '*suai*' (levy), threatened to resign, and was later transferred to an inactive post.

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[86]   Interview with Anchaleeporn Kusum, Assistant to Political Editor and News Anchor, *iTV*, Siam Infotainment Co., Ltd on May 9, 1998.

[87]   "Beastly row over Miss Thailand pageant", The Nation, May 11, 2000 (on-line edition).

Suthichai Yoon, a veteran press journalist and one of the founders of *iTV*, could not bear the thought of serving a politician. He left *iTV* together with most of his team from the Nation Multimedia group, and began a new news channel on a cable TV network.[88] In June 2000, he led his old teammates such as Sorayuth Suthasanachinda, who was a regular commentator in the section called '*Wikroe Khao*' to set up a 24-hour news channel known as 'UBC 8 Nation News Channel'.[89] As for *iTV*, frequent changes in management team and news policies since the departure of Nation Multimedia Group and the takeover by Thaksin,[90] have indicated that it is unlikely that the watchdog role of *iTV* will be maintained in the near future. Numerous reports of direct interference in political content during the 2001 election campaign were made, and journalists who were not comply with the management orders were immediately fired.[91] As Thaksin and his party won a majority of seats in 2001, critics viewed that *iTV* has inevitably shifted to presume a role of a 'servant of the state' -- being dictated and controlled by those running the government.[92]

6.4.2 *News Station*

The political role of *News Station* in the earlier studies has been described as that of 'a watchdog' that watches out for the state's wrongdoings and protects public interests in Japan. Altman, for instance, suggests that during the 1993 election campaign, *News Station* broke "taboos, challenging the establishment and exposing the rotten-roots of

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[88]   Membership of UBC, the only national cable TV operator in Thailand, reached 330,000 in mid 2000, which is only about 0.05% of the total population. "*Khodsana penpit seukranam 'Suthichai Yoon' rab nong National hoad*" (Media's unwelcome reception to National News), *Matichon Sudsapda*, June 12, 2000, pp. 70-71; "UBC Set to Storm Provincial Market", The Nation, April 8, 2000 (on-line edition).

[89]   Nation News Channel attempts to directly emulate CNN, and carry top news in both Thai and English languages. See "Nation set for new slot on UBC", The Nation, March 20, 2000 (on-line edition).

[90]   Nondhanada Intarakomalyasut, "Exec forced to table on layoff news, Redundancies not entirely ruled out", The Nation, November 28, 2000 (on-line edition); "Manager reassigned as *iTV* feud worsens", The Nation, December 29, 2000 (on-line edition); "*iTV* switch infuriates board head", The Nation, January 1, 2001 (on-line edition).

[91]   There were reportedly incidents in which *iTV*'s political reporters were told to tone down negative coverage of Thaksin and the Thai-Rak-Thai Party during the election campaign. "*iTV* crew decries 'interference' ", The Nation, January 4, 2001 (on-line edition); "A legacy of '92 is now shackled to one man's ambition", The Nation, January 4, 2001 (on-line edition); "*iTV* crew told to lodge petition", Bangkok Post, January 16, 2001 (on-line edition).

[92]   Julian Gearing, "Taming the Media: Allegation of Political Interference Cast A Cloud Over Thaksin's Incoming Administration", Asiaweek, 27(6), February 16, 2001 (on-line edition).

one-party rules".[93] However, it has also been argued that *News Station* is not a watchdog, but rather an agenda-setter as it lacks fairness and, often, accuracy. This argument was supported in a study of *News Station*'s coverage on political reform issues both before and after the 1993 election. In his analysis, Yokota found that the program played a crucial role in prioritizing reform subjects. The whole issue of political reform was incrementally reduced to a mere subject of electoral reform that the Hosokawa administration was set to accomplish in 1994. *News Station*'s main task, as he concluded, was that of an agenda setter, selecting and priming issues that it thought were most important.[94]

The following case study of *News Station*'s coverage on dioxin provides similar results. An edition of *News Station* broadcast on February 1, 1999 featured a report on the unusually high level of dioxin chemicals on 'leaf vegetables' in Tokorozawa City of the Saitama prefecture.[95] The director of a local environmental agency, interviewed by Kume, stated that such vegetables included spinach. As spinach is the most produced "leaf vegetable" in that area, Kume's reports alone resulted in a huge drop in the price of spinach. This drop caused a huge loss to local farmers, who are regarded as the stronghold of the conservative LDP's constituency. The Minister of Posts and Telecommunications rapidly ordered an investigation into the case, which revealed that Kume mistakenly cited the 1997 survey results of a local environmental agency that only found a high level of dioxin on tea leaves in the area. The issue was highly politicized by the LDP, to the extent that the President of TV Asahi had to make a trip to the Diet to explain the circumstances. Kume, who had consistently represented himself as a transparent, open, and reciprocal proxy who spoke on behalf of the Japanese society, made an on-air apology, albeit his denying that he had made false

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[93]   Kristin Kyoko Altman, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

[94]   Yokota Hajime, *Terebi to seiji* (Television and Politics) (Tokyo: Suzusawa shoten, 1996).

[95]   "*Tokorozawa daiokishin mondai saikô nôdo wa [sencha]--Satitama-ken*" (Tokorozawa's diaoxin problems, High level daioxin found in green tea -- Saitama Prefecture", *Mainichi Shimbun*, February 19, 1999, p. 23; "*Yasai daiokishin hôdô tere asa...* " (TV Asahi's Reports on daioxin in vegetables), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, morning edition, February 19, 1999, p. 35; "*Tere asa, Daiokishin sôdô chôsa zusan datta...*", (TV Asahi's daioxin trouble - Inaccurate report of investigation's results), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, evening edition, February 19, 1999, p. 23.

reports, and simply claiming that he did not receive the detailed results of the dioxin level conducted by the Environmental Agency.[96]

However, the controversy over whether *News Station* made a false report had itself ushered into the spotlight the problems of high levels of dioxin chemicals in the air, water, and soil. Grassroot concerns about the environment had generally not received much attention in either the national press, or on television until recently. For instance, the safety levels of dioxin intake, which were established by various environmental agencies and featured numerous discrepancies, had never been questioned by the media until Kume's mis-reporting.[97] The subpoena of the President of TV Asahi further attracted a divided media's attention. The conservative press, weekly magazines, and wide show programs on commercial stations in association with the conservative establishment, such as *NTV* and *Fuji TV*, demanded that the MPT find TV Asahi in violation of the Broadcast law.[98] The liberal press, on the other hand, condemned the subpoena. A commentary in the *Manichi Shimbun*, for instance, claimed that the dioxin problem was elevated to a national issue because the controversial nature and popularity of TV Asahi's *News Station* dismayed the authority. The newspaper went on to claim that if this case had involved other TV programs, then the dioxin problems would have attracted less political attention.[99] *Positive public reference* given to the program via correspondence, most of which focused on the actual problem of dioxin, also helped magnify the issue, and became an invisible force counterbalancing any attempts from the government to harshly attack the program. As Tahara Sôichirô observed, TV Asahi could overcome the problem this time because of the "overwhelming public support".[100]

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[96] Sôgô jaanarizumu kenkyûjo, "[*Daiokishin hôdô] no hôdô to sôdô to*" (The troubles and reports of the Daioxin's reporting), *Sôgô jaanarizumu kenkyû*, 1999, 168, pp. 18-28. See also Hattori Takaaki, "*Tokorozawa daiokishin hôdô to hôdô no jiyû*" (The report of Tokorozawa's problems of daioxin and the freedom of reporting), *Hôsô Repooto*, May 1999, (158), pp. 20-23.

[97] Kuroda Kiyoshi, "*Tokorozawa no daiokishin hôdô wo kangaeru*" (Have a think about a report on Tokorozawa's daioxin), *Akahata Shimbun*, March 7, 1999, p. 3.

[98] Takehisa Nariyuki, "*Takechan no widoshoo kôsa: Daiokishin hôdô to suchi majikku*" (Take's Lecture on Wideshow: The Reports on Daioxin and the Magic of Figure), *Sankei Shimbun*, evening edition, February 13, 1999, p. 7.

[99] Ogino Shôzô, "*Broadcast: Suteeshon dakara*" (Broadcast: Because it's *News Station*), *Mainichi Shimbun*, evening edition, February 23, 1999, p. 5.

[100] "*Kenryoku no hôdô kainyû*" (The Power of Intervention in Reporting), *Mainichi Shimbun* (evening edition), March 18, 1999, p. 3.

Within twenty-two days of the *News Station* broadcast, the first ministerial-level conference on dioxin policy was held, the standard set for tolerable daily intake was revised, and a basic policy to tackling dioxin problems was also formulated.[101] This evidence demonstrates that the television medium in Japan has helped set, and magnify a political agenda, as well as accelerating the government's responses to that agenda. In this case, the role of the TV medium as an agenda-setter is clearly manifest. However, the case also reflects the norm that accuracy and accountability in Japanese television news has often been sidelined by the emphasis of opinionated journalism.

There are arguably several reasons why *News Station* has rarely moved to perform a watchdog role. Unlike *iTV*, which had sought to contest state's discourses with undeniable visual evidence, it did not want to seek confrontations. *News Station*, like other Japanese news programs, is comfortable with the status quo and high ratings, and unwilling to take extreme risks to achieve change. As the program has constantly been attacked and pressured by the state, the President of TV Asahi, the news producer, and Kume himself know all too well what these risks entail. The recurrent act of "*tere asa basshingu*" (TV Asahi bashing), such as the summoning of the station's President, or the state pressure exerted on advertisers to stop sponsoring the station's programs, has been commonplace. TV Asahi, as well as other TV stations in Japan, largely relies for commercial viability on Japan's biggest advertising agency, Dentsu, which has a close relationship with the LDP.[102] As Watanabe puts it:

> Large advertising agencies, such as Dentsu Incorporated and Hakuhôdô
> Incorporated, also play a significant role in maintaining the collusive ties
> that link the media to business and politics...together they attempt to
> manipulate public opinion and maintain status-quo.[103]

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[101] "Minister urges quick review of safe, daily dioxin intake", The Japan Times, February 24, 1999 (on-line edition).

[102] For instance, Dentsu ran an advertising campaign for the LDP during the 1996 election, as well as the 2000 election. In 1997, Dentsu won a bid to buy a large piece of government site in Tokyo to build its headquarter. See details in Dentsu Inc., Japan 1998 Marketing and Advertising Yearbook (Tokyo: Dentsu Inc., 1998), p. 134.

[103] Watanabe Takesato, "The Sôka Gakkai and the Japanese Media", Paper presented at the Japanese Studies Association of Canada Conference, Montreal, October 1999, p. 19; See also see Watanabe Takesato, "*Gendai no kataribe Kume Hiroshi ga ukeru wake*" (The story-teller of the present day: The reasons why Kume Hiroshi assumed this role), Ushio, 1993, 12, pp. 110-119.

This collusive relationship between the state and the advertising elite became pronounced when they joined force to attack *News Station* in 1992. After Kume had severely criticized the Diet's passing of the Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) Bill, which allowed the dispatch of Japan's defence force to Cambodia, the Minister of MITI and these major advertising agencies exerted their pressure on car companies to withdraw from sponsoring the program.[104] Such tactics have intensified since the alleged influence of *News Station* on LDP's defeat, and the establishment of the so-called "Kume-Tahara made coalition" (*Kume-Tahara renritsu seiken*) in 1993.[105] Hence, the scope of news frames in which politics per se could be questioned and the symbolic display of politics could be fleshed out in this late night news program has been narrowed.[106]

6.5 Comparative Remarks

In a famous book entitled "Making the News", Golding and Elliott offered suggestions that were aimed at improving television news. The first was to lengthen news bulletins: "by extending the news even further, perhaps to an hour, most of the limitations to broadcast news will disappear". They also urged producers to provide more background information and to use a more active and less reportorial style of journalism.[107] Indeed, their call to improve news by combining facts and analyses has been implemented by both *iTV* and Japanese evening and late night news programs. These news programs have extended their news hours, and increased the amount of live interviews, soundbites, documentary-like sections, and commentaries. However, there is a stark contrast in the way between the two countries in the way that news analyses and commentaries are presented. While Thai news programs air news commentaries at the end of the programs

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[104] Tahara Shigeyuki, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

[105] Tase Yasuhiro, a former journalist for *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*", contributed the fall of LDP in 1993 to two television programs, *Sunday Project* and *News Station*, which are hosted by Tahara Sôichirô and Kume Hiroshi respectively. He branded the Hosokawa Coaltion government as "*Kume-Tahara renritsu seiken*", or "Kume-Tahara made coalition". Further discussion see Duncan McCargo, "The Political Role of the Japanese Media", The Pacific Review, 1996, 9(2), pp. 251-64; Kristin Kyoko Altman, "Television and Political Turmoil: Japan's Summer in 1993", in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), pp. 165-86; Yokota Hajime, *Terebe to seiji* (Television and Politics) (Tokyo: Suzusawa Shoten, 1996), pp. 116-60.

[106] For further discussion see Watanabe Takesato, "*Gendai no kataribe Kume Hiroshi ga ukeru wake*" (The story-teller of the present day: The reasons why Kume Hiroshi assumed this role), *Ushio*, 1993, 12, pp. 110-119.

[107] Peter Golding and Philip Elliott, Making the News (London: Longman, 1979), p. 212.

to avoid intermingling facts and comments, Japanese news programs tend to deliver both as 'news'.

This transformation of the TV news marketplace, brought about by *iTV* in Thailand and late night news programs in Japan, has arguably created an arena for enlarging the 'public sphere' and promoting participatory democracy. The incremental, as well as substantial, changes found in other television channels have indicated a move in the same direction. Television in Thailand and Japan has been recognized as a reliable and preferred source of political information, and the public have thus developed a *'positive referent'* power relation with this medium. Yet, whether television can sustain or further enhance the quality of its news programs depends on the improvement of journalistic expertise in delivering the accurate information and creating the attractive presentation styles, and to a large degree on sponsorship and patterns of ownership. This is clearly evident in the case of *iTV*, its watchdog role was only ephemeral due to the change of ownership.

However, the pluralism in both the Thai and Japanese television news programs, which was elicited by the competitiveness amongst different channels led to the establishment of a different political discourse. Both *iTV* news programs in Thailand and the late night news programs in Japan departed from the mainstream media discourses provided by state-centered television. The case studies of *iTV* and *News Station* demonstrated that these contests over interpreting political information and constructing political discourse led to changes in the political function of the television medium. In the Thai case, the competitiveness and newspaper-style journalism that *iTV* brought to broadcast journalism has shifted the political role of television news, from that of a 'servant of the state', to that of a 'watchdog' against the state's wrongdoings, as well as a 'guard dog' protecting its own interests and legitimizing the discourse of its patrons. In the case of Japanese television news, political information contests instigated by the state, in the forms of pressure on sponsors and direct coercion, prevented *News Station* from directly confronting the state by exposing the state's wrongdoings in a real

'watchdog' sense. Rather, they have influenced the program to perform as an agenda-setter -- setting and shaping alternative political discourse.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The power to create and distribute meaning still resides with
centers of material and political power, both within the state
and amongst the higher reaches of corporate and financial
authority. But this power is exercised dynamically. It is
fought over, challenged and abused, both within and without.[1]

Previous chapters in this thesis have discussed various arrays of contesting relationships and power relations between the state and the media in Japan and Thailand. In this final chapter, direct competition between the public and the state in both countries over control of political information is examined. The *Political Information Contest* model proposed in the first chapter is revisited, and the relationships between the state, the media, and the public in both countries are re-addressed and summarized.

7.1 Information Rights, the Informed Public, and Media Reference

There are four types of rights that constitute full citizenship.[2] Firstly, there are civil rights, including rights in relation to freedom of action within civil society, and freedom from undue coercion by the state. Secondly, there are political rights. These include the right to participate in the formation and application of the laws. Thirdly, there are social and economic rights. These are, for instance, workers' rights, employees' rights, and consumers' rights. Finally, there are cultural and information rights. Cultural rights refer to the right to have one's experiences, beliefs, and aspirations represented in the main forum of public culture. Information rights, on the other hand, include two sub-sets of rights: the right to access and the right to know. The former involves a public provision of the full range of information that people need to make considered judgments and

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[1]   Peter Golding and David Deacon, <u>Taxation and Representation: The Media, Political Communication and the Poll Tax</u> (Kent, UK: Whitstable, 1994), p. 203.

[2]   Graham Murdock, "Corporate Dynamics and Broadcasting Futures", in H. Mackay and T. O'Sullivan (eds.), <u>The Media Reader: Continuity and Transformation</u> (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 29-30.

political choices, and to pursue their rights in other areas effectively. The latter refers to the process by which such information can be converted into knowledge that can form the basis for strategies of action. This process is built upon each individual's level of education and media exposure. Indeed, the media play a key role in the process of creating public understanding of every possible aspect of information, and building conceptual frames through which it can be interpreted and evaluated. As such, the media help engender public participation and involvement in the political process, and create an informed public.

This concept also coincides with the 'revised form of the public sphere', as proposed by James Curran, which is a structural organization of media that is intended to facilitate the provision, availability, and circulation of relevant information affecting the public good.[3] As reviewed in previous chapters, the creation of such a public sphere in countries like Japan and Thailand is constrained by state censorship, state ownership, and oligopoly control of the media, and the limitations imposed by normative journalistic practices, which often restrict the flow and quality of information supplied to the public. Therefore, a question that should be raised here is whether the public in both countries can successfully gain direct access to information and interpret it without passing through the filtering processes provided by the media. Timothy Cook once noted that this well-informed and politically involved public can be achieved without involving the media:

> If representative democracy is to work well, there must be more participation not merely by news organizations on behalf of the people but by the people themselves in shaping the options and decisions of the government. Bringing in the public back into politics, of course, entails many possible steps not connected with either Congress or the media.[4]

Nonetheless, behind this attempt to bring the public back into politics lies a problematic concept of the 'public sphere', which is premised on the notion that all information be made available. This notion is indeed a cause for concern when

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[3]   James Curran, "Rethinking the Media as Public Sphere", in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds.). Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and Public Sphere in the New Media Age (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 27-57.

[4]   Timothy E. Cook, Making Laws and Making News Media Strategies in the U.S. House of Representatives (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1989), p. 177.

considering the Thai and Japanese situations, where not only political information but also a large volume of information that directly concerns public's lives is often not made available.

One root cause of such problems has been the absence of the legitimate notion of information rights in both countries until very recently. In Thailand, the local interpretation of rights has long been narrowly limited to the authority and privilege of the ruling class. Right or *sitthi*, was traditionally viewed as privilege associated with the position and duty of the elite and the ruler. According to Thanet,

> *Sitthi* (authority, right), an old word in wide use since the dawn of Thai written history in the fourteenth century was associated with the privilege and power of the king to rule over his subjects, deriving from his claim to protect and preserve order for the common good. In Sukhothai incriptions (700th Century), *sitthi* means 'authority and success'. As the right to rule over the subjects, and the successful execution of the state, *sitthi* is thus an attribute of rulers rather than commoners.[5]

The traditional concept of *sitthi* was also interpreted within the realm of Buddhism beliefs of past deeds, and impermanence, which encouraged people to depend upon those with authorities and fortune, or *phu mi amnaj wasana*, to make decisions about their lives.[6] Saneh Charmrik has even suggested that as Buddhism denies the significance of the 'self', freedom and rights can be defined as nothing much more than the freedom and right to crave for things transient and illusory.[7]

During the Ayudhya period (1350-1767), *sitthi* was extended to include the right of commoners, as well as slaves. However, as recorded in the Three Seals Law, these rights were largely concerned with the power of people in higher positions in dealing with their subjects. It was not until the Bangkok period (1782 until present) that the

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[5] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Slavery and Modernity: Freedom in the Making of Modern Siam", in D. Kelly and A. Reid (eds.), <u>Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 163.

[6] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "*Sitthi khon Thai nai rath Thai*" (Rights in the Thai States), in Chaiwat Sathaanandha (ed.), <u>*Chintanakan su pi 2000: Nawakham chueng krabuanthasana dan Thai Suksa* (Imagination towards 2000: Innovative Paradigms of Thai Studies?)</u> (Bangkok: Samnakgyan kongthun sanubsanun kan wichai, 1996), pp. 219-224.

[7] Saneh Chamrik, <u>*Sitthi manusayachon: Kenkhunkha lae thankhwamkhid*</u> (Buddhism and Human

modern concept of right was established. In 1928, Prince Narathip Praphanpong

classified rights into four types: the right of the freeman, the right of citizenry, the right

to be informed, and the right to rule.[8] However, these rights were inherent within the

supposed duties and obligations of the common people to the King, and their

hierarchical relations. It was ironic that the 1932 revolutionary party ended the absolute

monarchy and introduced popular democracy, but continued to assert elite domination

and protect the status quo in all political discourse. Girling has argued that while the

institution of patronage remained in place, the patrons themselves changed from the

royals and aristrocracy to a professional civil service, who became the foremost of

politics and administration.[9] As such, hierarchical relationships remained fundamental to

Thai social life.

A good illustration of the elite's attempt to protect its status quo was the

official definition of the word *sitthi* issued by the Royal Institute from the 1940s to the

1970s. It was defined as *"khwam samret"* (success), and *"amnaj an chob tham"*

(legitimate power). Only in 1980s was *sitthi* redefined to suit a more politically

liberalized environment by including "power to perform legally accepted things

freely".[10] The first Constitution of Thailand promulgated by the Revolutionary Party

guaranteed the right to communicate, but the right to publish was only guaranteed in the

subsequent constitution, as well as in the following thirteen constitutions.[11] However,

Rights: Value and Concepts) (Bangkok: Kobfai Publishing Project, 2000), p. 70.

[8] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "*Sitthi khon Thai nai rath Thai*" (Rights in the Thai States), p. 199.

[9] See Introduction in John S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

[10] Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Slavery and Modernity: Freedom in the Making of Modern Siam", p. 164.

[11] Bunlert Suphadilok, *Sitthi kan suesan nai prathet thai (The right to communicate in Thailand)* (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1984), pp. 13-31; See also Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *Rabob witthayu lae thorathat thai: krongsang thang setthakit kanmuang lae polkrathob tor sitthi seriphap* (Thai Radio and Television Systems: The Political and Economic Structure and Its Effects on Rights and Freedoms) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1999), pp. 300-336.

the people's right to know, or the right to be informed, (*sitthi nai kan rubroo*) was always considered a privilege, not a given right. In the recent past, only the well-connected groups such as politicians, and powerful businessmen could gain access to sensitive official information. For instance, personal information obtained through connections and illegal means was used by fellow politicians to discredit and slander their rivals. Advanced economic information and decisions, such as the flotation of the baht in 1997, benefited close groups of the political elite and their cronies. The right to know and the right of the general public to gain access to information have only been formalized recently in the sixteenth Constitution, promulgated in 1997, which guaranteed a wide range of rights, freedom, and participation of public individuals, collective entities, and the community. Articles 58, 59, and 60 guarantee information rights of the public, including the right of individual to access government information, as well as the right to be informed, and to participate in the official deliberation of administrative decisions.[12]

These information rights were reinforced by the promulgation of the Official Information Act of 1997[13], which was aimed at promoting the public's right to access

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[12]   Article 58: A person shall have the right to get access to public information
         in possession of a State agency, State enterprise or local government organization,
         unless the disclosure of such information shall affect the security of the State,
         public safety, or interests of other person which shall be protected as provided by law.

         Article 59: A person shall have the right to receive information, explanation
         and reason from a State agency, State enterprise or local government organization
         before permission is given for the operation of any project or activity which may
         affect the quality of the environment, health, and sanitary conditions, the quality
         of life or any other material interest concerning him or her or a local community
         and shall have the right to express his or her opinions on such matters in
         accordance with the public hearing procedure, as provided by the law.

         Article 60: A person shall have the right to participate in the decision-making
         process of State officials in the performance of administrative functions, which
         affect his or her rights and liberties, as provided by the law.
         See "Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 (1997)", Government Gazette, 114
         (55a), October 11, 1997.
[13]   This Act was initiated by the Anand Panyarachun's administration. After the May 1992
         incident, Anand set up a committee to draft the Act. However, due to frequent government

government information, as well as increasing government transparency. The law empowered the individual to have access to government documents, to request copies of them, to take advice, to make complaints, and to make appeals against personal information that he or she may feel inaccurate. In principle, this legislation seemed to be highly beneficial to the public. However, there have been a number of drawbacks and loopholes associated with the legislation and the administration of governmental offices responsible, thus discouraging the public from requesting information.

Since the dawn of Thai democracy, there has been a tradition of secrecy in the Thai government, which is keen to protect its interests, and clings to any information that is inconvenient to release. This culture of secrecy is not matched or balanced by any Freedom of Information Act. A denial of public access to information that is deemed harmful to the monarchical reputation, national security, foreign relations, or the national economy is clearly stated in Articles 14 and 15 of the Official Information Act. Indeed, the term 'national security' has been officially used to conceal information on a vast array of subjects, which often extends to many areas of policy-making, and cabinet meetings.[14] Moreover, public access to information can also be denied, when such information is classified as top secret, secret, or confidential in accordance with the National Security Act B.E. 2517. Such confidential documents are kept from public between five to twenty-five years. According to Article 26 of this Act, top secret information can also be destroyed if the officials in charge deem it necessary.[15]

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changes and disagreements over the details of the draft, it took four governments over five years to pass the law. See, for example, Chanchai Sawangsak, *Prarachchabanyat khormul khaosan khong ratchakan por.sor. 2540 (The Official Information Act B.E. 2540)* (Bangkok: Winyuchon, 1997), pp. 29-39.

[14]   According to the cabinet resolutions on May 19, 2000, details and documents presented or deliberated in cabinet meetings are considered official secrets, and only the Prime Minister has the authority to decide whether to allow disclosure of such information. See Boonlert Changyai, "*Mati pid hu pid ta prachachon*" (The motion that shut people's ears and eyes), *Matichon Sudsapdda*, May 25, 2000, p. 19.

[15]   Wichai Uthai, "*Raksa khwam lub*" (Keeping the secret), *Matichon Sudsapda*, May 14, 2001, p.

The culture of secrecy is well entrenched in the Thai bureaucracy. In 1999, only 297 of 8,279 state agencies, or about 3.45 per cent, published information about their structure and management, the scope of their authority, their rules, regulations, and their staff members in the Royal Gazette. Only twenty-two of seventy-six provinces in Thailand had public information service centers.[16] During the first year of the implementation of the Official Information Act, a number of public requests to access information were denied by bureaucrats, who cited the confidential nature of documents, and concerns for national security as the reasons. These people, whose requests had been denied, filed complaints to the Official Information Board (OIB), which is responsible for considering appeals from the public whose access have been denied. The first landmark case was that of Sumalee Limpa-ovart, a prosecutor, whose daughter failed in the entrance examination to one of the prestigious primary schools where a number of students were known to be admitted through favoritism and connections. With the belief that her daughter had done well in the examination, she requested to see the examination papers of all examinees. The school administration, which is run by Kasetsart University, a public university, instantly denied her request, and adamantly refused to comply with the orders from the OIB to disclose all of the examination papers citing privacy as the reason. Sumalee took her case to the civil court and finally won the lawsuit seven months after her initial request. Yet, the school avoided a full disclosure, only providing answer sheets without identifying the students, or their rankings.[17] Other publicized cases similarly involved the middle-class public whose requests for government information had been denied or obstructed by bureaucratic red

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[16]   Mongkol Bangprapa, "The Official Information Act: What is it you want to know?", <u>Bangkok Post</u>, August 4, 1999 (on-line edition).

[17]   "*Sumalee ngat raththammanoon lom rabob dek phak*" (Sumalee resorted to the Constitution to eliminate the system of favoritism), <u>*Prachachart Thurakit*</u>, March 29-31, 1999, p. 2; "*Sathit Kaset Never Ending Story*", <u>*Prachachart Thurakit*</u>, April 12-14, 1999, p. 2.

tape.[18] These cases received widespread publicity from the national media, particularly newspapers, because they signified the struggle of the middle-class against the old system of politics characterized by non-transparency, secrecy, and corruption. They also reiterated the prevailing notion in Thailand that bureaucratic resistance could override the law. In this situation, the Thai government was caught in a dual desire to give and withhold information. On the one hand, it had sought to present itself as more transparent and accessible by enacting the law. On the other hand, it succumbed to constant bureaucratic pressure and resistance, and thus became unwilling to share information with the public. Evidence of this dilemma was the appointment of a liberal-minded prosecutor as Director to the OIB, when it was first established, to mark a great leap of the Thai government in promoting transparency and accountability. However, the director was sacked immediately after he had authorized the release of government documents concerning cases in which official corruption was suspected. His position was soon filled by a bureaucrat.[19]

Journalists and representatives of civic groups, who have been seekers of access to official information, also felt that the law failed to prevent state agencies from withholding information. Yet, by early 2000 less than thirty per cent of petitions to gain access to official information were filed by journalists.[20] It was not only that most journalists were not familiar with the petition process, but also it was due to the way Thai journalists usually gather information. As a newspaper editor observed,

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[18] See the discussion of other cases in Supara Janchitfah, "Teething Problems", Bangkok Post, December 20, 1998 (on-line edition); "*Chai sitthi khor khomoon thabuang laew ko kwad khaya khao tai phrom*" (Use the right to gain access to the Department of University Affairs and then sweep the trash under the carpet), *Prachachart Thurakit*, April 11, 1999, p. 3; "Father files for results disclosure", The Nation, June 9, 1999 (on-line edition).

[19] "Who will inform the people?", The Nation, August 17, 1999 (on-line edition).

[20] Most of these journalists worked for business papers, such as *Prachachart Thurakit*. See "*Khormoon yu thi nai raw cha tam pai do*" (We will look up the information wherever it is), *Prachachart Thurakit*, January 14-17, 1999, p. 3. "Editorial: It's time for the OIC to prove its mettle", The Nation, January 5, 2000 (on-line edition).

> To get information through the new law is a new experience. In Thailand,
> there is a bad habit of getting information through back door and through
> personal connections. Journalists, businessmen, and politicians have often
> used their relations with officials to allow them to see information other
> people cannot see.[21]

Nevertheless, it should be noted that this journalist's preference for getting official information from private channels rather than searching for one is not uniquely limited to Thai journalists. As Hugo Young wrote, the practice is rather universal:

> The media are deplorably bad at using cornucopia of official information which
> is already available...Newspapers and television often neglect, or never bother to
> find out about, the tedious details often tediously available in unglamorous
> government publications.[22]

In short, the information rights of the Thai public, which include both the right to access and the right to know, are guaranteed only in principle. The Thai public maintains their heavy reliance on the media as their main channel of reference for political information. Therefore, the better that the Thai media systems are able to contest over control political information with the state, the more likely that the public will become better informed, and develop a more sophisticated understanding of the political world and engage in it.

In the case of Japan, the concept of rights (*kenri*) has existed since the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). The notion of rights was defined as a privilege, and associated with the duties and positions of individuals in accordance with their class under the feudal system. For instance, during the Tokugawa period peasants had been conscious of the "right to subsistence", and had been positioned as 'supplicants' who could petition the government when subsistence was threatened. When their petitions

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[21]   Kavi Chongkitthavorn, "Free Flow: Information Act finally passes the test", The Nation, February 11, 1999 (on-line edition).

[22]   Hugo Young, "Devious paths from the secrets maze", Guardian, May 14, 1992, p. 18, cited in Ralph Negrine, The Communication of Politics (London: Sage, 1996), p. 13.

were unsuccessful, they asserted their political rights by engaging in riots and uprisings.[23]

The feudal class system was abolished in the first few years of the Meiji Restoration. The concept of the people's rights (*minken*) started to take root among the common people after the enactment of the Education Code, which was aimed at eradicating illiteracy, and the flourishing of newspapers that contained critical writings by progressive intellectuals whose conception of 'natural rights' was influenced by Western writers such as Mill, Locke, Rousseau, and Spencer. For instance, an editorial published in *Kôchi Shimbun* on October 7, 1881 wrote:

> In the words of Rousseau, society is built upon a social contract. This is not completely according to historical data, and therefore, we cannot easily agree with him. However, we firmly believe that society should not exist without social contract. Thus, we are convinced that sovereignty must reside in the people, without the people the state cannot exist. If there is the people, even with out a king, society can exist.[24]

The concept of people's rights at the time was derived from the combination of the Western doctrine of natural rights and the Confucian ideology of 'dynastic change' which posited that "incompetent emperors should abdicate or be replaced, and that absolutism of the sovereign was not the natural will of heaven".[25] This led to the development of the concept of "joint rule by the sovereign and people". This concept became so widespread that it provided a pretext for the Freedom and People's Rights Movements (*jiyû minken undô*) all over the country in 1881, which resulted in the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution that recognized freedom of speech, press, communication, assembly, and education in 1889. Nevertheless, freedom and the rights of citizens under this constitution were restricted by the provision "under the limits of

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[23] Vera Mackie, "Freedom and Family: Gendering Meiji Political Thought", in D. Kelly and A. Reid (eds.), <u>Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 122.

[24] Cited in Joseph Pittau, <u>Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 106.

[25] Irokawa Daikichi, "Freedom and the Concept of People's Rights", <u>Japan Quarterly</u>, April-June

law". During the rise of militarism during the early Shôwa era, the legitimacy of this liberal concept was further challenged by the dominance of ultra-nationalist state-backed Confucian ideas, which emphasized hierarchy and obedience towards the emperor rather than individual rights. At the time, the Japanese state forged "an emperor-system ideology", which included inculcating patriotism, loyalty to the emperor, and the virtues of diligence and thrift. It successfully did so by disseminating such ideas through numerous centralized sets of institutions, such as the national school system, the military, the network of State Shinto shrines, and various hierarchically organized associations.[26]

With regards to the concept of the right to know (*shiru kenri*), a traditional belief existed since the Tokugawa period that "knowledge of the facts of government belonged to those holding bureaucratic office, and since the majority of samurai and all commoners were normally out of office, there were no grounds for considering diffusion of, or access to, official information".[27] Freedom of expression was restricted, and one could only express his opinion about political, economic, and social issues upon a privilege given from a superior.[28] This custom was in line with a prevalent belief in that period - *tami wa yorashimu beshi shirashimu bekarazu* (people must not be informed, but made dependent on the government's authority). This belief was based on the traditional relationship between *tami* (common people), and *okami* (people above), which carries on today. The hierarchical relationship between *okami* and *tami* emphasizes the traditional perception of information as a 'privilege', and seems to have obstructed the adoption of the concept of information rights among the Japanese

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1967, 14(2), p. 181.

[26] For further discussion see Sheldon Garon, Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[27] Albert A. Altman, "The Press", in M.B. Jansen and G. Rozman (eds.), Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 231.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

people. In present-day Japan, this relationship continues to reinforce people's tendencies to rely on the authority, or the *okami*, to make decisions on issues and handle information that affect their lives:

> Due to a long history of feudalism, the Japanese, especially in rural
> constituencies, tend to leave decisions on difficult matters to *okami*
> (people above us) and are not affected by the mass media's editorials
> as far as those difficult matters are concerned.[29]

Chapter Three of the current Japanese Constitution, which was promulgated in 1946 under the American influence, guarantees a wide range of fundamental rights, including civil rights, political rights, social and economic rights, religious and cultural rights, and the right to communicate (Article 21).[30] However, as McCormack argues, these basic rights "in practice have been seen as abstractions subordinate to a surviving, pre-modern notion of Japaneseness".[31] Noticeably, the Constitution still begins with a series of clauses about the emperor, and this indirectly emphasizes the associated feudal notion of loyalty and obligations, which is often defined as essentially Japanese. More significantly, information rights, including the right to access and the right to know, are disregarded in the Constitution. Thus, in the postwar Japan, "information" is still considered the "property" of the authorities, and those who want to access it must be given the "privilege" to do so.

Only in the recent years have the Japanese people embraced the concept of information rights. According to an NHK national survey in 1997, sixty-six per cent of 1,197 respondents suggested that they knew they had the right to know about government information.[32] This rise was largely brought about by an unprecedented

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29   Itô Yôichi and S. Kohei, "Practical Problems in Field Research in Japan" in U. Narula amd W.B. Pearce (eds.), <u>Culture, Politics, and Research Programs: An International Assessment of Practical Problems in Field Research</u> (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), p. 107.

30   <u>The Constitution of Japan (November 3, 1946)</u> (Tokyo: Eibun-Horeisha, 1948), pp. AA4 – AA8.

31   Gavan McCormack, <u>The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence</u> (NSW: Allen&Unwin, 1996), p. 199.

32   Okuhara Takashi, "*Towareru jôhô e no shutaisei ~ jôhô kôkai ni kansuru kokumin ishiki*

number of citizen movements at the local level in the 1980s and 1990s, which opposed

state policies and projects that lacked consultation with communities, and demanded

access to information about local government funding and expenses. The adoption of the

concept by these citizen groups has resulted in the enactment of local ordinances on

information disclosure in major metropolitan areas, including Tokyo, Osaka, and

Kanagawa since the mid-1980s.[33] These citizen groups, particularly the citizen

ombudsmen, who are a loosely network of private attorneys and supporters, have

become the most prominent information requesters in Japan. Since 1994, this group has

utilized Japan's local disclosure ordinances to audit the accounts of local government,

which has resulted in spending cuts and sharp reductions in lavish treatment between

local and state officials.[34] By 1998, all prefectures had implemented their own

information legislation. In 1999, some of these local ordinances were revised to insert a

clause, which specially guaranteed the 'right to know'.[35]

The central government is lagging behind local governments in this regard. The

National Public Information Disclosure Act (*Jôhô kôkai hô*) was just passed by the

Diet in May 1999, and came into effect in April 2001, despite the fact that similar bills

had been drafted since 1980. The Japanese law appears to stipulate a similar procedure

for information requests to that of the Thai Official Information Act. The Thai public

must file complaints to the OIB when their requests for information have been rejected,

and have to engage in lawsuits should subsequent complaints be in vain. The Japanese

public can either file lawsuits against the government or lodge complaints against the

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chôsa ~ kara" (From the survey of public opinion regarding information disclosure), *Hôsô*
kenkyû to chôsa, February 1998, (2), p. 24.

33   Lawrence Repeta, "Local Government Disclosure Systems in Japan", NBR Executive Insight,
        October 1999, (16) at http://www.nbr.org/publications/executive_insight/no16/index.html.
34   *Ibid.*
35   "*To,[shirukenri] meiki e*" (The "to" administrations will stipulate 'the right to know'), *Asahi*
        Shimbun, July 1, 1999, p. 34.

Disclosure Screening Commission attached to the Cabinet Office should their initial requests for information be rejected. Yet there are some problems associated with the Japanese law that remain unresolved. For example, the "right to know" is not mentioned in the legislation, with the LDP arguing that the Constitution does not clearly provide such a guarantee.[36] The law prohibits requests for information concerning defense, diplomacy, police records that can interfere with current investigation, information that, if disclosed, will impinge on frank discussions among government officials, and information on certain individuals. The law only allows the public to file lawsuits against the central government from a small number of district courts, including those in Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima, Takamatsu, and Fukuoka, thus discouraging people who live in other areas to engage in lawsuits.[37]

There have been a number of cases in which public requests for information have been rejected by local officials, and subsequently ended in local courts. Although the courts ruled in favor of the public, the requested documents were often partially disclosed, with many sentences considered sensitive, or "official secrets", blackened out by the authority.[38] Some government agencies denied that the sensitive information requested existed, whereas some refused requests to access information about entertaining expenses, claiming that releasing such information could unduly harm the workings of government or invade the privacy of individual officials. These refusals reflect the prevalent notion upheld by Japanese bureaucrats that information is the government's property, and should not be made public.[39]

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[36]   Maruyama Masaya, "*Yatô shirukenri meiki wo*" (The opposition urged to stipulate "the right to know"), *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 5, 1998, p. 3.

[37]   "Upper House clears porn, info bills", *The Japan Times*, April 28, 1999 (on-line edition).

[38]   Yamada Kazu, "*Boku nuri medatsu shiryô taiwan kankoku kankei wa hi kôkai*" (Blackened materials are striking, Information on Taiwanese and Korean diplomacy will not be disclosed", *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 14, 1998, p. 3.

[39]   See case studies on the issue of bureaucratic resistance in Lawrence Repeta, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-35.

Nevertheless, the Japanese public seems to be more enthusiastic about the Information Disclosure Law than their Thai counterparts. In Japan, there were more than 1,500 requests to the central ministries and government agencies within two days after the National Public Information Disclosure Act was enacted.[40] In Thailand, only 156 complaints against government withholding information were filed with the OIB within two years of its operations.[41] However, most requests to access government information in Japan were made by nonprofit organizations and citizen groups, whereas similar requests in Thailand were mostly made by the public, though dominated by a group of the middle-class.[42]. Indeed, it is a much more daunting task for a Japanese citizen to engage in a lawsuit against the government, as litigation in Japan is a time consuming and very expensive exercise. In this case, both the Thai and Japanese laws contrast sharply with the American Freedom of Information Act, which provides for government payment of attorneys' fees should requesters win the litigation.[43] Moreover, in contrast to the Thai law, which imposes a small penalty on officials who fail to comply with the OIB decisions ordering disclosure (Article 40), though this penalty is highly unlikely to be imposed in reality, the Japanese law does not impose a penalty for the failure to follow terms of the ordinance, nor does it punish officials who fail to comply with court decisions.

Another type of channel that has recently opened direct communication between the public and the state and widened public access to official information is the Internet. The use of Internet technology to produce an informed and politically active citizenship has been described by Wheeler as "electronic democracy". According to Wheeler, knowledge is now widely available through networks, which removes the difficulty of

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[40] "Public embraces new law, State showered with disclosure requests", The Japan Times, April 3, 2001 (on-line edition).

[41] Nakorn Serirak, "Two years of exercising the right to know in Thailand", The Nation, October 3, 2000 (on-line edition).

[42] Ibid.

[43] Lawrence Repeta, op. cit., p. 12.

accessing information, and this phenomena guarantees success for both direct and communitarian forms of democracy.[44]

According to Pitch Pongsawat, the Internet in Thailand first began in 1995, and by 2000 it was ranked fourth amongst the most consumed media after television, radio, and print respectively. [45] Internet Message Boards and chat rooms have become a new political space where the public are provided with the opportunity to directly interact with politicians. Popular political websites include www.PoliticsThailand.com, and political party websites, which provide biographies, policies, activities, speeches, committee-hearing, summaries and pictures of political activities.[46] Moreover, the websites of various independent commissions established in accordance with the intent of 1997 Constitution, such as the National Counter Corruption Commission and the Election Commission, are frequently visited by Internet users in Thailand. However, the reach of the Internet in Thailand is still extremely limited. In 1996, only about 1 million personal computers were in use, and 10 per cent of these computers were connected to the Internet.[47] The system is also plagued by limited telephone lines. According to the 1999 UNESCO Report, there was only an average of seven telephone lines per 100 inhabitants in Thailand, and there were only sixteen registered ISPs.[48]

The growth of Internet technology is far more advanced in Japan than in Thailand. According to an MPT report, the number of Internet users in Japan reached

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[44]   Mark Wheeler, Politics and the Mass Media (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 217.

[45]   Pitch Pongsawat, "A Case Study of Political Message Boards on the Internet", Paper presented at the 18th Annual Berkeley Conference on Southeast Asia, University of California Berkeley, February 16-17, 2001.

[46]   "Political website proves a big hit", The Nation, August 29, 2000 (on-line edition).

[47]   Pairash Thajchayapong, and Gritsana Changgom, "Supervising the Internet in Thailand", in V. Iyer (ed.), Media Regulations for the New Times (Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Cenre, 1999), p. 116.

[48]   UNESCO, World Communication and Information Report (1999-2000) (Paris: UNESCO, 2000), p. 217.

around 27 million in 1999.[49] Japan had an average of 48.9 telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, and the number of registered ISPs was as many as 2,600 in 1999.[50] This was largely a result of a government policy which has been oriented to expand information infrastructure to promote an 'information society' (*jôhô shakai*). Internet access to political websites and web campaigning during elections in Japan has been a new political phenomenon. It was claimed that during the first two months of Mori Yoshirô's premiership, the website of the Prime Minister's office (www.kantei.co.jp) received 18 million hits from Internet users who wanted to browse official explanations for the Prime Minister's infamous gaffes.[51] Nevertheless, most Internet users in Japan are in the younger age group (between 20 to 30).[52] This group of users is particularly fond of using web posters to express their political views. Professor Kawakami Kazushisa of Meiji Gakuin University observed this trend and suggested that the Internet has widened the political space in Japan to include the younger age group whose interests in politics have been declining and most of whom have no party affiliation. In his words, the Internet "has energized political discussion because it allows people to exchange uncensored views".[53] Yet, it remains to be seen whether the older age group of Japanese citizens, which generally have a strong affiliation with a political party and whose voting turnouts are often high, will find the Internet useful to access political information and communicate with their affiliated parties.

It is obvious that direct channels for the Thai and Japanese public to gain access to political information are, to a certain degree, still obstructed by two factors: the

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[49]   Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, *Heisei12 nenhan Tsûshin Hakusho (Communications White Paper 2000)* (Tokyo: Gyôsei, 2000), p. 10.

[50]   UNESCO, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[51]   Stuart Whitmore and Kurt Hanson, "The Move to E-Lections", Asiaweek, July 21, 2000, p. 7.

[52]   Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[53]   Cited in Kay Itoi, "Political Apathy? Japan's young people speak out online", Newsweek International, April 17, 2000 (on-line edition).

impracticality and loopholes associated with the law regarding information disclosure, and the minimal adoption and limited usage of Internet technology among particular groups. What is also clear is that it is unlikely that the public will use the information disclosure law and Internet technology to wholly supplant the provision of political information by the media. The mainstream mass media of press and television, with their journalistic intermediaries and filtering processes, will remain important actors in the political communication processes between the state and the public in both countries. However, as more information becomes available through the implementation of the information disclosure law and the growth and accessibility of the Internet, the Japanese and Thai media should take a proactive role in gaining access to, and distributing government information to the public, by making better use of the law and the technology themselves. Should more information become available as a result of the media's investigation, the public will develop a type of 'positive referent' power relation with the media. Consequently, the media can motivate the public to become more informed and involved, and this comes closer to creating a 'revised form of the public sphere'.

7.2 The Political Information Contest Model Revisited

The purpose of this study has been to explore new perspectives to understanding the relationship between the state, the media, and the public, and to develop basic guidelines for comprehending how the political role of the media varies over time and circumstance. In the first chapter, the *Political Information Contest* model was proposed as an alternative perspective that can lead to better explanations and understanding of the media's role in politics. The model rests on the premise that the interactions between the state, the media, and the public involve the exercise of power relations. This model incorporates five types of power relations, which are exercised by the state, the media,

and the public, in a political communication process with an aim to gain or maintain control over political information. These power relations are coercive, reward, expert, legitimate, and referent. Four major arguments underpin the *Political Information Contest* model.

The first argument was that the state is likely to exercise a coercive or reward type of power relation with the media. The analysis of the history and current practices of press censorship in Thailand and Japan in Chapter Two suggested that the state in both countries has always tried to regulate the flow of political information in the press by means of legal and extralegal controls. Whilst the Thai state has preferred to use stringent press regulations to maintain its control of political information by censorship, jailing or suing editors and journalists for defamation, the Japanese state has tended to impose reward strategies through a number of subtle extralegal mechanisms, especially through the system of the *kisha kurabu*. Both coercive and reward strategies have proved to be effective instruments to increase the ability of the Thai and the Japanese states to maintain their control of, and to suppress, alternative political discourse in the press. It is also clear in this chapter that when the state implemented its coercive or reward strategies, the press subsequently changed its role. For instance, when the military government took control in Thailand during the 1950s and 1960s and enacted stringent press laws, the Thai press shifted its role from a watchdog to the more partisan role of a guard dog, protecting its commercial interests as well as clinging on to their political connections. In the case of Japan, when the military dominated the government during the early Shôwa years and introduced a number of laws and administrative techniques to deal with the press, which had been very competitive and politically active, succumbed to these regulations and orders, and became subservient to the state. These transitions also indicate that when the state is in control of the political

environment, it has more ability to gain control over political information. Consequently, the media are less likely to triumph over the state in their efforts to gain more control over political information.

The examination of Thai and Japanese television broadcasting regulations in Chapter Three also demonstrated the dynamics of coercive and reward strategies that the state in both countries has applied to gain and maintain its level of control over political information. In Thailand, the first broadcasting law limited legal ownership of broadcasting stations to state agencies. Reward instruments were also employed for license administration and the control of broadcasting content. The combination of these approaches fostered the domination of a small well-connected broadcasting elite and restricted market entry. In Japan, where the reward strategies were more prevalent, the MPT preference for the unification adjustment (*ipponka chôsei*) when granting a broadcasting license contributed to overt MPT control over broadcasting stations and programming content. The MPT also employed reward tactics to establish collusive relationships with NHK executives and those of the commercial networks, and vice versa. These relationships promoted self-censorship and enabled the MPT to impose its control on programming content whenever it saw fit. This was exemplified by the commercial broadcasters' submissions to political demands for the sake of renewing their licenses.

The second argument was that the media tend to have both expert and legitimate relations with the state. With the level of expertise that enables journalists to triumph in a political information contest over the state, they should have a good knowledge and understanding of their profession, be able to resist influence from their organizations and their sources, and deliver good service with high ethical standards. The analysis in

Chapter Four examined these qualities of the Thai and Japanese journalists, specifically in relation to knowledge, organization, autonomy, a degree of social responsibility, and ethical codes.

Journalistic practices in both countries have been constrained by a number of systematic and ethical problems. These constraints limited the opportunities for journalists, the representatives of the media, to triumph over the state in gaining access to political information, and accurately interpreting and disseminating that information. Moreover, normative practices adopted when reporting about the Royal or the Imperial families, and some elements in political culture, could influence journalists to adopt legitimate relations with their sources and relegate themselves to the role of "messengers", passively conveying official messages to the public. For instance, the journalists' culture of maintaining good relationship or *'shinrai kankei'* with sources, and the gratitude of young Thai journalists towards their sources, or feeling of *krieng chai* (feeling in awe), proved to be elements of political culture that impeded the journalists from performing their tasks successfully. Although there are similarities in the normative practices and elements of political culture between these two countries, conspicuous discrepancies exist between these countries. These are, for instance, when a Japanese reporter pursues an independent research, or covers a leaked story, sanctions from the source are imposed to the whole team of journalists from the same organization. In Thailand, on the contrary, the system of group sanctions is absent, and Thai journalists enjoy a high degree of autonomy in their pursuits of news stories. The extent to which these cultural factors work differently in Thailand and Japan has been observed by Kirsch:

> In Japan where an actor chose not to identify himself with these particular roles or activities, sanctions were mobilized to either encourage or enforce his nonconformity. In Thailand when an actor chose not to identify himself with his particular roles and collectivities, no sanctions were mobilized.

Hence, in Thailand this could not be seen as "deviance" as it could in Japan.[54]

Accordingly, the journalistic normative practices and elements of political culture should be regarded as independent parameters that create different degrees of change in the political role of the media.

Another independent parameter that should be noted is the globalization of media, which has partially forced the MPT to pursue broadcasting reform and introduce broadcasting policies that are more responsive to pressures brought about by intense competition in the global market. This has allowed the commercial networks in Japan to expand, as well as allowing foreign broadcasters to enter the previously well-protected market. This has also increased the volume of news and current affairs programs on cable and satellite networks, thus providing people with more access to information. Moreover, multi-channel broadcasting will make it increasingly difficult for the MPT to censor debates and critical reports on news programs. The proliferation of global media, such as *CNN*, has also led to the adoption of new style of broadcast journalism in Japan and Thailand. In Japan, high-quality television coverage of political debates became increasingly available. This has resulted in a change in the political scene, as politicians have become more aware of the potency of the medium as a means of conveying their ideas and selling their personalities to voters. In Thailand, the traditional style of straightforward reporting with few background pictures became obsolete and was replaced by documentary-style reports, with more pictures, soundbites, and live broadcasts. As television news increasingly conveys political materials in an interesting and digestible manner, it has raised the profile of the public understanding of politics.

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[54]   A. Thomas Kirsch, "Loose Structure: Theory or Description", in H. D. Evers (ed.), Loose Structured Social Systems: Thailand in Comparative Perspective (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies Cultural Report Series, 1969), p. 56.

The third argument, which was discussed in the first section of this chapter, was that the public can adopt either positive or negative referent type of power relations with the media. This depends largely on the level of direct public access to political information and the perceived accuracy of the political information that the media disseminate. As discussed earlier, direct public access to political information in Thailand and Japan has improved over recent years due to the implementation of the law regarding information disclosure, and the growth and accessibility of the Internet. However, the loopholes associated with the law, perennial problems of communication infrastructure, and limited user groups in these countries continue to obstruct the direct flow of information between the state and the public. As a consequence, the public in Thailand and Japan are likely to continue relying on the mainstream media as their main channel for political reference for a considerable time to come. However, should the public in these countries find the information distributed by the media inaccurate and unreliable, or purely state-orchestrated information, they are likely to adopt negative referent type of power relations with the media. As a consequence, they may either lose interests in politics, or try to gain more control of political information by making better use of the information disclosure law and the Internet to create their own personal networks of information. This depends largely on the public's motivation, capability, and opportunity to gain access to information.[55]

The final argument was that the media's role in politics is *fluid* and *changeable* depending on the types of power relations are operating at a given time. This argument also entailed that the media's role can shift from the positive end of the spectrum, the watchdog role, to the negative end of the spectrum, the role of a servant of the state, and

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[55] Previous research has shown that public became politically informed if they have motivation, capability, and opportunity to learn. See, for example, Michael X. Delli, Scott Keeter, and J. David Kennamer, "Effects of the News Media Environment and Citizen Knowledge of State Politics and Government", Journalism Quarterly, Summer 1994, 71(2), pp. 443-456.

to those in between. The content analysis of press coverage of political reform in Thailand suggests that the Thai press can function as an agenda-setter. The reliance of the Thai press on outside sources, such as academics and public intellectuals, has provided the public with a wide range of information on political reform, and has promoted public debates. The public has also become dependent on the press for information by regarding the press as their positive reference. As a result, the press agenda on political reform has been turned into a public agenda. Despite blatant attempts made by the conservative government to divert the agenda, the press and the public united and successfully forced the government to realize political reform by passing the 1997 Constitution. The content analysis of the Japanese press coverage of the same topic indicated that the Japanese press can also play a role of an agenda-setter, but to a lesser degree than the Thai press. The Japanese press's reliance on the official sources has opened the way for state officials to forge their own agenda. The lack of alternative sources in press coverage has limited the press's emphasis to political conflicts rather than reform issues and their repercussions. Furthermore, the shift in the role of the press to a guard dog role in both countries has been evident in the content analyses of press coverage of the respective Prime Ministers. Due to its concern about the reward relations it had with the LDP administration, especially through the privilege of low postage charges, and the fixed price system, the Japanese press appeared to be hesitant to attack the Prime Minister. On the contrary, the Thai press, which built strong positive support from the public by successfully articulating and reinforcing public dissent, used public apathy to win the battle against the state's contest to impose its own news frame and influence political discourse.

The content analysis of television news coverage in Chapter Six revealed similar results. The new style of TV journalism and high level of expertise that both *iTV* and

News Station introduced to broadcast journalism shifted the political role of television that had once functioned as a servant of the state, to perform a more proactive role as a watchdog, or an agenda-setter. However, the recent change in the power relations between *iTV* and the Thai state from a coercive to a reward type through the change of ownership, from being owned by a group of shareholders to being solely owned by a media tycoon who currently occupies the Premier's post, is likely to relegate the role of *iTV* to a mere servant of the state. As for *News Station*, it was evident that direct coercion from the state and pressure from sponsorship could at times influence the program to change its political course. Yet, due to enormous public support to the program and the program's ability to gain access to political information by bypassing the system of the *kisha kurabu*, *News Station* is likely to shift its political role to a watchdog function in the foreseeable future.

Although the discussion in the preceding chapters did not address all occurrences of political information contests between the state, the media, and the public in both countries, it did explain how and in what manner that the contestation took place. Nevertheless, it can be argued that political information contests occur more often in an arena of political pluralism, such as in Thailand where the alternation of parties in power is common, than in the political arena of Japan whose political system has long been dominated by one-party rule. The forms and degree of contestation also depends largely on the political culture in which it operates. Too few or too many contestations highlight differences in political culture – the former signifying a political system where its actors prefer to maintain the status quo and seek consensus-building, whereas the latter is in a constant state of flux. Thus, the political role of the Thai media has varied more than that of the Japanese because the Thai political environment has been very fluid, in which change in the form and degree of power relations among the state, the

media, and the public occurred frequently. This means that political information contests require a context or environment that nurtures or engenders them, and a political culture including the beliefs, values, and attitudes that is supportive, which essentially means a modern democracy with participatory politics. Therefore, political information contests are arguably essential elements of democracy. The absence of political information contestation marks the failure of democracy in a society, resulting in stagnation, decay, or the emergence of dictatorial or authoritarian regimes that will impose complete controls on the media and on direct public access to official information. This will inevitably lead to the demise of the public and participatory politics.

7.3 The State, the Media, and the Public in Japan and Thailand

In their study of Taxation and Representation, Golding and Deacon concluded that while the state and the elite continue to maintain their power to create and distribute meaning, this will always be challenged and fought over by other actors in the political communication system, especially by the media and the public.[56] This argument implies that the relationship between the public and the state can no longer be described in simple terms, and that it becomes contested and multi-directional. The media's role also becomes more crucial in highlighting issues and concerns and putting pressure on the state and its agencies. As such, the media take on a significant role to unearth secret information, to articulate, to organize, to voice the opinion of the public, and to keep the state responsive to such opinion. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that not all of these political functions of the media are detectable, as C. Wright Mills once wrote:

> No one really knows all the functions of the mass media,
> for their entirety, these functions are probably so pervasive
> and so subtle that they cannot be caught by the means

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[56]   See footnote 1.

of social research now available.[57]

Nevertheless, an important question regarding the function of the media, which was posed in Chapter One, as to whether the Japanese and the Thai mass media have been considered driving forces promoting reform and transformation of politics, or whether they have simply been bastions of conservatism serving existing interests, can be answered. The evidence presented in this study seems to demonstrate that different media in each country play a different role. Whilst the Thai press tends to take an adversarial role, and has been a main advocator for political reform, television news coverage is more biased towards conservatism and is likely to serve the political and broadcasting elite's interests. This is largely due to the pattern of ownership of television stations, with most under state control, or the control of the political elite as is the case with *iTV* . The Japanese press, on the other hand, is too restrained by the system of the *kisha kurabu*, which generates news conformity, and by its reliance on the official sources for political information to offer readers alternative political discourse. Television news programs in Japan, by contrast, are far more active than the press in challenging mainstream political discourse and sharing with their audiences various new political perspectives. This has been largely due to the increased competitiveness in the television industry and its less reliance on the *kisha kurabu* for information. However, this radical role is scarcely performed by the public broadcaster, NHK.

Nevertheless, it is clear that both the Thai and the Japanese media have actively played a more important part in disseminating political information to the public, conveying public responses to the state, as well as keeping both the state and the public responsive to political issues by organizing and mobilizing public opinion, and by

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[57]   C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 311.

becoming the catalyst for public debate. These politically active media have significantly contributed to the strengthening of democracy and participatory politics in both countries. Denis McQuail observed this contribution of the media and noted that the more political information is available, and really accessible by people, the more chances there are for the public to make "relevant choices or to recognize, and connect with, some strand of political belief".[58] In Japan, as suggested by Flanagan, media exposure has helped improve the quality of mass political participation over the postwar period. Both print and broadcast media in Japan have "helped create a more knowledgeable electorate, one that is better equipped to translate its political preferences into voting choices".[59] In Thailand, the press coverage of May 1992 that motivated thousands of protestors to take to the street,[60] and the promotion of the 'green campaign' by the press that helped to hasten political reform testified that the Thai press has been capable of promoting democracy and increasing public participation in politics. More recently, Thai newspapers, and radio and television programs have been geared towards promoting a concept of civil society by representing themselves as a forum for public debate providing direct participation in political issues.[61] The following table summarizes distinctive similarities and differences in the elements of political communication systems, particularly those regarding the state, the media, and the public, in Thailand and Japan.

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[58]   Denis McQuail, "Diversity in Political Communication: Its Sources, Forms, and Future", in P. Golding, G. Murdock, and P. Schlesinger (eds.), Communicating Politics: Mass Communications and Political Process (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), p. 137.

[59]   Scott C. Flanagan, "Media Exposure and the Quality of Political Participation in Japan", in S. Pharr and E. S. Kruass (eds.), Media and Politics in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 278.

[60]   Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, "The Development of a Participatory Democracy: Raison D'Etre for Media Reform in Thailand", Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science,1994, (22), pp. 101-14.

[61]   Chawarong Limpatthamapanee, "Bothbath seumolchon kab kanphatthana khwampen prachasungkhom" (The role of the mass media in the development of civil society), Lok khong seu lem 2 (The Media's World Vol. 2) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1998), pp. 168-189.

Table 18: Similarities and Differences of the Elements of Political Communication Systems in Thailand and Japan

	Similarities	Differences	
		Thailand	Japan
The State Distribution of Power	Bureaucrats retain considerable power in policy-making.	'Liberal Corporatism', a system dominated by capitalists and the middle class	'Patterned Pluralism', a system whereby various groups can channel their interests in policy-making.
Ruling Party	Governed by a coalition at present.	Frequent changes of parties in power	One party ruled for over 38 years.
Political Party	Consists of small groups or factions	Alliance between groups, and parties shifts frequently.	Shifts in alliance or a breakaway from a party is less frequent.
Political System	Participatory Democracy	Constant changes of government mostly induced by public rejection.	Changes of government are usually caused by internal party struggle.
Contest with the media	The state attempts to control political discourse.	Frequent	Occasional, as most media prefer to preserve their status quo.
The Public Education and Media Reference	Heavy reliance on media for political information	Less advanced education system helped sustain visual culture (television), rather than reading culture (newspaper).	A mass literate public with the highest newspaper consumption per capita in the world.
Direct Access to Information	Direct channels to gain access include the use of the law concerning information disclosure and the Internet technology.	The culture of secrecy is still well entrenched in the Thai state. Internet usage is also in its rudimentary stage.	Loopholes in the Information Disclosure Act discourage the public to use the law. Internet users are not good representatives of the whole electorate.
The Press Censorship	The combination of legal and extralegal control mechanisms	Emphasis has been placed on the use of legal means.	The prevalence of subtle extralegal means, such as the system of reporter's club
Ownership Structure	Private ownership	A few highly-circulated papers are owned by families, while most are public companies.	Most are still owned by families who created the papers, and company employees.
Press Coverage of Politics	Emphasis is placed on reporting of politics, rather than policies.	Long news stories with a sharp division between facts and comment	Conformity in news stories, but difference in editorial lines is detectable.
Partisanship	Press partisanship affects news coverage and editorial biases.	Partisanship is frequently inevitable due to the acquisition of newspaper ownership.	Some papers forged relationships with the ruling LDP through personal connections.

Television			
Ownership Structure	Limited ownership, and new entry restricted	State ownership.	Private ownership, with a strong public broadcaster.
Licensing System	Designed to give to those with connections with the state.	'Privileged concessions' was given based on the logic of the patron-client system.	A process of 'unification adjustment' was imposed to accommodate the 'fair share norm'.
Public Service Broadcasting	Self-censorship is an important part of the organizational culture.	Totally dependent on state funding.	Semi-governmental organization whose annual budget needs an approval from the Diet.
Relationship between Political and Broadcasting Elite	Close relationship has been built through both formal and informal channels.	The relationship is now more concerned with coinciding economic interests rather than the traditional moral orientation.	The relationship is forged and institutionalized through various licensing and consulting procedures.
Control of Programming Content	Direct and indirect interference of political content	As all channels are state owned, state interference in administration and content is prevalent.	Pressure to change political content was exerted by the MPT and the LDP on NHK and commercial networks.
Political News Coverage	Emphasis on politics rather than policies	Informative news	Interpretative and opinionated news
Journalists			
Education	Journalism curricular is directed to suit industrial needs rather than producing quality journalists.	U.S. approach to journalism with emphasis on technical knowledge	Emphasis is placed on teaching of communication and social theories.
Professional Ideology	Emphasis is on the notions of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality'	Connections between the press and political parties have yielded little appreciation of these concepts in practice.	These concepts have influenced the press to refrain from adversarial reporting.
Career Route	Journalism can be a bridge to a political career.	Journalists change jobs fairly often.	The prevalence of a life-time employment system
Autonomy	System of seniority is emphasized.	Beat journalists have a certain degree of autonomy to pursue their own stories.	Beat journalists are less able to initiate their own news angle.
Relationship with source	Close relationship with the source, and sometimes being used as informants	Young journalists feel grateful to their source. Sanctions, if occur, are placed on individuals not groups basis.	Journalists are easily manipulated and the whole team of journalists can be sanctioned.
Newsgathering System	Pack journalism	Journalists are assigned to cover important beats, and the Opposition.	Journalists are structured to center around major factions.

| Coverage of Royal family and Imperial family | Self-censorship is imposed | Legal sentence is imposed on lèse-majesté charges. | If an 'improper' coverage published, sanction is imposed by the Imperial Household Agency, and attack from the right wing group is possible. |
| Ethical Standard | Establishment of self-governing bodies | Journalists received bribes from politicians. | Journalists received lavish entertainment from the source. |

7.4 Final Remarks

The *political information contest* model proposed in this study offers a new way to assess the political communication systems within democratic societies. This model was adopted in a pursuit of a comparative analysis of the Thai and Japanese mass media. By focusing on the interactions and power relations between the three important actors of a political communication system -- the state, the public, and the media --, media regulations, the structure of ownership of media, journalistic practices, media coverage of politics, and public's direct access to political information in Japan and Thailand were examined, compared, and contrasted. Contests and struggles over control of political information among these actors were evident at almost all levels. Based on the results of this study, it is arguable that the political role of media is *fluid* and *changeable*, and the media change their political role according to the type of power relations between the state, the media, and the public are operating in their quest for control over political information at the time.

The Thai and Japanese cases presented here are not unique, as similar contests between the state, the media, and the public over the control of political information can be found in other democratic societies, though the degrees and forms of the contests and struggle can be varied. This difference largely depends upon the dependent variables, that is, the ability of each of these actors to gain control over political information, and the independent variables, such as elements of political culture and the effects of media globalization on those societies.

Implicitly, political information contests are essential for a democratic society, where the public are expected to participate in politics. Without contestation from the reliable and objective media and the public, politically diverse information necessary for the public to exercise their political choices will not be made available. Although political information contests do not in themselves guarantee a healthy democracy with the politically active media, their existence in the societies represents an important step in that direction.

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Interviewees

Adachi Hisao, Editor, News Program, Nippon Television Network Corporation, on October 29, 1998.

Hashida Mitsuo, Deputy Editor-in-chief, *Kobe Shimbun* on November 26, 1998.

Iwamura Tatsurô, Deputy Chairman Editorial Board, *Asahi Shimbun*, on November 18, 1998.

Kawamura Shigemitsu, Editor-in-Chief, *Akahata Shimbun* on October 20, 1998.

Maruyama Shigeki, *Radio Kansai*, November 11, 1998.

Nakajima Gengo, Manager of International Affairs Department, the Japan Newspapers Publishers and Editors Association on October 23, 1998.

Professor Sugiyama Mitsunobu, Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies, University of Tokyo, on October 26, 1998.

Professor Takeichi Hideo, Department of Journalism, Sophia University, on October 14, 1998.

Yamaguchi Kazufumi, *Radio Kansai*, on November 11, 1998.

Appendix 1: Decision - Making Process on Licensing Television and Radio Broadcasting Channel in Thailand (until the implementation of Article 40)

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  ┌ ─ ─ → ┌──────────────┐ ─ ─ ─ ─ → ┌──────────────┐
  │       │   Station    │           │    Public    │
  │       └──────────────┘           └──────────────┘
  │              │
  │              ↓
  │       ┌──────────────┐
  │       │ Public Office│
  │       └──────────────┘
  │              ╲
  ↓              ╲
 ┌──────────────┐ ←──────── ┌──────────────┐
 │   NBEB/NBC   │ ────────→ │    NRFMB     │
 └──────────────┘           └──────────────┘
      ↑    ╲
      ╲     ╲
 ┌ ─ → ┌──────────────┐ ──────────→ ┌──────────────────┐
 │     │     OSPM     │             │ - Budget         │
 │     └──────────────┘             │   Bureau         │
 │            │                     │ - National       │
 │            ↓                     │   Security       │
 │     ┌──────────────┐             │   Council        │
 │     │   Economic   │ ←────────── │ - NESDB          │
 │     │  Ministries  │             │ - Other Agencies │
 │     └──────────────┘             └──────────────────┘
 │            │
 │            ↓
 │     ┌──────────────┐
 └ ─ ─ │  Cabinet's   │
       │   Meeting    │
       └──────────────┘
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──────→ Before Approval

─ ─ → After Approval
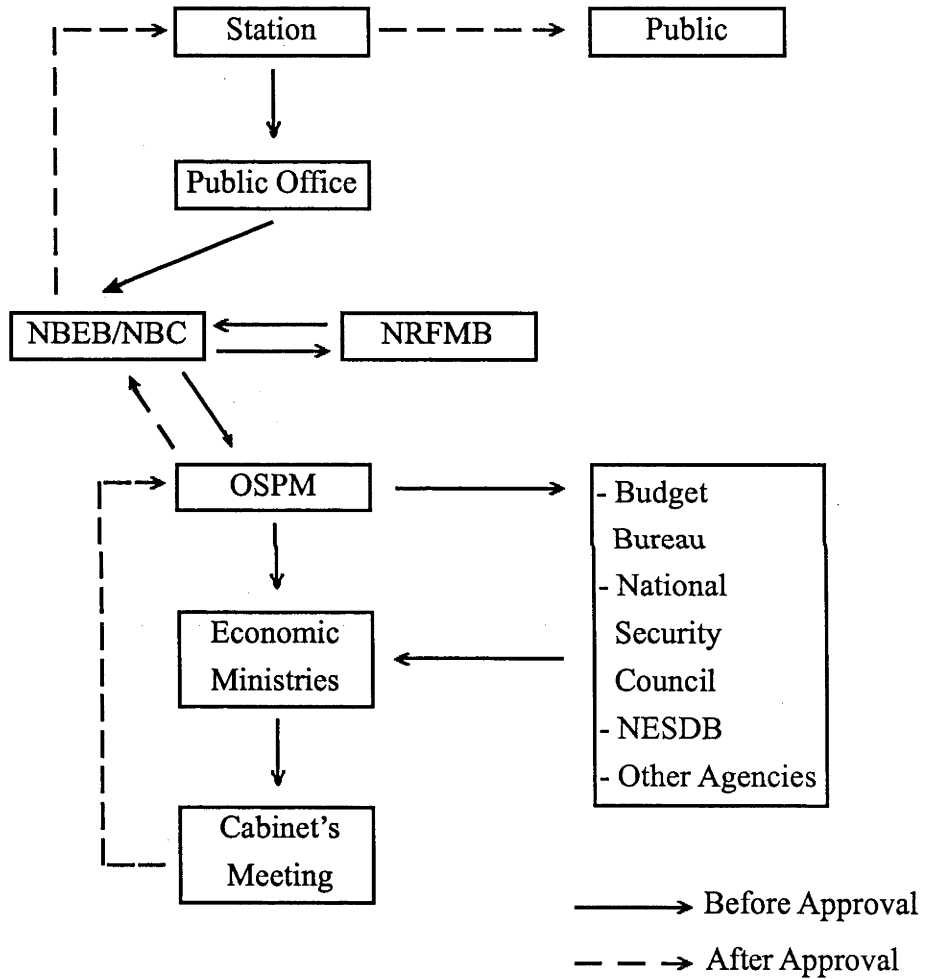
NBEB: **National Broadcasting Executive Board**
NBC: **National Broadcasting Commission**
NRFMB: **National Radio Frequency Management Board**
OSPM: **Office of the Secretary to the Prime Minister**
NESDB: **National Economic and Social Development Board**

Appendix 2: NHK's Receiving Fees (as of 1998)

Type of Receiver	Method of Payment	Amount (Yen)	6 Months in Advance	12 Months in Advance
NHK1&NHK2 **Color TV**	Collecting from Home Electronic Transfer	1,395 1,345	7,950 7,650	15,490 14,910
B&W TV	Collecting from Home Electronic Transfer	905 855	5,190 4,890	10,130 9,550
Satellite **Channels** **Color TV**	Collecting from Home Electronic Transfer	2,340 2,290	13,390 13,090	26,100 25,520
B&W TV	Collecting from Home Electronic Transfer	1,850 1,800	10,630 10,330	20,740 20,160

Source: Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai Ron, *NHK Nenkan '98 (NHK Radio & Television Yearbook '98)* (Tokyo: Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai, 1998), p. 85.

Appendix 3: Major Controls over NHK by the Diet and the Government

Item		MPT	Cabinet	Diet	Finance Minister	Board of Audit	Relevant provisions
				Organization and Controls			
Personnel affairs	Members of the Board of Governors		Appointment and dismissal by Prime Minister	With the consent of both Houses			Art. 16, 19, 20 of the Broadcast Act
Broadcasting facilities	Establishment of broadcasting stations	License preliminary license*					Art. 4, 8, 12 of the Radio Act
	Supervision of broadcasting stations	Supervision (Revocation of license)*					Chapter 6 of the Radio Act
	Abolition, and suspension of operation, of broadcasting stations	Approval* or notification					Art. 43 of the Broadcast Act
	Transfer of broadcasting facilities	Approval*		With the consent of both Houses			Art. 47 of the Broadcast Act
Financial affairs	Budget of revenues and expenditures / Business program / Funds program	Comments --	--> Via -------	--> Approval			Art. 37 of the Broadcast Act
	Provisionary budget (limited to three months)	Approval* ----	-------------------	--> Report			Art. 37-2 of the Broadcast Act
	Issue of bonds	(Via) -----------	-------------------	-------->			Art. 42 of the Broadcast Act / Art. 13 of the Enforcement Regulations of the Broadcast Act
	Inventory Financial statements (accompanied by written explanation)	} Presentation -	-> Presentation -	-> Presentation		Audit	Art. 40 of the Broadcast Act
	Accounts					Audit	Art. 41 of the Broadcast Act
Receiver's fee	Monthly receiver's fee			Determined by the approval of the budget of revenues and expenditures			Art. 37-4 of the Broadcast Act
	Provisions of receiving contract	Approval*					Art. 32-3 of the Broadcast Act
	Standard for exemption from receiver's fee	Approval*					Art. 32-2 of the Broadcast Act
Business	Repair of receiving equipments	Designation of service station					Art. 9-7 of the Broadcast Act
	Business necessary especially for advancement of broadcasting and its reception, except the ones listed in the Broadcast Act	Approval*					Art. 9-2 of the Broadcast Act
	Overseas broadcasting	Order*		State pays expenses needed for transmissions			Art. 33 and 35-2 of the Broadcast Act
	Study on broadcasting	Order*		conducted by order (within the budget)			Art. 34 and 35-2 of the Broadcast Act
	Modification of articles of incorporation	Approval*					Art. 11-2 of the Broadcast Act
	Business report	Comments --> Via -------		--> Report			Art. 38 of the Broadcast Act
	Presentation of data	Request for presentation of data					Art. 49-2 of the Broadcast Act / Art. 4 of the Enforcement Regulations of the Broadcast Act

Asterisk shows the items which the Minister of MPT must refer to the Radio Regulatory Council and respect its resolution when the Minister expects to deal with such items or to attach his comments thereon, unless the Council considers it unnecessary to do so. (Art. 48 of the Broadcast Act, Art. 99-11 of the Radio Act.)

Source: Adapted from Nakajima Iwao, "The Broadcasting Industry in Japan:
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Appendix 4: Core Units in Curriculum Towards a Degree of Bachelor of Communication Arts offered at Chulalongkorn University, Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Mass Communication) at Kasetsart University, and Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Journalism) offered at Thammasat University

Chulalongkorn University	Kasetsart University	Thammasat University
1st-2nd years	1st-2nd years	1st-2nd years
Social Science	**Social Science**	**Social Science**
1)Management and Organization	1)The Use of Library Resources	1)Introduction to Political Science
2)Government and Politics of Thailand	2)General Psychology	2)General Psychology
3)General Psychology	3)Introduction to Law	3)Introduction to Economics
4)Foundation of Economics	**Humanities**	4) One subject in Social Science
5)Principle of Jurisprudence for	1)The Art of Living with Others	**Humanities**
Science	2) One of the followings	1)One subject in Humanities
Humanities	-General Philosophy	**Language**
1)Civilization	-Thai Society in Literature	1)Thai
2)Philosophy and Logic	-Introduction to Logic	2) Foreign Language I
Language	-Introduction to Religion	3) Foreign Language II
1)Foundation English I	-History in World Civilization	**Basic Science and Mathematics**
2)Foundation English II	-History in Contemporary World Affairs	1) Science

Chulalongkorn University	Kasetsart University	Thammasat University
1st-2nd years	**1st-2nd years**	**1st-2nd years**
Basic Sciences and Mathematics	**Language**	2) Mathematics or Basic Computer Skills
1)Introduction to Statistics	1)Two language subjects	
2)Introduction to Computer	**Basic Science and Mathematics**	
3) One of the followings :	1)Science and Mathematics	
-Our Environment	**Physical Education**	
-Man and Nature	1)Track and Field	
-Natural Science	2)Badminton	
3rd-4th years	**3rd-4th years**	**3rd-4th years**
Core Courses	**Core Courses**	**Core Courses**
1)Introduction to Communication	1)General Principle of Communication Arts	1)Introduction to Communication
2)Visual Communication	2)Introduction to Journalism	2)Law of Mass Communication
3)Language for Communication	3)Introduction to Speech Communication	3)Introduction to Journalism
4)Advanced Study of Language for Communication	4)Public Relations	4)Basic News Reporting
5)Introduction to Newswriting and Reporting	5)Advertising	5)Introduction to Broadcasting
6)Introduction to Mass Media	6)Photo Journalism	6)Introduction to Public Relations
	7)Introduction to Broadcasting	7)Introduction to Advertising
	8) Communicative Writing	8)General Knowledge of Film

Chulalongkorn University	Kasetsart University	Thammasat University
3rd–4th years (continued)	3rd–4th years (continued)	3rd–4th years (continued)
7)Ethics of the Mass Media		9)Photography 1
8)Thai Folklore		10)Communication Theory
9)Introduction to Public Relations		11)Communication and Public Opinion
10)Principles and Practices of Speech Communication		12)Introduction to Communication Research
11)Psychology for Communication		13)Communication Technology
12)English for Academic Purposes I		
13)English for Academic Purposes II		
14)English Communication		
15)Translation for Communication Arts I		
16)Translation for Communication Arts II		

Chulalongkorn University	Kasetsart University	Thammasat University
3rd-4th years (continued)	3rd-4th years (continued)	3rd-4th years (continued)
Major in Journalism	**Major in Journalism**	**Major in Journalism**
1)Introduction to Journalism	1)Reporting and Newswriting	1)Advanced News Reporting
2)Press Photgraphy	2)Typography	2)Photojournalism
3)Theory of Printing	3)Introduction to Film	3)Printing Technology
4)Layout and Illustration	4)Laws of Mass Communication	4)Editorial and Article Writing
5)Advanced Reporting	5)Public Relations II	5)Newspaper Editing
6)History of Journalism	6)Radio and Television Program Production	6)Publication Design
7)Law of the Press	7)Script Writing for Radio, Television and Film	7)Electronic Publishing
8)Feature Writing	8)Research Methods in Mass Communication	8)Feature Writing
9)Newspaper Management	9)Seminar	9)Journalism Practice
10)Journalistic Writing	10)Three English Language Units	10)Seminar in Journalism
11)Newspaper Editing	11)Practices of Training (300 hours)	11)Internship
12)Magazine Editing		
13)International Press		
14)Journalism Research		
15)Seminar in the Press and Society		
16)Individual Study of Print Media		
17)Journalism Practicum		

Source: Chulalongkorn University, Chulalongkorn University Bulletin 1996-1992 (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1996), pp. 114-128; Kasetsart University, Kasetsart Academic Catalog (Bangkok: Office of the Registrar, Kasetsart University, 1991), p.104, pp. 434- 437; Thammasat University, *Koo mue kan suksa chan parinyatri pi kan suksa 2541 (Undergraduate Handbook 1998)* (Bangkok: *Samnak Thabien lae Pramolphol* (Office of the Registrar and Compiling Statistics), Thammasat University, 1998), pp. 157-163.

Appendix 5: Undergraduate Courses on Communication and Information Offered at the University of Tokyo, Keio University and Waseda University

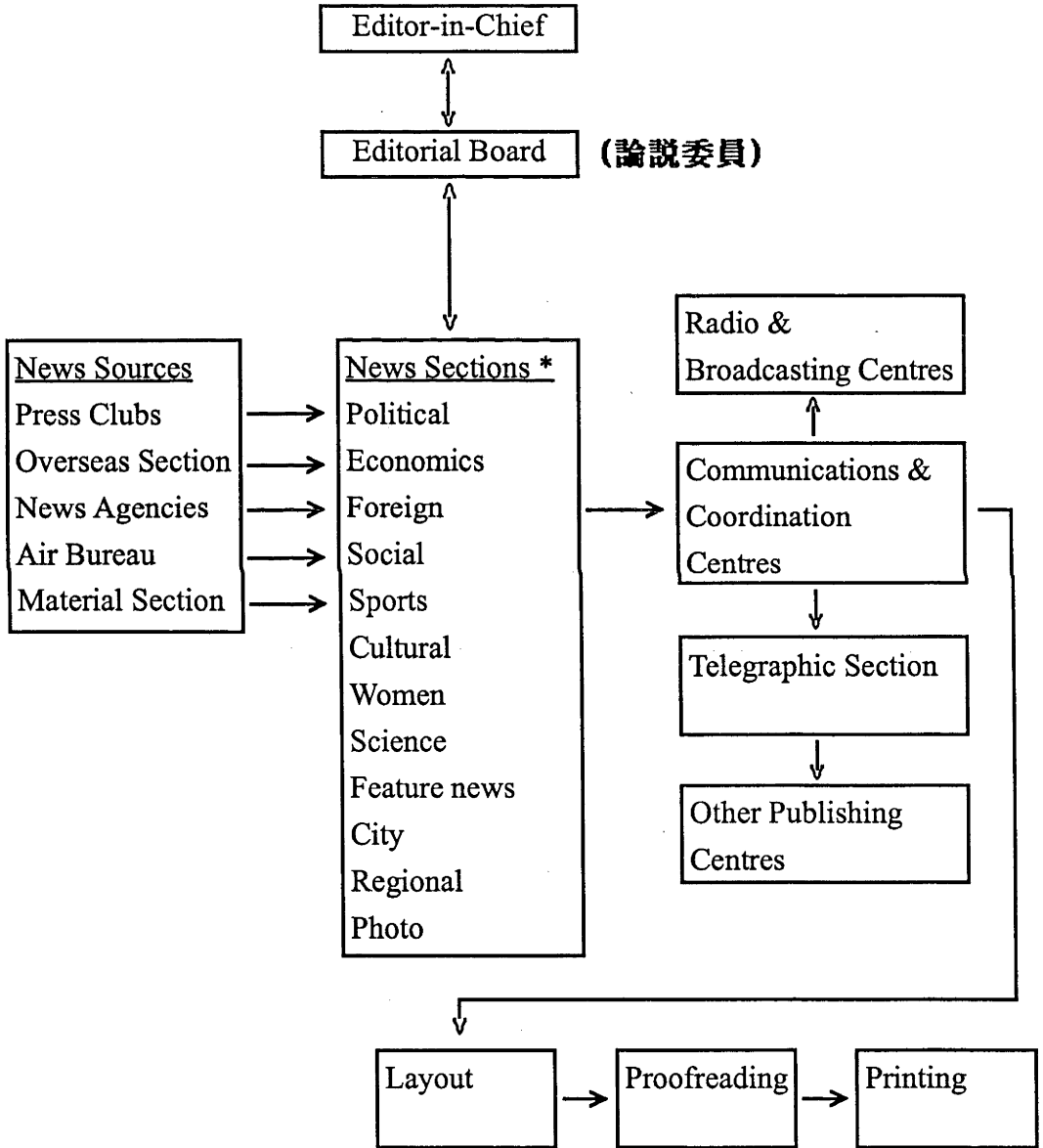| University of Tokyo	Keio University	Waseda University
1) Principles of Mass Communication	Group1	School of Political Sciences & Economics
2) History of Mass Communication	1) Journalism	1) History of Mass Communication Development
3) Methodology of Mass Communication Research	2) Theories of Mass Communication	2) Theory of Mass Communication
4) Theory of Mass Communication	3) History of Mass Communication	3) Mass Media
5) Freedom of the Press	4) International Communication	4) Seminar (The World and Communication)
6) Mass Media Law	5) Methods in Mass Communication Research	5) Seminar (Reporting in English)
7) Public Opinion and Propaganda	Group2	School of Literature I
8) Mass Media Industry	1) Information and Choice	1) Psychology of Communication
9) Popular Arts in Mass Society	2) Social Psychology	2) Society of Communication I, II
	3) Public Opinion	3) Copy Writing and Catch Phrases
	4) Studies on Media Culture	4) History of Cinema
	Group3	School of Literature II
	1) Newspapers	1) Mass Communication
	2) Broadcasting	2) Seminar (Mass Media and Environmental Problems)
	3) Advertising and Public Relations	

University of Tokyo	Keio University	Waseda University
	<u>Group4</u> 1) Legal Systems for Mass Communication 2) Mass Communication Policies 3) Comparative Journalism 4) Information Industries 5) Mass Media Management 6) Mass Communication Technologies and Society <u>Group5 Seminars in</u> 1) Media Effects 2) Television and Social Behaviour 3) Basic Mass Communication Theories 4) Contemporary Cultures 5) Contemporary Societies <u>Group6</u> Special Lectures on Broadcasting <u>Group7</u> 1) Journalism English 2) Writing	<u>School of Commerce</u> 1) Advertising 2) Seminar (Marketing Management) 3) Seminar (Study of Advertising Theories) <u>School of Education</u> 1) Principles of Journalism 2) Introduction to Broadcasting 3) Public Relations 4) Seminar in Social Science (Broadcasting) 5) Seminar in Social Science (Journalism) 6) Seminar in Journalism 7) Seminar in Broadcasting <u>School of Sciences and Engineering</u> 1) Contemporary Mass Communication <u>School of Human Sciences</u> 1) A Theoretical Study of Film and Photography 2) Theory of Sports Information 3) Introduction to Social Communication

Appendix 6: News Flow within *Matichon* Newspaper
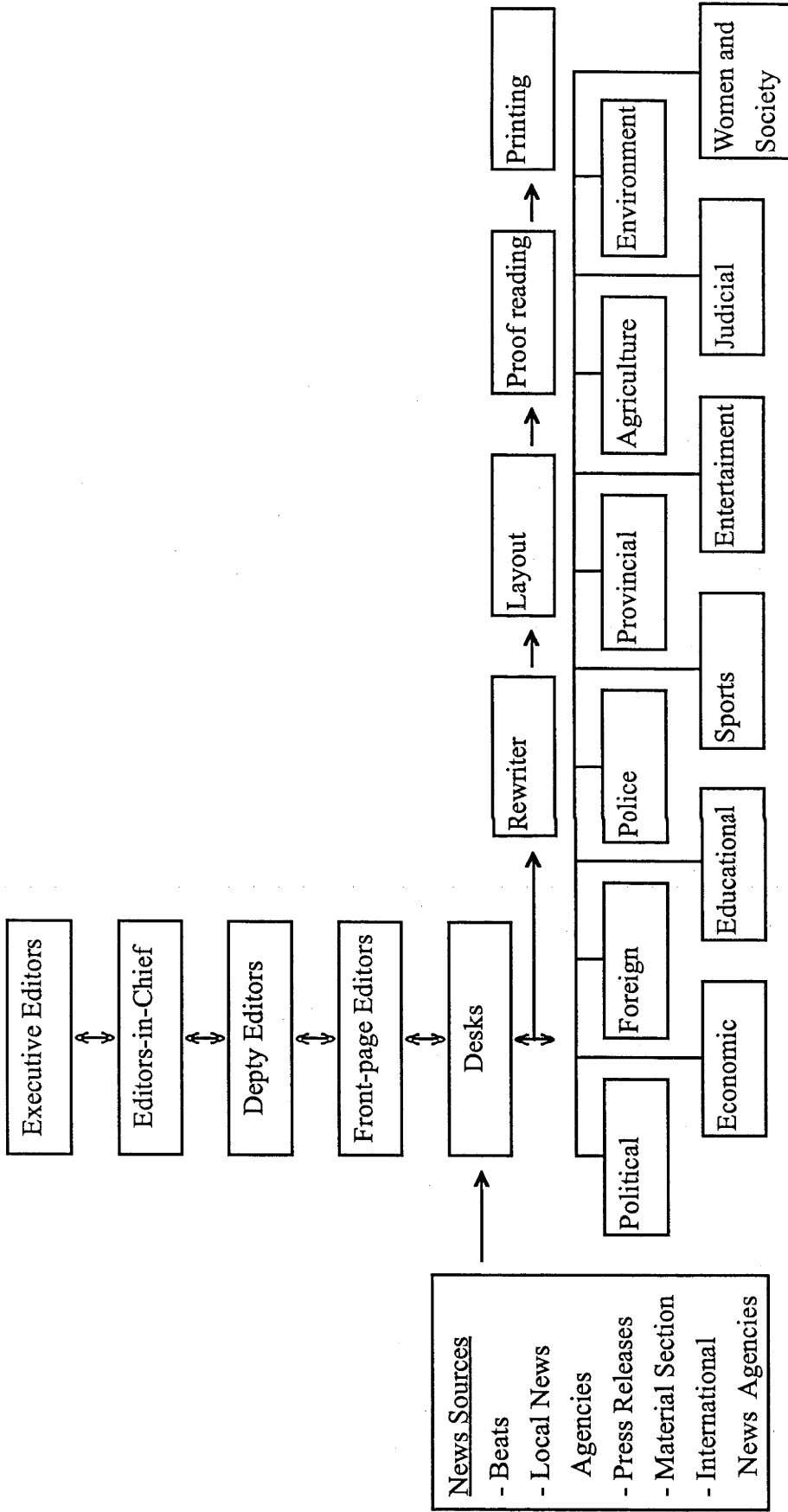
Appendix 7: News Flow within *Asahi* Newspaper

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Editor-in-Chief │
                    └─────────────────┘
                            ↕
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Editorial Board │   （論説委員）
                    └─────────────────┘
                            ↕
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News Sources	News Sections *
Press Clubs —→	Political
Overseas Section —→	Economics
News Agencies —→	Foreign
Air Bureau —→	Social
Material Section —→	Sports
	Cultural
	Women
	Science
	Feature news
	City
	Regional
	Photo

Radio & Broadcasting Centres

Communications & Coordination Centres

Telegraphic Section

Other Publishing Centres

Layout —→ Proofreading —→ Printing

* Each news section has one cheif editor （部長）, four or five sub-editors （部次長）or the so-called *desuku*, and a group of reporters. Only *Asahi*'s office in Tokyo has a political section. There are approximately fifty reporters there.

Appendix 8

List of Selected Editions of Newspapers

Editions of Selected Thai Newspapers (*Matichon* and *Thai Rath*)

Months (November 1996 - October 1997)	Editions (Morning issues)
November	November 3 - 9, 1996
December	December 8 - 14, 1996
January	January 19 - 25, 1997
February	February 23 - March 1, 1997
March	March 2 - 8, 1997
April	April 13 - 29, 1997
May	May 18 - 24, 1997
June	June 22 - 28, 1997
July	July 6 - 12, 1997
August	August 10 - 16, 1997
September	September 21 - 27, 1997
October	October 26 - November 1, 1997

Editions of Selected Japanese Newspapers (*Asahi* and *Yomiuri*)

Months (April 1993 - March 1994)	Editions (Morning issues)
April	April 4 - 10, 1993
May	May 9 - 15, 1993
June	June 20 - 26, 1993
July	July 25 - 31, 1993
August	August 1 - 7, 1993
September	September 12 - 18, 1993
October	October 17 - 23, 1993
November	November 21 - 27, 1993
December	December 5 - 11, 1993
January	January 9 - 15, 1994
February	February 20 - 26, 1994
March	March 27 - April 2, 1994

Appendix 9: Coding Sheet for Articles on Political Reform

No._____

1) Article comes from which paper? _____

2) Publication Date_____

3) Article Page Number_____

4) Size of the article

   a) very brief (0-1/8 page)
   b) brief (1/8 - 1/4 page)
   c) medium (1/4-1/2 page)
   d) long (1/2-1 page)
   e) very long (more than one page)

5) Type of the article
   a) news report   b) commentary

6) Does article include picture?
   a) No go to 7   b) Yes

7) Who/ What is in the picture?

   a) politician   b) bureaucrat
   c) NGO member   d) academics or public intellectuals
   e) legislation or constitution   f) charts or graphs
   g) public   h) voting boot

8) Is there a direct quote within the article from government official?

   a) No (go to 9)   b) Yes

9) Is the name of the official cited?

   a) No   b) Yes

10) What is the topic of headline about?
    a) Issue in the reform

b) Key decision-maker in the reform

c) Opposition in the reform

d) Timing of the reform

11) Is the reform about?

    a) election reform

    b) anti-corruption measures

    c) administrative reform

    d) judicial reform/legal reform

    e) educational reform

    f) human rights reform

    g) constitutional reform

12) What is the agenda of the article?

    a) pro-reform

    b) anti-reform

    c) neutral

13) Is there a reaction from the opposition in the article?

    a) No   b) Yes

14) What issue is given priority in the article?

    a) getting t the right direction to reform (stimulating debate on the issue)

    b) expediting the legislation process

    c) blaming officials or systems that obstruct the process

15) Is the by-line attached?

    a) Yes (go to 14)   b) No (ends here)

16) Name of Reporter_____

Appendix 10: Coding Sheet for Newspaper Headlines

No._____

Coding Sheet

1) Headline comes from which paper? _____

2) Publication Date_____

3) What is the headline

_____

_____

4) Who is the main actor in the Headline?

       a) Prime Minister
       b) His close cabinet members
       c) The Opposition
       d) The Public

5) The general topic of the headline

       a) Prime Minister's failure in administration
       b) Prime Minister's personality/activity
       c) Party/Coalition disarray
       d) Opposition to the Prime Minister
       e) Opposition to the coalition party
       f) Support the prime Minister

6) Name of Reporter_____

Appendix 11

Headlines of Selected Political Articles Published in *Naew Na*, *Matichon*, and *Thai Rath* during October 1- 31, 1997

Naew Na

Date	Headlines	Translation
Oct.1	พรรคจิ๋วแตกเละ	Jiw's party splited.
Oct.2	เหนาะป้องสุขวิช	Sanoh protected Sukhavich.
Oct.3	จิ๋วแหยงโละยี้	Jiw's afraid to get rid of his close aids (The four "despicable" are Sanoh Thienthong, Sukhavich Rangsipol, Pol. Capt. Chalerm Yubamroong and Samak Soonthornveth, all of which except Sukhavich are in charge of the Ministry of Interior).
Oct.4	จิ๋วพลิกลิ้นไม่รื้อ ค.ร.ม.	Jiw turned his tounge not to reshuffule the cabinet.
Oct.5	พรรคน้าขู่ถอนวง	Uncle's party (Chatchai's Party) threatens to withdraw.
Oct.6	จิ๋วแหกตาซ้ำซาก	Jiw lied repeatedly.
Oct.7	ป๋าเปรมคัมแบ็ก	Prem comes back.
Oct. 8	จิ๋วต้องลาออก	Jiw must resign.
Oct.9	ทบ.ลุ้นจิ๋วลาออก	Army Chief expects Jiw to resign.
Oct.10	หมงนัดพบป๋า	Mong will meet Prem.
Oct.11	ฉลอง ร.ธ.น.ยิ่งใหญ่ จิ๋วเปิดใจไม่ขอลาออก เมินตั้งรัฐบาลแห่งชาติ	Grand celebration for the New Constitution, Jiw disclosed 'not resign', and ignored to demand for a national government.
Oct.12	อมเรศชิงลาออก, ในหลวงรับสั่ง รธน.ฉบับ ใหม่ ผลสำเร็จของทุก ฝ่ายในชาติ	Amaret early resigned, His Majesty the King told the new Constitution is a success of all sectors in the nation.
Oct.13	พลิกเกมกู้ชาติ แพทย์เป็นห่วงบ้านเมือง แนะจิ๋วเช็คสมองด่วน	Change game to restore the nation, Doctor suggested Jiw to have his brain checked.
Oct. 14	นักธุรกิจรุมขับจิ๋ว/ จิ๋วจ่ายมั่วมีสิทธ์ติดคุก ทุ่มหาเสียงมือบคนจน	Businessmen ganged up to expel Jiw, Jiw's mixed spending in vote-buying and ganging up the poor can cost him an imprisonment.

Oct.15	จิ๋วรีดภาษี ๔ หมื่นล้าน ชวลิตใกล้ลาสานสั่งลา ลูกพรรค/ ผิดหวังแผนกู้ เศรษฐกิจกร่อย จิ๋วโดด หนีไม่กล้ารับผิดชอบ	Jiw extorted 40,000 million, he (Chavalit) farewelled his party members, as he's approaching his end/ Disappointed by the dull economic recovery plan, Jiw fled from his responsibilty.
Oct 16	รุมด่าลั่นฆาตกรจิ๋ว จิ๋วตื่นพบป๋ากลับมือเปล่า	All condemned Jiw - the murderer/ Jiw went to see Pa (Prem) but returned with bare hands.
Oct.17	ลุกฮือไล่จิ๋ว นักธุรกิจปิด สีลมชุมนุมใหญ่จันทร์นี้ เคลื่อนพลล้อมทำเนียบ วันอังคาร	Flared up to Drive Jiw, Businessmen close Si-Lom for a big demonstration this Monday, then move to the PM's Office on Tuesday.
Oct.18	จิ๋วถอยลดราคาน้ำมัน/ ทัพธุรกิจขานรับกู้ชาติทั่ว กรุงรวมพลขับไล่จิ๋ว	Jiw reduced the petrol price. The business army called for restoring the nation by gathering to oust Jiw.
Oct.19	สารพัดกลุ่มคึกคักไสหัว จิ๋ว/น้าชาติขู่ลั่นถอนยวง จี้จิ๋วปรับ ครม.ต้องเจ๋ง	Various groups were eager to drive Jiw out/ Chatichai threatened to quit, unless Jiw's cabinet reshuffle excels.
Oct.20	จิ๋วหนักแผ่นดินออกไป – ความเห็นแนวหน้า (Bold letters)	Jiw, a wastrel, Get out! - **Naew Na's** View.
Oct.21	ไล่จิ๋วระหึ่มทั่วแผ่นดิน ยกทัพเข้ากรุง, สมทบ ม็อบสีลมบุกทำเนียบ, กรรมกรร่วมหนุนสู้ จิ๋วสั่งตำรวจขึงลวด หนามล้อมทำเนียบต้าน ม็อบไล่บุก	People all over the nation roared to drive Jiw out. They ganged up to protest on Silom St. and went to the PM's office, with support from labour unions. Jiw ordered the police to fence his office with barbed wire to counter the protesters' possible intrusion.
Oct.22	ปิดล้อมรังโจรไล่จิ๋วยืด เยื้อ/ จิ๋วตัดหางชาติ พัฒนาตะเพิดพ้นรัฐ บาล/ จี้ชวลิตรีบพบ แพทย์หวั่นเป็นโรคสมอง เสื่อม	Blockade around Jiw's headquarter was prolonged, Jiw disowned Chatpattana, fending them off the government/ A call for Chavalit to see doctor in fear of Alziemer's disease.
Oct.23	ปักหลักกู้ชาติ, จิ๋วต้องออก, คำขาด พลังมหาชน/ น้าชาติ ผวาถูกตัดหาง กลับ ลำชิงถอนตัว	Protestors, staying on firm ground to restore the nation, stated their ultimatum - Jiw must go! / Chatichai was startled by the breaking off, withdrew fast.
Oct. 24	ร่วมใจแต่งดำไล่จิ๋ว พลัง ขับผู้นำลามข้ามประเทศ ไทยในอเมริกาหนุนสู้	People protested by wearing black to drive Jiw out, People's power united to oust their leader came across national boundaries with supports from Thai residents in the US.

Oct. 25	รัฐบาลจิ๋วออกลายทรราช	Jiw administration showed signs of treachery.
Oct. 26	ชพน. จ้องล้มจิ๋วในสภา	Chatpattana prepared to oust Jiw in the parliamentary session.
Oct. 27	ลากไส้เหวงเชลียร์จิ๋ว	Exposé: 'Weng' embraced 'Jiw'
Oct. 28	ดันจิ๋วนายกฯอมตะ เผยแผนลบยึดฐานมหาดไทย ฟื้นวงจรอุบาทว์	A plan to seize the Ministry of Interior as a battle ground to resuscitate the vicious cycle of Jiw's indestructible premiership.
Oct. 29	ลูกพรรคฮือขับจิ๋ว แก้วนำทัพลุย/ชวลิตรับทำชาติพัง/น้าชาติทิ้งประธานที่ปรึกษาเศรษฐกิจ	'Kaew' led Jiw's party members to oust him/ Chavalit admitted he had ruined the nation/ Chatichai left his post as chief of economic advisors.
Oct. 30	กวงลั่น ๕ พ.ย. พิฆาตจิ๋ว	'Kwang' declared he would oust Jiw on Nov. 5.
Oct. 31	กวงสิ้นท่ากลับลำยอมสยบจิ๋ว น้าฉุนนายกฯเตือนปากจะพาพัง	"Kwang" was crushed, and succumbed to Jiw, Chatichai was dismayed at the Prime Minister's reprimand of his comments.

Headlines on *Matichon* Newspaper during October 1- 31, 1997

Matichon Daily

Date	Headlines	Translation
Oct 1	ควม.แตก อีสานใต้ไล่ เกียรติชัย ก๊วนประท้วง โหยจัด ขึ้นชั้นขอเก้าอี้ รมต.	New Aspiration Party splits, "South-Isan" faction drove Kietchai out, this rebellious faction urged for ministerial positions.
Oct 2	ยิ่งช้า ยิ่งเสียหาย อ้างรอ กลับจากญี่ปุ่น จิ๋วยื้อปรับ ครม. น้าเตือนเศรษฐกิจ พัง	Chatichai reminded: "the more we wait, the more disastrous the economy will become", but Jiw argued the cabinet reshuffle should happen after his return from Japan.
Oct 3	เสนาะ_สุขวิช_เฉลิม_ สมัคร ต้องอยู่ จิ๋วเปิดโผ ปรับ ครม. กวง_ณรงค์ ชัยเด้ง	Jiw disclosed his plan of cabinet reshuffle. Sanoh, Sukhavich, Chalerm and Samak will stay. Kwang (Kietchai Chainowarat), and Narongchai Akraseranee would be out.
Oct 4	ประกาศลั่นมาก เชื่อป้าสิ เลิกถามได้เลย เสนาะ สวนทาง บิ๊กจิ๋วไม่ปรับ ครม.	Sanoh guaranteed that there would be no cabinet reshuffle - a stark contrast to what Jiw said.
Oct 5	"ประเทศไทย ในกำมือ จิ๋ว" ๑๕ ต.ค. วันชี้ชะตา ทางรอดเหลือน้อยเต็มที	"Thailand is in Jiw's whims", Oct 15 is the judgement day. There're only few ways out.
Oct 6	จิ๋วสะเดาะเคราะห์_เสนาะ แก้ฮวงจุ้ย ซินแสเดิน ว่อน เข้าบ้านผู้นำระดับ ประเทศ	A Chinese astrologer has been busy visiting Thai leaders' houses, exorcising Jiw's evil spirit, and changing "*feng chui*" at Sanoh's house.
Oct 7	ระดมคนดีทั่วไทย_ไม่ใช่ ๓๙๓ คนในสภา ป๋าเปิดสี่ เสาแจงไอเดีย รัฐบาล แห่งชาติ	Gather all the goodies in Thailand - not the 393 individuals in the parliaments. Prem opened his house to clarify his idea of the 'national government'.
Oct 8	จิ๋วขานรับป๋า ปรับ รบ. แห่งชาติ	Jiw agreed with Prem to gear for the national government.

Oct 9	"เสนาะ" สาธุรัฐบาล แห่งชาติ ลั่นให้บ้านเมือง ดี ไม่หวงเก้าอี้	"Sanoh" adopted the idea of national government, saying he is ready to leave for the sake of the nation.
Oct 10	สสร. หนุน "ป๋าเปรมสุด ตัว" นั่งนายกร้ ฐบาลแห่ง ชาติ	The constitutional drafters gave a full support for General Prem in becoming a PM of the national government.
Oct 11	จิ๋วลั่นไม่คิดออก ไม่เคย คุย ผบ.สส. รธน.ใหม่ ประกาศใช้แล้ว รมต.หนี แสดงทรัพย์สินท์	The Supreme Army Commander confirmed Jiw has never mentioned that he would resign/ the new constitution has been enacted/ Ministers avoided declaring their assets.
Oct 12	หมดที่พึ่ง สถานการณ์ บีบจิ๋ว เดินลงเก้าอี้ แบบสาหัส	Crisis forced Jiw to ungracefully quit.
Oct 13	๑๕ นายแบงค์พบผู้ว่า ธปท./ร่นวันแถลงกู้ชาติ ๑๔ ต.ค.รู้ชะตากรรม	15 bank officials met the governor of the Reserve Bank of Thailand/ Changed the day to 14th of Oct. to announce the plan to revive the country.
Oct 14	ยอมตั้งกร คุมเศรฐกิจ หอการค้านัดติดธงไล่จิ๋ว ดิ้นถก ๑๐ พรรค ชิงธง รบ.แห่งชาติ	Jiw appointed "Korn" to oversee the economy. The Thai Council of Commerce planned to protest by carrying the flag. All ten parties are eager to set a new national government.
Oct 15	รีดภาษีโหด น้ำมันขึ้น ลิตรละบาท	Heavy tax charged. Oil price was increased by one baht per litre.
Oct 16	ชาวบ้านตายแน่ๆ เงิน เฟ้อพุ่ง ๒๐% น้ำมันยัง ขึ้นไม่หยุด รัฐอ้างกระทบ น้อย	People will be surely dead. Inflation rose by 20%. Oil price kept rising, yet the government said their action would create minor recovery.
Oct 17	อ้าง ๑๑รมต.ชาติพัฒนา ร่วมรบ. ไม่เป็นสุข น้าสั่ง แตกหัก ลุยจิ๋วปรับ ครม.	Chatichai claimed eleven ministers from his party were unhappy when joining this government, and demanded Jiw to reshuffle the cabinet.

Oct 18	จิ๋วจำอวด ฝืดเลิกขึ้นภาษีน้ำมัน ตลกรู้ข่าวขำกลิ้ง วานซืนขึ้น วันนี้ลด เพิ่งรู้คนเดือดร้อน	Jiw - "the comedian", ceased to increase oil taxes. The real comedians would laugh at this great joke - commenced by yesterday and cancelled by today. Perhaps Jiw has just learnt that people are suffering.
Oct 19	ทนงไขก๊อก เปิดทางถก ๖ พรรคค่ำนี้/ น้ายื่นคำขาด จิ๋วไม่ปรับถอนตัว	Thanong's resignation from Treasurer allowed the six coalition parties to talk tonight. Chatchai gave Jiw his ultimatum. If Jiw doesn't reshuffle the cabinet, he and his party will resign.
Oct 20	รื้อ รมต.ทิ้ง ๔๘ เก้าอี้ ไม่มีเงื่อนไข มติ ๖ พรรค ปรับ ครม.ให้สิทธิขาด จิ๋ว_น้า	The six coalition party agreed to reshuffle 48 cabinet positions with no conditions. They would agree to whatever Jiw and Chatchai consider best.
Oct 21	ม็อบยึดสีลมไล่จิ๋ว ฮือล้อมทำเนียบ	Demonstrators sieged Silom Rd. to drive Jiw out, they then moved to the PM's office.
Oct 22	ผวา เผาทำเนียบไล่จิ๋ว สั่งเตรียมพร้อม ๑๐๐% ควม.แฉ ประสงค์_มนูญ ปลุกม็อบไล่นายก	Jiw is afraid that the demonstrators will burn the PM's office to drive him out, so he ordered all the national security agents to be on alert. The New Aspiration Party revealed that Prasong Soonsiri and Manoon Roopkhachorn are the key actors who incited this demonstration.
Oct 23	กรรมกรอดข้าว ขู่จัดฉาก น้าถอนตัว	Labourers commenced their hunger strike amidst the claim of pretense. Chatchai resigned from the cabinet.
Oct 24	โฆษิต ขอ ๓ ข้อ แลก นั่งคลัง_ยูคอมยึด ๒ เก้าอี้ ครม.ใหม่ไม่เจ๋ง จริงปรับเล็กๆ ขี้ยังอยู่	Kosit Punpiemrath made three requests for not residing as a Minister of Finance. UCOM captured two seats. The cabinet reshuffle has been so minimal that all the "despicable" ministers are kept in positions.

Oct. 25	"กวง ตายเดี่ยว" "หมอวิชัย" ประท้วงจนได้ดี "จิ๋ว ๔" ยี้เก่าอยู่ครบ ยี้ใหม่เพิ่มเพียบ	"Kwang's death wish", Doctor Wichai gained because of his frequent debates, "Jiw 4" retained a lot of 'old *despicable*' ministers, whilst adding more of new *despicable* ones.
Oct. 26	หวังใหม่ป่วน แฉเละ สายเลือด สายเลีย ย้ำครม. กู้ศก. เร่ง กม. ลูก	Crisis in New Aspiration Party, Conflicts between families and clientels. New cabinet claims to focus economic recovery and passage of organic laws.
Oct. 27	เสนาะยิ้มร่า มท.ทำประเดนให้ถึงบ้าน กม.ลูกยังไม่เสร็จ มีคู่มือเลือกตั้งแล้ว	Sanoh smiled as his governing ministry finished drafting an election manual even prior to the drafting of election law.
Oct. 28	โวไม่ยกมือให้ ตายห่าแน่ ปชท.ถกถอนตัว ควม. แค้น บี้จิ๋ว ขู่คว่ำ ๖ พรก.	Thai Famers' Party threatened the New Aspiration Party to vote down six economic legislatives.
Oct. 29	หิ่งสภาอกหัก ทุ่ม ๓๐ ล้าน ล้ม พรก. ชูกวงแกน นำโค่นจิ๋ว ย้ายพรรค	Breakdown in the Parliament, Thirty million baht was spent to vote down economic legislations, Kwang leads to defeat and defect.
Oct. 30	"กวง" เดือดลุยจิ๋ว ยื่นคำขาด ล้ม พรก.	"Kwang" was angry, sent an ultimatum, "vote down legislations".
Oct. 31	แพทย์สภาจี้วิชัย_เปรมศักดิ์ เลิกใช้นพ. "กวง"ถอยกรูด เจอจิ๋วสู้ ลั่น ปรับครม. บ่อยๆก็แย่	The Medical Asscociation asserted Wichai and Premsak should stop using "MD". "Kwang" was defeated as Jiw fought back, arguing frequent cabinet reshuffle will only make things worse.

Headline on *Thai Rath* during Oct. 1-31, 1997

Thai Rath

Date	Headlines	Translation
Oct. 1	บิ๊กอ๊อด ยกนิ้ว บิ๊กจิ๋ว สยบ ฝ่ายค้าน	Gen. Aud congratulated Gen. Jiw on defeating the Opposition.
Oct. 2	ปรับ ครม. ป่วน ศึกอัดข้อ "น้า" กับ "เหนาะ"	Difficulties in reshuffling the cabinet, Conflicts between Sanoh and Chatichai.
Oct. 3	ณรงศ์ชัย กวง เต็งจำ ปลดจิ๋ว เร่งปรับ ครม.	Narongchai and Kietichai are sured to dump Jiw and quickly reshuffle the cabinet
Oct. 4	ควรเอาใครออก	Who should be dumped?

Oct. 5	ออกเถอะจิ๋ว เจ้าสัว วิง วอน	Jiw, please leave, the entrepreneurs begged.
Oct. 6	จวกกลุ่ม ๑๗ สิงหา เลิกเห่า ควม. กัดกันเอง	Aug. 17th Group Attacked, Conflicts in New Aspiration Party
Oct. 7	คน มท. นินทา"นาย" ถอยได้แล้ว	Public sevants at the Ministry of Interior said their boss should leave.
Oct. 8	แย้มแผนปรับ ครม. คุยข่มหลังเลือกตั้ง หวัง ใหม่กลับมาอีก	A plan to reshuffle the cabinet disclosed, New Aspiration Party suggests it'll be back.
Oct. 9	"ไม่ต้องปรับ"	"No reshuffle"
Oct. 10	จิ๋วเจรจาญี่ปุ่นได้สาม แสนล้าน	Jiw negotiated Japan's aids for 300 million baht.
Oct. 11	ไม่เอา "จิ๋ว"	No more "Jiw"
Oct. 12	ปรับใหญ่ไล่ยี้	Big reshuffle to dump all the "despicable" ministers.
Oct. 13	จิ๋วประชุมด่วน รอ ๑๕ ต.ค. ไม่ได้	Jiw called an urgent meeting, as he could not wait until Oct. 15.
Oct. 14	จิ๋วออกลูกเดียว ปชป. ถึงจะร่วม	Democrat Party will only join the coalition, if Jiw leaves.
Oct. 15	จิ๋วฟุ้ง ตั้งรัฐบาลปึก ๒๖๘ เสียง	Jiw boasted to establish a strong cabinet with 268 seats.
Oct. 16	จิ๋วเข้าบ้านป๋า ผวาน้า สลับขั้ว	Jiw saw Prem in fear of Chatichai's change of mind.
Oct. 17	"เมตตาธรรมของรัฐ บาล"	At the government's mercy
Oct. 18	ที่สุดจิ๋วจนตรอกลดน้ำ มัน ใช้อัตราภาษีเดิม	At last, Jiw had to reduce petrol price by using former exile rate.
Oct. 19	สุดทนยื่นใบลาออก น้ำ มันพ่นพิษ	Ministry of Finance resigned due to discontentment over oil exile.
Oct. 20	"จิ๋ว"ดิ้นเฮือกสุดท้ายโละ ครม. ๔๘ร้ ฐมนตรีลาออก	"Jiw" gasped for his last breath by reshuffling the cabinet.
Oct. 21	"ต้องออกลูกเดียว" ม็อบ ไล่จิ๋ว ชุมนุมใหญ่วันนี้	"Jiw must go". A big demo meets today to drive him out.
Oct. 22	จิ๋วเครียดจัดตั้ง ป้อมในทำเนียบ	Jiw stressed out, fenced up in the Prime Minister's Office
Oct. 23	"ม็อบไล่จิ๋ว ลามไปถึง ต่างจังหวัด ปรับครม. ชะงัก "น้าชาติ" ถอนตัว	Demostrations to drive "Jiw" out spreaded to rural provinces. Reshuffle halted as Chatchai left.
Oct. 24	"โฆษิต" รมว.คลัง มนตรี ถอย วางมือการเมือง	"Kosit" became new Finance Minister, whilst "Montri" left politics.
Oct. 25	คลอดแล้ว จิ๋ว ๔ ซุปเปอร์ยี้ยังเพียบ	Launch of the fourth cabinet under Jiw, still full of despicable ministers.
Oct. 26	เกหมดหน้าตัก	Lay all bets.

Oct. 27	"หวังใหม่" ป่วน อกหัก รมต. แก๊งอีสานตีรวน	Conflicts in the New Aspiration Party, led by *Isan* ex-MPs.
Oct. 28	"บิ๊กเหนาะ" กร้าว หัก เหลิมตัดพ้น กรมตร.	"Sanoh" cut lose Chalerm from the Police Department.
Oct. 29	บิ๊กจิ๋ว อ่วมหนัก น้าชาติ ลาออก	General Jiw faced crisis as Uncle Chatichai left.
Oct. 30	"กวง" อาละวาด ขีดเส้น ตาย ๕ พ.ย. จิ๋วเจอดี	"Kwang" went on rampage, threatening Jiw by drawing a deadline by Nov. 5.
Oct. 31	โดนหาพัวพันยาเสพติด "กวง"กดดันจิ๋ว แล้วก็บ่ ๓ พ.ย. แน่	"Kwang" was accused of having drug-related charges, thus succumbed to Jiw. Uncle Chatichai confirmed to leave by Nov. 3.

Appendix 12

Headlines of Selected Political Articles Published in *Yomiuri*, *Mainichi*, and *Asahi* from June 12 to July 14 1998

Yomiuri

Date	Headlines	Translation
June 12	内閣不信案提出、民主、自由、共産　きょう否決へ	The Democratic, Liberal, and Japan's Communist Parties will submit the non-confidence motion today.
June 13	内閣不信任案を否決	The cabinet's non-confidence motion was voted down.
June 14	橋本首相在職歴代　6位に　きょう886日田中元首相と並ぶ	PM Hashimoto has been serving 886 days as a premier, by far ranking at the sixth place among previous prime ministers. The PM was also compared with the former PM Tanaka.
June 15	N/A	N/A
June 16	不良債権処理促進へ公的資金追加投入も	A pledge to manage bad loans and further injection of public funds.
June 17	内閣支持率3割切る、本社全国世論調査、景気低迷強い不満	Yomiuri's survey shows less than thirty per cent support for the cabinet. The public are intensely dissatisfied with the sluggish economy.
June 18	首相は不良債権処理に「顔」示せ	PM – You have to show the 'face' of the plan to manage bad loans.
June 19	「不良債権」重い宿題、円安是正抜本策	Bad Loan – tough homework (for the government), A drastic policy to shore up the yen.
June 20	「破たん」受け皿銀行　来月初旬に具対策	The 'Receiving Bank' Plan became abortive. A concrete policy will be announced at the beginning of next month.
June 21	「不良債権」解決へ党内の安定必要	The stability within the party is important for reaching solutions to manage bad loans.
June 22	ご意見無用　―橋本首相ブレーン嫌い？	"Comments are no use." Does Hashimoto hate intellectuals?
June 23	首相の経済諮問期間急げ、経済専門家を首相補在官に	PM should hurry in setting up an economic advisory body, and appoint economic experts as his advisors.
June 24	政策決定は内閣に一元化、主要閣僚途中で代えるな	The policy measure was simplified by the cabinet. Important cabinet posts should not be changed halfway through.

June 25	政策決定は政治の責任で、官僚は複数の選択肢示せ	Policy measure is a political responsibility. The bureaucrats should present a lot of choices.
June 26	国民に魅力的な政策示せ	Should present attractive policies to the people.
June 27	重要政策、党派超え連携、国益見据え、政争を回避	(The government) should introduce significant policy measures, induce factional cooperation, fix on national interests, and avoid political conflicts.
June 28	橋本行革の行方、政権戦略絡み、「風」吹くか	What's going on with the Hashimoto's administration? Is it tangled up with political strategy, or is there a change of wind?
June 29	不良債権処理など舌戦、党首ら「票」求め繁華街で	A war of words over resolving bad loans. Each party leader was campaigning at downtown Tokyo.
June 30	票目当ての甘い公約やめよ国民も選挙で意思を示そう	Stop canvassing votes by making a sweet public pledge. The public should voice their opinion at the election.
July 1	民主との党首討論拒否 自民 菅代表は厳しく批判	Leader of the LDP rejected to have a debate with the leader from the Democratic Party. Kan, the representative of the Democratic Party, strongly criticised the LDP.
July 2	首相恒久減税に意欲	The PM wished for a permanent tax reduction.
July 3	ブリッジバンク導入決定 破たん認定明確に、自民内あいまい定義を懸念	A decision to introduce a 'bridge bank' was made. It's quite clear to have a rocky start as there was concern from within the LDP about its ambiguous definition.
July 4	首相「減税カード」切る参院選終盤最大の争点に	The PM played 'the tax reduction card'. The last lap of the House of Councillors' election campaign showed signs of the greatest contest.
July 5	クリントン訪中 橋本外交試される戦略性	Hashimoto's diplomatic tactic was at a test during Clinton's visit.
July 6	恒久減税巡り舌戦展開、首相公約野党党首から一斉反発	A war of words over the permanent tax reduction escalated. Leaders of the Opposition parties together reacted strongly against the PM.
July 7	野党共闘柔軟に模索、自民党政権は耐用年数過ぎた	The Opposition's joint struggle flexibly groped. The LDP regime has last too long.
July 8	首相「恒久減税」明言へ調整インフレ検討	The PM announced the permanent tax reduction scheme in tune with the monitoring of inflation.

July 9	参院選「必ず投票」64％、政治に不満最高の85％	The voting turnout of 64 % is certain at the House of Councillors' election. As high as 85% are not satisfied with current politics.
July 10	「恒久減税迷走」で終日弁明、橋本首相矛先はもっぱらマスコミ報道に	The PM spent a whole day explaining about the permanent tax reduction scheme, arguing that the press confused the whole situation.
July 11	自民、減税４兆円超の方針、得票への効果不透明	How the LDP measures of reducing tax for 4 trillion yen would affect the poll results remain opaque.
July 12	自民「勝敗ライン」さや当て	LDP will lose or win is uncertain.
July 13	自民惨敗首相退陣へ　経済失政に厳しい審議	LDP totally defeated, the PM resigned. Severe judgment on the mismanagement of the economy.
July 14	橋本首相、正式に退陣表明	PM Hashimoto formally declared his resignation.

Mainichi

Date	Headlines	Translation
June 12	民主、自由、共産　3党、不信任案を提出	Three parties – the Democratic, the Liberal, and the Japan's Communist Parties will submit the non-confidence motion.
June 13	野党に複雑な波紋、民主には同調せず　自公連携の布石か	The situation became more confusing for the opposition. Is the LDP going to form a strategic alliance with the Komeitô, but not the Democratic Party?
June 14	金融機関の破たん処理、「公的受け皿銀」設立へ、自民政府企業保護へつなぎ融資	Establishing a "public receiving bank" became a government measure for financial resuscitation, and a protection of a loan between the government and business enterprises.
June 15	N/A	N/A
June 16	再び、「両院支配」うかがう自民、「橋本隠し」で「経済失政」批判かわす	The LDP wonders if it will rule both Houses again. Hashimoto is hiding and dodging at criticism against the economic malaise.
June 17	橋本失政、「追及に力点、自由党が参院向け公約」	The Liberal Party pledged to examine the failure of the Hashimoto administration, and to earn a victory in the House of Councillors' election.
June 18	秋乗り切りは外交頼み、参院	The key factors for the survival of the

	選後の橋本政権命運握る票素	Hashimoto's administration are to handle a diplomatic challenge, and to hold on to power after the election for the House of Councillors.
June 19	橋本首相恒久減税実施固める	The PM made up his mind to go ahead with the permanent tax reduction scheme.
June 20	受け皿銀行来月初めにも具体案、サマーズ副長官に加藤氏伝える	Kato told the Deputy Secretary of the State, Mr. Summers, that a concrete policy for the receiving bank will be ready by early next month.
June 21	長銀を「受け皿銀」に改組 自主再建は困難と判断公約資金を投入	The Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan will be restructured into a "Receiving Bank". Yet independent restructuring would be equally difficult to the judgment on investing public funds.
June 22	橋本失政生かせぬ焦り	The Hashimoto administration was under fire for its policy misjudgments.
June 23	長銀を全面支援 ―政府、自民、異例の協議で確認預金、金融債を全額保護	The government, particularly the LDP, gave a full support to the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan. The total amount of deposit and bond were confirmed at the special meeting.
June 24	有権者増加 初の9000万人台に、政治復権なければ、投票率またダウン？	The number of eligible voters has increased to 90 million people. However, the voting turnout would be down if there is no political turnaround.
June 25	来秋まで続投に意欲、橋本首相日露関係を根本改着	Prime Minister Hashimoto wishes to improve the foundation of the Japanese-Russian relations by next autumn.
June 26	国営銀創設固める、政府、自民、預保機構の子会社	The government and the LDP strengthened a plan to establish a national bank, the structure of which would take a form of a subsidiary of the National Reserve Bank.
June 27	自民橋本竜太郎総裁 野党批判なく政策一本	Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryûtaro made a policy announcement with no criticism against the Opposition.
June 28	内閣改造、党役員人事、時期めぐり自民内対	The time for cabinet reshuffle and change of personnel within the LDP has come.
June 29	長銀不良債権「合併前に買取機構へ」自民幹事長と政調会長合意安定化基金も投入	Before incorporating the non-performing loans into the Long-term Credit Bank of Japan, purchasing mechanism must be established. The Secretary of the LDP and Head of the

		Policy Research Committee have agreed on the injection of funds to keep the account balance.
June 30	参院選序盤の情勢、自民改選の61に迫る	At the early stage of the House of Councillors' election, sixty-one LDP candidates are expected to be re-elected.
July 1	受けない！？、橋本PR、国民が 「本音」で応酬	PM Hashimoto's PR style did not work, as the public responded with their true feelings.
July 2	首相の恒久減税容認、政治的思惑が先走り	The PM permanent tax reduction scheme was given a go ahead, though it came right out with political intention.
July 3	なし崩した使途拡大、発表急いだ首相、米国矛長官の来日にらむ？	Did the PM hastily announce the expanded amortisation plan only to catch the US Secretary of State's attention?
July 4	実施方法なお課題、「広く薄く」奈良消費増えず、税率是正も難問	The plan to implement permanent tax reduction is a major concern. If it is too general and too little, it will not promote consumption, and the correction of tax rate will become difficult.
July 5	選挙後の党人事、総裁選にらみ...いつか来た道？終盤へ自民派閥の影ジワリ	Change in the party line-up, and the election of the LDP President is expected after the election. The negotiation among the LDP factions will happen around at the last stage of the election.
July 6	財源規模不透明なまま、橋本首相の税制改革発言	While scope of funding remains opaque, PM Hashimoto has announced his tax reform plan.
July 7	強気自民に危機感、過半数どころか	The majority of the public has developed a sense of crisis towards the LDP.
July 8	恒久減税やるの？やらないの？、「わかりやすく言え」自民党内にも批判、選挙街が裏目に	The decision as to whether the tax will be reduced or not, should be put in a clearer term. Criticisms against the LDP have been widespread in the constituencies as well as within the party.
July 9	減税会見、切弱詰まり「恒久化」明言　参院選終盤情勢に危機感、首相の迷走際立つ	The government was forced by its concerns of defeat to announce the tax reduction scheme. At the last stage of the House of Councillors' election, there was strong feeling of crisis, and the PM loss of policy direction was

		obvious.
July 10	恒久減税首相明言の批判続く、小泉厚相も財源に懸念	The PM announcement of permanent tax reduction scheme continued to draw criticism. Several Ministers were worried about sources of funding.
July 11	参院選あす投票、橋本自民に審議	The House of Councillors will go to the poll tomorrow, the day both Hashimoto and the LDP will be judged.
July 12	参院選きょう投開票、自民61議席、焦点に減税、不良債権処理どう評価	The LDP aims at getting 61 seats at today's poll. Its selling points are focused on its tax reduction scheme, and management of non-performing loans.
July 13	自民惨敗、首相退陣へ、高投票率、失政を直撃	The LDP defeated. The PM resigned. High voting turnouts. Results clearly reflected his misadministration.
July 14	橋本首相が辞任表明、後継選出旧 小淵派軸に、21日に両院総会	PM Hashimoto announced his resignation. The succeeding candidate is likely to come from the old-guarded Obuchi faction. Both Houses will meet on the 21st.

Asahi

Date	Headlines	Translation
June 12	竜頭蛇尾？昇り竜？	A tame ending or a bright start?
June 13	市場は橋本政権「不信任」、経済次第のもろさ変わらず	The market has no confidence in Hashimoto administration. There has been no change in the weakened economy.
June 14	一日も早く、補正成立を	Should hurry to approve the revision.
June 15	N/A	N/A
June 16	死せる角栄、自民を走らす	The dead Kakuei still runs the LDP.
June 17	野党よりも景気が怖い、政府、自民、トリプル安に危機感、参院選控え逆風警戒	A sense of crisis in the government was signalled by the dropping of three economic indicators. The LDP is more concerned about the economy than the Opposition. Watch out for a turnaround in the upcoming House of Councillors' election.
June 18	橋本首相談話	An informal talk with PM Hashimoto.
June 19	橋本首相会見、不良債権処理に全力法人減税前倒しで結論	PM Hashimoto concluded at the press conference that all efforts will be put

		to manage the bad loans and reduce the corporate tax.
June 20	民主党、菅直人代表、我々は納税者側の立場、自民対立の構図作る	Kan Naoto, a Democratic Party's representative, declared that his party is sided with the taxpayers, and will formulate a plan to confront the LDP.
June 21	日本、外圧に重い？、改革先送りのツケ問われる政府の覚悟	Japan was again pressured by foreign powers by being asked about its slowness to embark on reform.
June 22	大手19行検査急ぐ、預金者保護を強調、橋本首相	PM Hashimoto announced the hastening of inspection processes of 19 banks, and the strengthening of protection given to account holders.
June 23	自民に厳しい評価、参院選、本社世論調査　自民に投票は選挙区22％惨敗の89年水準	Results of Asahi's poll on the House of Councillors' election showed the public's disenchantment with the LDP. The LDP might get as low as 22 % from all of its constituencies – the same level when it defeated in 1989.
June 24	受け皿銀の融資引き継ぎ厳格審査を首相表明	The PM announced after a serious deliberation that all loans will be handed over to the Receiving Bank.
June 25	参院選後の臨時国会、首相、本格国会を意図	The PM proposed to change the special Diet session planned after the House of Councillors' election into a regular Diet session.
June 26	6兆、10兆…減税額競う野党踏み込めぬ自民へ	The opposition attacked the government's slowness in implementing the tax reduction scheme, declaring that it will reduce tax up to 6 or 10 trillion yen if it is in the government.
June 27	住信、長銀合併、受け皿銀の活用焦点　政府、自民検討作業に影響必至	The 'Receiving Bank' is aimed at merging the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan and Sumishin. The LDP and the government's influence in this operation is clearly inevitable.
June 28	農林水産業を妥協せず守る、橋本竜太郎首相	PM Hashimoto Ryutaro will not compromise with the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries.
June 29	受け皿銀公約資金30兆円活用政府、自民方針貸し倒れ損失時	According to the LDP government's policy to write-off bad loans, the Receiving Bank will use up to 30 trillion yen.
June 30	自民確執広がる気配、内閣改造、人事の時期巡り、首相、	Feelings of discord are widespread within the LDP. The time for cabinet reshuffle and new party line-up has

	景気、党内　両にらみ	arrived. The PM must keep his eyes on both the economy and his party.
July 1	日本版ブリッジバンク首相がゴーサイン統括組織の機能詰め公約裏付け、どう具体化	The PM gave a go-ahead to the Japanese version of bridge-bank. Yet only its general structure and functions, not a concrete policy, were mentioned.
July 2	「金融管理人」制度を創設、政府自民ブリッジバンク導入で、倒産法制の枠外	The LDP government introduced bridge-bank as a financial system administrator outside the limit of the bankruptcy law.
July 3	無策批判に最終答案、米政府関係者警戒感含む歓迎	A final answer to the criticism on lacking policy. The US government representatives accepted with some precaution.
July 4	選挙.市場.米国を意識　首相、時機計り「減税カード」	Due to concerns about the election, the stock market, and the US reaction, the PM took this opportunity to use his 'tax reduction card'.
July 5	具体性欠く安保、外交論議、全く触れない首相	The Security Cooperation Plan and foreign policy lacks concreteness, but the PM did not touch on this issue.
July 6	地方で人気、遊説、ペースアップ「橋本効果」頼む自民	The LDP went on campaign tour in the country, aiming to capitalize on Hashimoto's popularity.
July 7	「減税発言」で自民迷走　首相、恒久減税の具体策語らず	The LDP was at a loss by the announcement on tax reduction. Yet the PM did not spell out any concrete policy on tax reduction scheme.
July 8	自民「不況対策に効用強調」野党の「見直し論」勢い出ず	The LDP focused on effective policies to manage the recession, whereas the Opposition's New Look campaign did not gain much ground.
July 9	首相「所得減税を明言」来年から課税最低限は維持	The PM announced income tax reduction. From next year lowest taxation level will be in use.
July 10	不良債権かすむ論戦ブリッジバンクより減税に力点	The discussion on bad-loan management faded as the issue of tax reduction now replaced the topic of bridge-bank.
July 11	自民勝敗ラインは61、人事の時期焦点　首相立場苦しく	The winning line for LDP is marked at 61. The PM has a difficult time as the focus was also on the timing of cabinet reshuffle.
July 12	経済立て直しへ審判、あす未明に大勢が判明	From the dawn of tomorrow a lot of people will make their judgments on economic recovery.
July 13	自民惨敗、首相退陣へ、首相	The LDP defeated. The PM would

	「すべて、私の責任」	resign, as he admitted, "all of this was my own faults".
July 14	自民党惨敗、爆発した民意、変化求め続ける有権者	The LDP defeat was a result of an outburst of public dissent. Voters want further changes.

Appendix 13: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 13 May 1998

(underline: stories unique to that program)

Channel 3 (5:30-6:30 pm) (7:40-8:30pm)	Channel 5 (8:00-9:05pm)	Channel 7 (6:00-6:30pm) (7:30-8:30pm)	Channel 9 (7:00-8:30pm)	Channel 11 (6:30-8:05pm)	iTV (7:00-8:30pm)
1. Conflicts between two economic ministers	1. Royal news	1. Riots in Indonesia	1. Conflicts between two economic ministers	1. Immigration Authority sent home illegal migrants along Southern border	1. Riots in Indonesia
2. NAP's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee	2. Conflicts between two economic ministers	2. Traffic police's graft	2. NAP's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee	2. Cambodian refugees in Northern Thailand	2. iTV executives met with the Minister of Interior and Head of the Police Department
3. The government's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee	3. Chart Pattama's response to allegations of prior knowledge of floating of the baht	3. Minister of Education will investigate the overcharging of school fees	3. The new director of the Bank of Thailand	3. Illegal logging in the North	3. Traffic Police's graft and Highway Police's graft
4. Riots in Indonesia	4. Search for owners of illegal yachts	4. Search for owners of illegal yachts	4. Demonstration in front of the Bank of Thailand	4. Navy's assistance to drought sufferers in the South	4. The new director of the Bank of Thailand
5. Economic effects of the riots in Indonesia	5. Karen held eleven Thais for ransom in Burma	5. Tram accident in Chiang Mai	5. Highway police's graft	5. Protest against a hospital's director in Kalasindh	5. Cash flow troubles of two financial institutions
6. Cash flow troubles of two financial institutions	6. Riots in Indonesia	6. Robbery in Bangkok	6. Tram accident in Chiang Mai	6. Drought in Chaiyaphum	6. Locals in Buriram suffered from Anthrax
7. Traffic police's graft	7. Opposition against nuclear tests in India	7. Karen held eleven Thais for ransom in Burma	7. Molchon Party merged with NAP	7. Karen released eleven hostages	7. Conflicts between two economic ministers
8. Tram accident in Chiang Mai	8. General Prem Tinnasulanondh attended Chatichai's funeral	8. Demonstration held by small boat fishermen in Songkhla	8. Prachakorn Thai Party's denial of rumour about merging with another party	8. Riots in Indonesia	8. Toll fees will increase

Appendix 13: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 13 May 1998

9. The new director of the Bank of Thailand	9. Cash flow troubles of two financial institutions	9. Problem of industrial waste in Rayong	9. Three organic laws will be deliberated by the Cabinet at the end of the month	9. The new director of the Bank of Thailand	9. The government's and NAP's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee
10. OPM plans to establish a committee on social investment	10. The new director of the Bank of Thailand	10. Toll fees will increase	10. General Prem Tinnasulanondh attended Chatichai's funeral	10. The government's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee	10. Molchon Party merged with NAP and splits in the NAP
11. Factional split in NAP	11. Toll fees will increase	11. Conflicts between two economic ministers	11. Speaker of the lower house visits China	11. NAP's responses to findings of the economic crisis study committee	11. General Prem Tinnasulanondh attended Chatichai's funeral
12. Kraisak disclosed Chatichai's decision to have a surgery which resulted in his death	12. Transfer of seven Police Superintendents for negligence	12. The new director of the Bank of Thailand	12. Transfer of seven Police Superintendents for negligence	12. Conflicts between two economic ministers	12. Cambodian refugees were sent home
13. Toll fees will increase	13. Traffic police's graft	13. Opposition against nuclear tests in India	13. Toll fees will increase	13. Cash flow troubles of two financial institutions	13. Demonstration against dam construction in front of OPM
14. Royal news	14. Highway police's graft	14. Fighting in Cambodia	14. OPM plans to establish a committee on social investment	14. Rakez Saksena fought against an extradition to Thailand	14. OPM established the Office of Official Information
15. Families are coping with costs of school and book fees	15. Factional split in NAP	15. Rakez Saksena fought against an extradition to Thailand	15. Scoop on the findings of the economic crisis study committee	15. Factional split in NAP	15. The Prime Minister opened a conference on "ASEAN University Network Forum"
	16. Prachakorn Thai Party's denial of rumour about merging with another party	16. UAE bought US fighter jets	16. Solar car race in the US	16. Molchon Party merged with NAP	16. Army commander will seek an informal discussion with the commander of the Burmese Army on the closure of the bridge linking the two countries

Appendix 13: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 13 May 1998

17. Cambodian refugees were sent home	17. Election in the Philippines	17. Seminar on software development	17. Local production of natural goods	17. Election in the Philippines
18. Crime in Macao	18. Troubles of financial institutions in Korea	18. Riots in Indonesia	18. Scoop on "IMF's conditions" and "Privatisation"	18. Nike's factory in Vietnam
19. Mexico's drought	19. UN Secretariat met with Iraq's vice President	19. Peace process in the Middle East	19. Royal news	19. Opposition against nuclear tests in India
	20. US containment policy for nuclear waste	20. Industrial Banking of Japan merged with Nomura Securities	20. Election in the Philippines	20. Royal news
	21. Factional split in NAP	21. Crime in Macao	21. Peace process in the Middle East	
	22. Kraisak Choonhavan's supports to new party leader of Chat Pattana	22. Powerful man in Taiwan		
	23. General Prem Tinnasulanondh attended Chatichai's funeral	23. Royal news		
	24. Royal news	24. Prisoners escaped		
		25. Karen released eleven hostages		
		26. Demonstration held by small boat fishermen in Songkhla		
		27. Protest against local administrator		
		28. Army will propose its budget to the government		

Appendix 14: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 14 May 1998

(underline: stories unique to that program)

Channel 3 (5:30-6:30 pm) (7:40-8:30pm)	Channel 5 (8:00-9:05pm)	Channel 7 (6:00-6:30pm) (7:30-8:30pm)	Channel 9 (7:00-8:30pm)	Channel 11 (6:30-8:05pm)	iTV (7:00-8:30pm)
1. Riots in Indonesia	1. Royal news	1. Riots in Indonesia (Scoop)	1. Riots in Indonesia	1. Sugarcane farmers protested against a sugar factory in Kamphangphet	1. Riots in Indonesia
2. Deputy Director of the Bank of Thailand met with the Managing Director of the Thai Military Bank and the Bangkok Bank	2. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are drafting the 4th letter of intent to the IMF	2. The Army commander ordered a charge against eleven Thais held hostage by Karen on crossing border illegally	2. Effects of Indonesia riots on regional economy	2. Medical help given to an injured elephant in Ubon Rachathani	2. Traffic Police's graft, Highway Police's graft and Local Police's graft
3. Conflicts between two economic ministers	3. Deputy Director of the Bank of Thailand met with the Managing Director of the Thai Military Bank and the Bangkok Bank	3. Transfer of seven Police Superintendents for negligence	3. Conflicts between two economic ministers	3. Locals in Buriram suffered from Anthrax	3. Graft among the economic officers of Bangkok government
4. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are drafting the 4th letter of intent to the IMF	4. Taxation Department disclosed a decline in annual tax revenue	4. All economic officers of Bangkok government were called to the meeting on graft problems	4. Deputy Minister of Agriculture urged the government to disclose the initial findings of the economic crisis study committee	4. Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives held a meeting with tapioca producers in Knon Kaen	4. Transfer of seven Police Superintendents for negligence
5. Director of five insurance companies confirmed their financial stability	5. Riots in Indonesia	5. Taxi driver murdered	5. Traffic police's graft	5. Food and Drug Authority met with seafood exporters in Songkhla	5. Deputy Director of the Bank of Thailand met with the Managing Director of the Thai Military Bank and the Bangkok Bank

Appendix 14: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 14 May 1998

6. Rattanakosin Insurance Company closed down	6. More Cambodian refugees were sent home	6. Jewellery shop robbery	6. NAP'S member issued an agenda that the government must expedite the investigation on Police's graft	6. Karen migrants in Mae Hongson	6. The assembly of the Moon River Community protested in front of the Ministry of Interior
7. Deputy Minister of Agriculture urged the government to disclose the initial findings of economic crisis study committee	7. The Lower house's advisory committee considers an issue on police graft to deliberate in the next parliamentary session	7. Deputy Director of the Bank of Thailand met with the Managing Director of the Thai Military Bank and the Bangkok Bank	7. Transfer of seven Police Superintendents for negligence	7. Increase in a number of foreign visitors to Phuket	7. Conflicts between two economic ministers
8. The Prime Minister's responses to allegations of deliberately changing the report on economic crisis	8. India conducted nuclear testing for the second time	8. Scoop on cash flow problems of two financial institutions	8. Police arrested a group of drug traffickers	8. Riots in Indonesia	8. Tram accident in Chiang Mai
9. Traffic police's graft	9. Election in the Philippines	9. Deputy Minister of Agriculture urged the government to disclose the initial findings of the economic crisis study committee	9. Poll reports on family's spending this school year	9. Economic effects of the riots in Indonesia	9. Locals in Buriram suffered from Anthrax
10. Effects of Indonesian riots on Thai tour companies	10. Crime in Macao	10. Restructuring the Electricity Authority of Thailand	10. Molchon Party merged with NAP	10. Conflicts between two economic ministers	10. The second announcement of university entrance examination results
11. US and Japan sanctions its aids to India because of its nuclear testing	11. Traffic accident in China	11. India conducted nuclear testing for the second time	11. Scoop on the bankruptcy of Bangkok Bank Commercials	11. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are drafting the 4th letter of intent to the IMF	11. Parents buy used books for their children to reduce cost

Appendix 14: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 14 May 1998

12. Royal news	12. Malaysian and Indonesian governments agreed to corporate in tackling bush fire	12. Election in the Philippines	12. Royal news	12. Deputy Director of the Bank of Thailand met with the Managing Director of the Thai Military Bank and the Bangkok Bank	12. Passenger's confusion and inconvenience at the new bus terminal in Bangkok
13. Police arrested a group of drug traffickers	13. Wife of cult leader in Japan, Asahara Shoko, was sentenced to seven years	13. Tax drivers in New York are on strike	13. The Prime Minister discussed with the Army on the annual budget	13. The Prime Minister rejected claim that he would divert most of the funding on social investment scheme to the South	13. Deputy Minister of Agriculture urged the government to disclose the initial findings of the economic crisis study committee
14. Passenger's confusion and inconvenience at the new bus terminal in Bangkok	14. Minister of Internal Affairs of Vietnam ordered a special task force to tackle drug problems	14. Labour union in Korea agreed with the corporate reform	14. Restructuring the Electricity Authority of Thailand	14. The National Economic and Social Development Committee will hold a seminar on solving economic crisis	14. Special Advisory committees passed three organic laws and would send it to the Cabinet at the end of the month
15. Families spent less on books and new school uniforms this year		15. Vietnam will attend the APEC's meeting this year	15. Minister of Foreign Affairs met with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss export strategy	15. Special Advisory committees passed three organic laws and would send it to the Cabinet at the end of the month	15. Police arrested a group of drug traffickers
		16. The first Koala being artificially conceived was born in Australia	16. Passenger's confusion and inconvenience at the new bus terminal in Bangkok	16. NAPS member issued an agenda that the government must expedite the investigation on Police's graft	16. The Prime Minister discussed with the Army on the annual budget
		17. The second announcement of university entrance examination results	17. Traffic accidents in Rayong	17. Traffic police's graft	17. India conducted nuclear testing for the second time

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Appendix 14: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Thailand on 14 May 1998

18. Chief Army commander visited Cambodian refugee camp in Srisaket	18. Telephone Organisation of Thailand confirmed its readiness for servicing during the Asian Games	18. Molchon Party merged with NAP	18. Crime in Macao
19. Royal news		19. Scoop on "American donation or profiteering"	19. Military exercise in Taiwan
		20. Royal news	20. A radio station was blown up in the Philippines
			21. Peace process in the Middle East
			22. The first Koala being artificially conceived was born in Australia
			23. US surgeons tried a head transplant on monkey
			24. More than thirty skeletons were found in a cave in Mexico
			25. Royal news

Appendix 15: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Japan on 25 November 1998

(underline: stories unique to that program)

NHK News 7 (7:00 - 7:53 pm)	NTV News Plus 1 (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	TBS News no mori (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	Fuji TV Super News (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	TV Asahi Super J Channel (5:00 - 7:00 pm)
1. President Jiang's arrival in Haneda	1. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	1. Actress Hirose Kyoko passed entrance exam at Waseda University	1. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	1. Actress Hirose Kyoko passed entrance exam at Waseda University
2. Minister of Foreign Affairs met with the chairman of Chinese chamber of commerce	2. A boy swallowed a needle while eating fried potatoes	2. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	2. A boy swallowed a needle while eating fried potatoes	2. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle
3. Minister of MITI met with the director of National Development Planing Committee of China	3. Crack in JAL's Boeing	3. Prime Minister Obuchi had an official plane made a U-turn to Haneda to pick up forgotten materials on the way to Moscow	3. Real Estate fraud	3. President Jiang's arrival in Haneda
4. Director of Environment Agency met with the Chinese Minister of Environment	4. Food poison in Gunma	4. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	4. Young foreign men attacked people in Kobe	4. Murder in Fukuoka
5. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	5. Kan Naoto's denial of alleged affairs	5. Government's plan to give-away merchandise coupons	5. Murder in Fukuoka	5. Legislation to assist SMEs
6. Coalition government between the LDP and the Liberal party	6. President Jiang Zemin's arrival at Haneda	6. President Jiang's arrival in Haneda	6. A young Japanese girl will receive a heart transplant in LA	6. Armed robbery in department store in Paris
7. Opposition within the LDP factions against the coalition	7. Faked postal office's products	7. Debts of Collapsed Yamaichi Securities	7. Faked postal office's products	7. A boy swallowed a needle while eating fried potatoes
8. Kan Naoto's view on the coalition	8. Orang-utan went on lose in Taipei	8. Faked postal office's products	8. A court case against a local mafia figure	8. Crack in JAL's Boeing
9. Prince Ronarith of Cambodia was appointed as House speaker	9. Real Estate fraud	9. Meeting between policy makers of the LDP and the Liberal party	9. Crack in JAL's Boeing	9. Faked postal office's products

Appendix 15: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Japan on 25 November 1998

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
10. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	10. Ancient stove found in Kagoshima	10. Deaths of hundreds of local birds in Nagano	10. Government's plan to give-away merchandise coupons	10. American Online
11. Guidelines on using DNA testing in finding parents or children	11. Young foreign men attacked people in Kobe	11. Member of Aum Shinrikyo appeared in court	11. President Jiang's arrival in Haneda	11. History of Japan - China relations
12. Faked postal office's products	12. Osaka's bid against Beijing for Olympics 2008	12. Santa Claus school in New York	12. Petrol station robbed in Kanagawa	12. Decline in a number of people taking life insurance policies
13. LDP's advisory council on constitution and education deliberated	13. Murder in Fukuoka	13. Crack in JAL's Boeing	13. Korean girl murdered	13. Kan Naoto's denial of alleged affairs
14. Decline in a number of people taking life insurance policies	14. Break up of Watanabe faction in LDP - Yamazaki left	14. Real Estate fraud	14. Corruption in retirement home building project	14. Santa Claus school in New York
15. Casting for New Year's Day special broadcast	15. Waste dumping problem in Saitama	15. Corruption in retirement home building project	15. Actress Hirose Kyoko passed entrance exam at Waseda University	15. Orang-utan went on lose in Taipei
16. Osaka's bid against Beijing for Olympics 2008	16. Corruption in retirement home building project		16. Orang-utan went on lose in Taipei	16. Meeting between policy makers of the LDP and the Liberal party
17. Anniversary of the birth of NHK Hi-Vision broadcast	17. Prince Ronarith of Cambodia was appointed as House speaker			17. Osaka's bid against Beijing for Olympics 2008
18. Water stream since Edo period became polluted				18. Yamazaki's opposition to the coalition and his plan to form a new faction in LDP
19. Orang-utan went on lose in Taipei				19. Robbery at pet shop in Tokyo
				20. NGOs met in Yokohama to promote a campaign against products made from Tiger
				21. Member of Aum Shinrikyo appeared in court

Appendix 16: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Japan on 26 November 1998

(underline: stories unique to that program)

NHK News 7 (7:00 - 7:53 pm)	NTV News Plus 1 (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	TBS News no mori (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	Fuji TV Super News (5:55 - 7:00 pm)	TV Asahi Super J Channel (5:00 - 7:00 pm)
1. President Jiang met with PM Obuchi but has not signed a declaration because of the clause on historical recognition	1. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	1. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	1. President Jiang met with PM Obuchi but has not signed a declaration because of the clause on historical recognition	1. President Jiang met with PM Obuchi but has not signed a declaration because of the clause on historical recognition
2. US response to China's one country policy	2. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	2. In Niigata, a man filed a lawsuit against the school for failing to prevent bullying and his child's death	2. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	2. The Empress launched her book titled "hashi wo kakeru"
3. President Jiang met with the Emperor and the Empress	3. Opposition against the LDP-Liberal Party coalition from within the LDP	3. A mentally-ill man was acquitted for stabbing a primary school girl	3. A Russian woman with help from an accomplice killed her husband in Niigata	3. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case
4. The preparation of state reception for President Jiang at Imperial Palace	4. Miyazawa Kiichi nominated Kato Koichi to lead his faction	4. Cheating in Pachinko	4. In Niigata, a man filed a lawsuit against the school for failing to prevent bullying and his child's death	4. Minister of Finance reached an agreement with Minister of Home affairs in reducing income tax
5. Parents of a boy who killed in a traffic accident sought a re-opening of the case	5. Bank robber in Korea was fought back by female bank employees	5. Minister of Finance reached an agreement with Minister of Home affairs in reducing income tax	5. Christmas lights in Paris	5. Fire at Nisshin Noodle Cup factory
6. Meeting of LDP's secretary from around the nation	6. Minister of Finance reached an agreement with Minister of Home affairs in reducing income tax	6. President Jiang met with the Emperor and the Empress	6. The growth of DNA testing business	6. Increase on tax imported rice to 1,000 - 1,300 %
7. Miyazawa Kiichi nominated Kato Koichi to lead his faction	7. President Jiang met with PM Obuchi but has not signed a declaration because of the clause on historical recognition	7. President Jiang met with PM Obuchi but has not signed a declaration because of the clause on historical recognition	7. Fire in Osaka	7. Christmas lights in Paris and christmas lights festival in Omote Sando caused troubles to local residents

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Appendix 16: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Japan on 26 November 1998

8. Exxon bought Mobil	8. A Russian woman with help from an accomplice killed her husband in Niigata	8. Miyazawa Kiichi nominated Kato Koichi to lead his faction	8. Bank robber in Korea was fought back by female bank employees	8. Japan's bid for speed train project in China against German and France
9. Increase on tax imported rice to 1,000 - 1,300 %	9. Controversy over Pinoche's extradition in London	9. The collapse of local bank in Saitama	9. A jewellery shop in Kanagawa was robbed by Chinese men	9. Children often get burnt from heater and hot water in winter
10. Minister of Finance reached an agreement with Minister of Home affairs in reducing income tax	10. Yamazaki will form a new faction in the LDP	10. Fire in Ota-ku	10. Two school girls were arrested for refusing to pay taxi fees	10. Former Japanese Prime Ministers met with President Jiang Zemin
11. Increase in car manufacturing level	11. Police found more evidence on corruption charge against an LDP MP	11. A man was arrested for discarding a baby	11. Chinese men were arrested for stealing computers and electronic goods	11. In Niigata, a man filed a lawsuit against the school for failing to prevent bullying and his child's death
12. In Niigata, a man filed a lawsuit against the school for failing to prevent bullying and his child's death	12. A girl called SOS on her mobile while being attacked on the way home	12. A part-time prostitute was arrested for robbing her clients	12. Anniversary party organised by Fuji-Sankei Communication Group	12. A Russian woman with help from an accomplice killed her husband in Niigata
13. Wakayama murder mystery and insurance swindle	13. Food poisoning in school			13. Police found more evidence on corruption charge against an LDP MP
14. Brazilian Foreign Minister met with the Japanese Foreign Minister	14. The Emperor and the Empress attended a gathering of Japanese war veteran			14. Ministry of Finance proposed its budget for next year
15. Decline in a number of people taking life insurance policies				15. Opposition against the LDP-Liberal Party coalition from within the LDP
16. Police found more evidence on corruption charge against an LDP MP				16. The court will decide the case of Nomura Securities early next year

Appendix 16: Convergence and Diversities of Evening News Stories on free-to-air Broadcast in Japan on 26 November 1998

17. Miyazawa Kiichi nominated Kato Koichi to lead his faction

18. Controversy over Pinoche's extradition in London

19. The collapse of local bank in Saitama

20. Chinese men were arrested for stealing computers and electronic goods

21. Democratic Party sued "Sentaku" a weekly magazine for reporting false allegation