

Peace Journalism and Thailand's Southern Insurgency

: A comparative analysis of the conflict coverage
in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

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Abstract

Since 2004, Thailand has experienced a resurgence of violence in the three southern border provinces. This conflict has worsened the relationship between the majority Thais and the minority Muslims, with serious ramifications for the education, economy and health care system of the region. The Thai media have been blamed for exacerbating the situation, with critics claiming that newspapers reporting on the conflict often expresses prejudice, negativity and bias in providing only one side of the story. This thesis assesses these and related criticisms through the lens of 'Peace Journalism' in order to examine the guiding tenets of war journalism while, at the same time, exploring the basis to propose alternative approaches to reporting. In methodological terms, the empirical case study draws on a content analysis of pertinent coverage produced by two English-language newspapers (*Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*) reporting on the three major incidents during the first year of the southern conflict as well as semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors in order to better understand how and why they present the conflict in the ways that they do.

Key findings indicated that the coverage of the two English-language newspapers shared the same main elements of war and peace journalism, with the former's emphasis on elite interests, visible effects of war, and a here and now perspective, and the latter's emphasis on multiparty-orientations, victim-centred priorities, and the causes and consequences of the conflict. Both newspapers relied firstly on the 'elite' group as main news actors and news sources, with a secondary focus on 'people', which suggests that the voices of people affected by the incidents were not neglected in their reportings. The analysis of labels revealed that, compared to *Bangkok Post*, which tended to use labels with neutral terms, *The Nation* used wider range of labels that include both emotive and negative terms.

In sum, the study revealed surprising evidence of more peace journalism elements in the conflict coverage. This is because both newspapers under scrutiny perform objective journalism that involves investigative reporting and the engagement of all sides in the coverage. In addition, the situation of the three incidents affected the war and peace approaches in the coverage, see from the increasing trend of peace journalism over the course of three incidents. The semi-structured interviews revealed that the organisational principles and the format of the newspapers guided the way the journalists report the conflict. To improve the conflict coverage, journalists need support from their organisations in order to increase their level of expertise and experience in covering the southern conflict. The thesis concludes with recommendations on improving the quality of newspaper reporting on this conflict.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BRN	=	Barisan Revolusi Nasional
CPMR	=	Campaign for Popular Media Reform
CPM43	=	The Civilia-Police-Military Taskforce 43
DSW	=	Deep South Watch
ICG	=	Human Rights Watch
INA	=	Issara News Agency
INC	=	Issara News Center
NRC	=	National Reconciliation Center
PJ	=	Peace Journalism
PULO	=	Patani United Liberaton Organisation
SBPAC	=	Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre
TJA	=	The Thai Journalists Association
WJ	=	War Journalism

Chapter 1

Introduction

The news media play a significant role in modern societies. They supply news and information to the general public, providing multiple perspectives through news articles, commentaries and editorials in a manner that can influence public opinion (McQuail 2010). In this way, the news media have become a mediator connecting people with social reality. In a wider sense, the news media provide a means for social institutions to convey their selected versions of events and conditions to the public (Ibid.).

However, as the media are a cultural institution with their own interests and rules for shaping perceptions of reality, information could be distorted according to their own purposes or those of other social institutions. The purpose of the messages they convey can either be neutral, intend to inform, or represent an attempt to manipulate or control public opinion (Ibid.). Shaw (1979) argued that the media are persuasive in focusing public attention and determining the importance placed on specific issues. McCombs and Shaw (1972) posited that the audiences' attention is manipulated by the content the media chooses to present. The media, thus, have the capability to influence our view of the world by choosing what reality to report and how to report it during the process of news production. Rarely, if ever, is this a neutral process and it is the duty of journalists to ensure that the information they present is accurate, fair, balanced and truthful.

Given the pervasive nature of conflicts in the modern world and the changes in the communication technologies today, the media play a significant role in informing the public about wars and conflicts around the world. Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010, p.4) mentioned that "...media are becoming part of the practices of warfare to the point that the conduct of war cannot be understood unless one carefully accounts for the role of media in it. This is what it means to speak of war as mediatized." In this sense, the media not only act as a medium between the public and the social reality, but they can also influence the public by choosing which reality of war and conflict to report, and how to report them to the public. The reality of war is produced and presented through the media, and thus war these days cannot exist without the media dimension (Ibid.).

In conflict situations, journalists will inevitably face difficulties because all sides will seek to control the media, whose information can be either unreliable or censored (Goretti 2007). Reporting conflicts can represent both a personal risk and an ethical challenge. In many cases, the media emphasise only a brief background of the reality. Conflicts are often inaccurately represented, and in some cases, the media are manipulated in an effort to win support for a particular position, or to demonise enemies of this position (Lynch 2010). Therefore, the mediatisation of war is important because "perceptions are vital to war" and "it is through media that perceptions are created, sustained or challenged" (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010, p. 4). In the context of this research, the perception of the public is important as it is perceived to be one of the causes of the conflict – a point that I will revisit to discuss later in this chapter.

The traditional way of covering conflicts, which scholars such as Galtung (2002) and Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) termed as 'war journalism', treats the notion of conflict as 'news value' (Galtung 1986, 1998, 2002). War journalism focuses on dehumanising the enemy and the visible effects of violence, confining conflicts to a closed time and space, and focusing only on the current situation, not on its causes and effects (Ibid.). It works as a propaganda tool, which seeks to have a strong impact on public perceptions and behaviour, and usually leads to a situation where the public value violent responses to conflict, and ignore non-violent alternatives (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005).

As an alternate to war journalism, peace researchers and activists developed another model for reporting conflicts: peace journalism. Peace journalism arguably allows the media to play a productive and socially responsible role in conflict situations and to the public in ways that help contribute to peaceful solutions, instead of exacerbating the situation (Galtung 1998; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). Peace journalism suggests new ways for journalists to explore the background of a conflict in order to help its audiences understand the dynamics of the conflict, seek out the causes and solutions to the situation, and give voice to all parties involved (Galtung 1998, 2002; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005).

This research is borne out of my interest in peace journalism, and the reporting of a conflict in southern Thailand, which represents a case study for this thesis. Thus, this thesis explores the coverage of Thailand's southern insurgency on its first year of occurrence. Since 2004, Thailand has experienced

long-running and on-going violence. The southern conflict is considered deep-rooted, and is based on a complex historical background, in which various political, religious, cultural and ethnic issues all play an important part. Of particular interest here is that the Thai media have been criticised by many observers – including reformists and media professionals – as one of the factors worsening the situation. Reports of the southern conflict often express prejudice and a negative tone, and provide only one side of the story: key characteristics of war journalism.

This research examines these criticisms of the Thai media. It looks at the practices of two major English-language newspapers in Thailand in order to establish how the two newspapers represent the conflict. The study aims to explore the war and peace frames these newspapers use, the factors influencing the strengths and weaknesses of their news production, the possible alternative ways of reporting the conflict, and the consequence of all this in terms of how the quality of the journalistic practices in this case may be improved. The argument here is that peace journalism can provide a better means of reporting conflict, and can help bring about peaceful solutions.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part explains the background of the research: both contextualising Thailand's southern conflict, and providing a critique on the Thai media and their reporting. The second part sets out the research objectives and the research questions. The third part explores the scope of the research, which includes a brief background of the three case studies and an overview of the two English-language newspapers. The fourth part sums up the content of the subsequent chapters in this thesis.

1.1 Background of the research

Since January 2004, Thailand's three southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat have experienced an upsurge of violence. From January 2004 to January 2015, the region underwent more than 14,741 attacks, resulting in 6,321 fatalities and 11,408 injuries (Deep South Watch Incidents Database 2015). Historically, the three southern provinces were part of the Great Patani until the region was incorporated into the Thai state in the early 20th century. This, however, separated Muslims of Malay descent from the mainstream Malay culture. The vast majority of Muslims in Thailand reside in its southernmost provinces - Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat - which are connected to the Malaysian border.

Although Muslims represent only 4-5 percent of Thailand's population, they constitute the largest religious minority in the country. Most Muslims from the South are Malay in origin and share common ethnic identity, cultures, traditions and religious beliefs with the Malays (Knodel et al. 1999).

The Thai government sought to enforce the assimilation of the Muslim minority into the mainstream Buddhists culture, which caused anger among the southern Muslims, and provided a breeding ground for insurgent activities carried out by armed political groups (McCargo 2006a, 2008; Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu 2006; Croissant 2007). According to Yusuf (2007), the Muslims in the south hold strict Islamic values. They consider Islam as one distinct identity and regard their enforced assimilation by the state as unacceptable. This resulted in the growth of many resistance movements over many decades.

Thailand's southern insurgency is considered to be one of the country's most serious and complicated conflicts. The upswing of violence in 2004 was particularly important in terms of the growing threat posed by radical Islam in the region due to the changing patterns, the scale of well-planned attacks, and the increasing numbers of casualties (Albritton 2010). The Thai government believes that the violence was organised by a minority of extremists, and that social grievances – unemployment, lack of education, limited resources and infrastructure, and drugs problems – were the main factors behind it (Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu 2006). The southern violence has had a large impact on Thai society, and has worsened the relationship between the majority Buddhists and the minority Muslims in Thailand. It has also greatly impacted upon the education, economy and healthcare systems in the southern region.

Many commentators have endeavoured to establish the motivations behind the violence, only to arrive at very different views. Aiewsrivongse (2004) characterised the southern conflict as 21st century peasant rebellions, with no clear and specific purposes or targets. Chakapia (2004 in Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu 2006, p. 111) claimed that the principle cause of the southern conflict is the government's use of forceful means to solve the problem. Wasi (2004 in Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu 2006, p. 111) considered that the motivation was concentrated on issues of conflict, power and religious ethics. Satha-Anand (2006) believed that the root causes were historical. Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu (2006) argued that the attacks were caused not by social problems, but by ideological beliefs.

Separatist movements have been presented in Thailand's southern region for decades, but the current one dates back to 2001. However, the scale of the incidents of 2001-2003 was not as large. In fact, little attention was paid to it until 4 January 2004, which is the media's common reference point for the start of the insurgency. According to Jitpiromsri (2013), from 1993 to 2003, there were 722 recorded insurgency-related incidents, yet fully 3,000 incidents occurred in 2004 alone. Abuza (2009) contended that to date the start of the insurgency to a specific point in 2004 is in part politically motivated and journalistically convenient.

The Campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR) believes that media organisations are key to the resolution of the conflict because these organisations play a vital role in shaping and affecting public perceptions (Deep South Watch 2007). The media inform the public in other parts of the country of the events that occur in the southern border area. The events are reconstructed: journalists convey their version of reality to their audiences, guiding the public's understanding of the situation, and it is difficult for the audiences not to be influenced by the information with which they are presented.

The reporting of the insurgency has been widely criticised by media observers, who believe the coverage is dominated by war journalism (Deep South Watch 2007; Media Monitor 2005). The focus is on elite voices and details of death, injuries and damage, while the voices of local people are hardly heard. The main characteristics of reporting often concentrate on the 'here and now', sensationalising details of the attacks and casualties while ignoring the very deep-rooted dynamics and possible solutions, resulting in widespread assumptions that the problems have been caused by the lack of patriotism among southern Muslims (Media Monitor 2005). These perceptions, arguably influenced to a large extent by the reporting of the situation, are believed to have further widened the gap between the Muslim minority and the rest of the country and inevitably influence the perceptions of the majority of Thais with regard to events in the south.

Media Monitor (2005) found that prejudice against Muslims is overt in Thai newspapers. Voices of those affected by the conflict are often ignored, and southern Muslims are negatively represented in connection to terrorism, insurgency and brutal violence. In other words, if we consider the traditional

formula of 'who, what, where, when, why, and how', the 'why' appears much less frequently than the remainder in coverage of the southern conflict (Ibid.). The 'why' aspect of the reporting is rarely seen because most media people lack the ability to investigate the events they cover.¹ This suggests either an inability or lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Thai press to explore the causes of the incidents.

On the other hand, criticism of the Thai media also comes from the other side. In an anonymous open letter to the Thai media (2013),² the authors, who call themselves 'the freedom fighters of Patani', expressed their resentment over the representation of the southern conflict that reflects "extreme prejudice and biased reporting." The criticism includes: the labelling of the actors as "southern villains or terrorists', the rare opportunities and news spaces they have to express their opinion and communicate with the Thai public, the over-reliance on information from the Thai government, and the provision of one-sided historical facts. From this, the Thai media not only deliver news and information from the southern area to the Thai public but also influence the views and attitude of the society, which is widely perceived as biased and prejudiced.

In the model of peace journalism, the role of the media not only lies in reporting war, but also in helping to foster peace and reduce conflict. Moreover, in the case of Thailand, freedom of the press has been reduced since 2004, when the government increased its control over the media through various means. Such limits in freedom of expression posed major challenges for peace journalism and Thai media practices by limiting access to local sources and forcing journalists to rely mostly on institutional voices for their reportage. It should be stated, though, that despite these limitations, the Thai media continue to be regarded as one of the better organised and freer media in the region (McCargo 2000).

Attempts to improve the quality of the reporting have been made. Media professionals have expressed their concern over such negative representations. They asked the press to be more aware of the consequences of their role, and demanded a change in reporting style (Deep South Watch 2007). The criticism that the Thai media contribute to exacerbating the violence in the south and creating conflict in Thai society led the Thai Journalist Association (TJA) to set up the Issara News Center (INC) in 2005 with the aim of training journalists in reporting the southern conflict in a less biased manner.

Twenty newspapers in Thailand participated, sending reporters and journalists to the INC for courses and workshops.³ The TJA found that most Thai journalists lacked the skill of reporting sensitive issues related to religious, cultural and ethnic conflicts, and that the journalists had limited access to sources in the conflict area (Ruangdit 2007). The training included: promoting the idea of peace journalism, promoting process-based reporting, pairing journalists from Bangkok with local journalists, and raising awareness of the background and history of the conflict.

The INC was a success in the first year. Many Thai newspapers used its resources and it was widely commended on a national scale for its reliable and objective reporting (Ruangdit 2007). However, the political crisis of 2006 interrupted the work of the centre. Journalists were asked to return to Bangkok to work for their newspapers to report the national crisis. Today, the INC has been restructured and is under the Issara News Agency (INA), which is a news agency focused on objective reporting.

Kanwerayothin (2006) studied the performance of the centre by focusing on the coverage of the two hostage incidents in 2005 and 2006, and found that the INC encountered problems in relation to a lack of human resources, capacity, commitment and understanding of peace journalism. Kanwerayothin speculated that, because the idea of peace journalism was still new, many reporters and journalists did not understand it very well, and continued to use war-oriented headlines. This assessment, however, does not mean that peace journalism has failed; rather, it can be viewed that a good start has been made in promoting peace journalism in the practices of the Thai media during the early years of the conflict.

As mentioned before, this research is borne out of my interest in exploring peace journalism in this specific setting. Most studies show that the Thai media have a tendency to support the government's southern administration, which often propose harsh security measures, and ignore the background of the conflict and the voices of the local people. The study thus attempts to investigate the conflict coverage in this specific setting, particularly in the English-language newspapers, to see how the violent incidents were reported during the first year of the current insurgency. The study was carried out by conducting a content analysis of the coverage of two English-language newspapers. Semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors who covered the conflict were also undertaken in order to understand how they characterise the conflict, and to what extent peace journalism can provide a basis for better and more accurate journalistic practices.

1.2 Research objectives and Research questions

The objective is to explore how the Thai media represented Thailand's southern conflict in its first year of occurrence. By analysing news content in the selected newspapers and interviewing people involved in making the news, this study hopes to provide new insights into Thailand's southern conflict and how the conflict is reported. The findings are expected to indicate the problems of conflict reporting in Thailand, and to propose an alternative way of promoting peace journalism. Such journalism is expected to contribute to the understanding about the social responsibility of the media in reducing and not exacerbating the conflict. Further, it is hoped that this study will help inform long-term conflict reduction and reconciliation strategies as well as contributing to the development of the media profession in Thailand in terms of the broader public good. The research questions of this thesis were formed out of these objectives as follows:

RQ1. How has the coverage of the two English newspapers in Thailand (Bangkok Post and The Nation) represented the southern conflict?

RQ2. To what extent do these two newspapers follow war-oriented and/or peace-oriented approaches in covering the southern conflict?

RQ3. What are the journalists and the editors' perceptions of the factors influencing the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict's coverage?

RQ4. What can be an alternative way of covering the conflict in this specific context?

RQ1 and *RQ2* explore how the English language media in Thailand interpreted and represented the southern conflict by analysing the representation of the conflict in their news coverage. To answer these questions, the analysis considers the application of war and/or peace journalism in the news content, which includes an analysis of the news actors, news sources, and the language used in referring to the events and actors. *RQ3* and *RQ4* aim to investigate the journalistic practices, the media environment, and the organisational conventions in the production of the southern conflict news, and to

see how these factors influence/challenge the performance of journalists in reporting the news in this context. These questions were designed to indicate the factors contributing to and challenging the making of news with the hope of finding a possible alternative for covering the conflict. The answers to *RQ3* and *RQ4* will be drawn from the semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors involved.

The details on the theoretical frameworks and methods used in this study will be provided in Chapter 5, Research Methodologies.

1.3 Scope of the research

This section explains the scope of the research, the background of the three case studies, and the significance of those events in order to answer why, of all possible incidents, these three specific events were chosen. The study looks at the performance of the two leading English-language newspapers in Thailand – *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* – with an emphasis on their coverage of three major incidents of violence in 2004. Seven days of coverage will be analysed for each incident. The significance of the three case studies is discussed below.

1.3.1 Three case studies and the significance of the three events

Arsenal raid incident (4th January 2004)

This incident began when hundreds of young men raided an army ammunition depot at Narathiwat Rajanakarin Army Camp in Joh Airong District, Narathiwat Province, and made off with more than 400 weapons, including RPGs, machine guns and rifles, and killed four soldiers at the scene. Twenty schools in 11 districts across the southern region were burnt down on the same day. The attacks, which required specific military skills and training, were considered well-coordinated and well-planned. The incident quickly escalated into large-scale violence, and is generally considered to be the first incident of the current southern insurgency. After the attacks in January, a hard line response including martial law was imposed in the three southernmost regions, and additional army troops were sent there, resulting in up to 30,000 soldiers being based in the area.

Kruese Mosque incident (28th April 2004)

The violence broke out when insurgents launched well-planned attacks on 11 government locations and security checkpoints in Pattani, Yala and Songkhla provinces. After the attacks failed, 32 insurgents, mostly young Muslim teenagers, sought refuge in the Kruese Mosque. The military was later ordered to attack the mosque and gunned down all insurgents. The incident resulted in the death of all 32 insurgents, and great damage to the holiest mosque in the region. This incident caused anger among the Muslims for two major reasons. First, local people believed that the actions of the police and the military represented an insult to Islam by attacking their holiest and most sacred mosque. Second, because those young militants were poorly armed (most of them carried only machetes) and died in consequence of an order to kill, they came to be regarded as martyrs (*shahid*). Thai authorities reported that 108 insurgents and five security officials were killed in this incident, and an additional 17 insurgents were arrested. The religious overtone of the incident symbolised the fracture between the Buddhist Thais and the Muslim Thais in the country, and is believed to have generated more mistrust between the two communities.

Takbai demonstration incident (25th October 2004)

On 25th October 2004, around 2,000 people, mostly Muslim youths, demonstrated in the district of Takbai, Narathiwat Province. The demonstration was held against martial law and to demand the release of six Muslim youths, arrested by the police under accusation of involvement in supplying weapons to the militants.

Tensions arose when the authorities failed to negotiate with the protesters and the police called for army reinforcements. The security personnel used gunfire and teargas to control the situation, seven demonstrators were killed by gunshots. Later that day, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested. The army ordered their shirts to be taken off, and for them to be bound with their hands tied behind their backs. The demonstrators were then thrown into trucks in order to take them away for interrogation at the Army Camp in Pattani, approximately 4 hours away. They were stacked five or six deep in the unventilated trucks. By the time they reached their destination, 78 of them had died from suffocation, making 85 deaths in total. The Takbai incident was considered as the bloodiest clash since a new wave

of separatist insurgency had been launched in Thailand's southern region in January 2004 (The Nation 2005).

Significance of the three events

The southern insurgency represents a pressing concern for the whole ASEAN community (ICG 2005). The violent incidents posed challenges not only to the Thai government on national security issues, but also to the Thai media and their reporting on the long-lasting national conflict, which concerns the ethnic and religious beliefs of the a minority.

The three major incidents in 2004 were selected because they were internationally known and were considered to be the most serious events of 2004, which was the year that represented the start of the current southern insurgency. Moreover, the Kruese Mosque incident and Takbai demonstration incident also brought into question human rights issues, and the Thai government was widely criticised by international forums such as Human Rights Watch and the United Nations Human Rights Council. The Takbai demonstration incident caused worldwide uproar and condemnation, and had a particular impact on the relationship between Thailand and neighbouring Muslim countries given its religious connotations (Human Rights Watch 2007; Asian Human Rights Commission 2009). Stating that no other incident could match the scale of the Kruese and Takbai incidents, McCargo (2008, p. 3) described them as "the two worst days of violence", which greatly undermined the legitimacy of the state and boosted the militant movement.

For the purposes of this study, an examination of how the arsenal raid incident was reported can help demonstrate how the two English language newspapers treated the first outburst of the insurgency, while an analysis of the two subsequent events can illustrate how the newspapers reported events when the insurgency was at its peak.

1.3.2 Background: *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

This research focuses on the two English-language newspapers because these are the main 'quality' newspapers in the country, which, despite modest circulations compared to the Thai-language newspapers, are considered to wield a disproportionately powerful influence in shaping public opinion

(Prado 2010). The newspapers are widely read by the country's middle and upper class citizens, including the political elite and opinion leaders. Furthermore, international news organisations draw on the resources of these two newspapers for their own reporting of the southern conflict. As a result, the way in which these newspapers reported the events can influence how the world understood and responded to the situation.

A pragmatic consideration for the choice also needs to be mentioned: copies of the English language newspapers were easily attainable, and the use of Thai language newspapers may create problems of inaccurate translation when translated into English for the analysis. A brief background of the two newspapers is provided as follows. (See more details in Chapter 3, the Thai mediascape)

Bangkok Post

Bangkok Post was founded by Alexander McDonald, an American editor, and his Thai associate, Prasit Lulitanond, in 1946. It is staffed with a mix of foreigners, and is considered a conservative press.⁴

Bangkok Post now belongs to Post Publishing Public Co. Ltd, whose main activity is the publication and distribution of English daily newspapers, magazines and books. Post Publishing's main publication is *Bangkok Post*, which has a circulation of 80,000 copies a day, and holds 55% of the market (Forum-Asia 2005). Post Publishing's newspapers also include: *Post Today* (a Thai-language business daily newspaper), *Student Weekly* (a weekly English-language newspaper for students), and *M2F* (a Monday to Friday Thai newspaper on urban lifestyles). Its digital media include the *Bangkok Post* website, *Post Today* websites and M2Fjob.com (Post Publishing 2013). Compared to *The Nation*, *Bangkok Post* is a smaller organisation, with a less complicated system of news production.

The Nation

The Nation was founded in 1971 by Thai editors, Suthichai Yoon, Thammanoon Mahapaoraya and ML Sunida Kittiyakara. The newspaper underwent significant change in 1991 after it hired a team of journalists who left *Bangkok Post* over reporting principles. It has a reputation of being liberal-minded, and has presented itself as an alternative English-language newspaper.⁵ It is currently operated by Nation Multimedia Group Plc, one of the biggest media organisations in Thailand, and has a daily circulation of 70,000 copies, with a market share of 45% (Forum Asia 2005).

The Nation Group's main business involves the publication and distribution of magazines and newspapers, production of books for English education, production of television and radio programmes, and supervision of *The Nation's* official news website. Its printed materials include the *Daily Express* (English), *Krunthep Turakij* (a Thai business newspaper), *Kom Chad Luk* (a Thai newspaper), *Nation Channel* (Thai & English TV), *Nation Radio* (Thai), *Nation Weekend* (Thai news), *NJ* (*Nation Junior*), *Connect*, *Biz Book*, *Biz Week*, *Phuket Gazette*, and *OK Nation*.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction explains the background of the research including its objectives, research questions, and scope of the research.

Chapter 2: Thailand's Southern Conflict: History and Current Situation explains the background and history of the ongoing conflict, looking at both past rebellions, and the rise of the current insurgency. The chapter later focuses on the year 2004 and the major incidents that occurred during that year. The chapter explains the theories behind the causes and the return of the violence from different perspectives, and ends with an overview of both the current situation and prospects for the future.

Chapter 3: The Thai Mediascape summarises the history of journalism in Thailand, with a focus on the Thai print media and English-language newspapers. The chapter explains the background of the two English-language newspapers under scrutiny, *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*. It also presents a critique of the Thai media, and the problems with the reportage of the southern conflict, and how these led to the establishment of the Issara News Center (INC) in a bid to introduce peace journalism into journalistic practices in Thailand.

Chapter 4: The Literature Review on Peace Journalism examines the concept of conflict reporting, and focuses on the problems posed by war journalism. Later, it advocates peace journalism as an alternative means of conflict reporting, which emphasises the socially responsible role of the media. The literature review on peace journalism includes discussions and criticisms as well as its application to the

reporting on several conflicts from different parts of the world. The chapter ends with the discussions on the practice of peace journalism in the context of Thailand's southern conflict and its literature.

Chapter 5: Research Methodologies: Content Analysis and Semi-structured Interview provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks and the methods of the study. The chapter justifies why the two methods – a content analysis and a semi-structured interview – are suitable for this inquiry, and how they can provide answers to the research questions. The theoretical frameworks that inform the research methods are presented and discussed. A brief overview of the two methods and how they are applied for this research are presented, and the methodological limitations of the study are provided.

Chapter 6: The Representation of the Southern Conflict in News Coverage presents the findings from a content analysis of the two English-language newspapers to answer the question of how the conflict was reported. This chapter illustrates how the news coverage of the southern conflict supports specific elements of war and peace journalism. The empirical analysis reveals the prevailing war and peace journalism elements and frames, the dominant news actors and news sources, and the use of language to characterise the events and the actors of the incidents. Later, the comparison of the findings between the two newspapers under scrutiny are presented and discussed.

Chapter 7: The Study of the Production of the Southern Conflict News puts forth the findings from semi-structured interviews. The chapter summarises main points derived from the interviews with some of the journalists and editors involved. The main points include: the perception of the conflict, the process of the production of the southern conflict news, the policy of the two newspapers in the production of the southern conflict news, and limitations in the news production process. The chapter later presents the recommendations for better journalistic practices in this context as proposed by the interviewees.

Chapter 8: Conclusions provides a summary of the key answers to the research questions, including conclusions and discussions of major issues arising from this research. The chapter explains the significance of the study and the implications of the study for future research. The chapter ends with

the recommendations for the Thai media with regard to how the quality of its conflict reporting can be improved.

Chapter 2

Thailand's Southern Conflict: History and the Current Situation

Islamic insurgent movements have been a focus of domestic and regional concern in Southeast Asia for many years, with campaigns in Indonesia's Aceh, the Philippines' Mindanao, and Thailand's south all providing examples of this. In the cases of Thailand and the Philippines, the movements occurred in countries where Muslims are not in the majority (Chalk 2001; Rabasa 2003). As Rabasa (2003) noted, the conflicts are derived from the disaffection of the Muslims in areas that used to be independent, but are now part of non-Muslim majority states: a source of discontent intensified by feelings of socio-economic and political grievance. According to Funston (2008), Thailand used to represent a good example of the successful integration of the Muslim minority. However, the situation has changed considerably since early 2004, with the problems still ongoing today.

Thailand has experienced insurgencies from the Muslim minority for over 100 years. However, the current wave of violence is different in many ways. First, the degree and scope of violence is hitherto unmatched. Innocent people, both Buddhists and Muslims, have been killed; with the methods of killing becoming professional, military-like and very well planned. Second, the incidents occurred in order to provoke fear amongst the general public (Abuza 2009, 2011). The insurgency greatly impacted upon the education, healthcare, economy and infrastructure of the region, and also brought into sharp focus issues regarding human rights, corruption and democracy. Most fundamentally, though, this insurgency grew out of the antipathy of Malay Muslims to the Thai state, and created huge divisions within one nation.

This chapter, then, explains the complex background and history of Thailand's southern conflict. It begins by detailing the history of the conflict: from the creation of the Thai nation to exploring past rebellions and the rise of the current insurgency. Details of major incidents in 2004 and a brief summary of violent situations between 2004 and 2014 are provided. Later, the chapter draws upon theories regarding the causes of the conflict and its resolution. It ends with a summary of the current situations, and an outlook for the future.

2. 1 The history of the southern conflict

This section explores the history of the southern conflict, from the incorporation of the former Malaysian state of 'Patani' into the Thai state, and then looks into Thai-nation building, especially the policy of assimilating the Muslim minority into Thai culture, which is believed to be the main cause of the past rebellions.

2.1.1 The history of 'Patani': from 'Patani' to 'Pattani'

The history of conflict and tension in Thailand's southern region can be traced back over a century. The three southernmost provinces formed part of the Great Patani after the fifteenth century before being incorporated into the Thai nation in the early 20th century. Patani was a Malay sultanate and centre of Islam in Southeast Asia. In ancient times, it represented a centre of Islamic learning, culture, diversity, and trade, and was a major power in the Malayan Peninsula (Suhrke 1970; Le roix 1998; Cline 2007; Funston 2008; Montesano and Jory 2008; Abuza 2009; Liow 2009). However, while 'Pattani' refers to a modern Thai province, 'Patani' carries Malay nationalist connotations, and refers both to the historic sultanate and its wider area, including territories divided administratively today into the province of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and adjacent parts of Songkhla (McCargo 2008; Montesano and Jory 2008). The name 'Patani' is still used by the Malay Muslims in support of the independence and autonomy of the region (Funston 2008; Abuza 2009; Liow 2009).

Between the Ayuddhaya and early Bangkok periods, Patani was a self-governed tributary state. While Thai historians claim that it was always a vassal state to Siam, Malay historians argue that it used to be an independent sultanate (McCargo 2008). Some historians suggest that Patani was under the rule of Ayuddhaya only when it was weak. However, the tributary relationship of the traditional Southeast Asian states was not that of colonies. Instead, the tributary states retained their autonomy, rule and ownership of their land: power was in local hands, meaning that the people enjoyed both freedom and protection (Puaksom 2008).

Siam first intervened directly in the internal affairs of Patani when appointing its new governor. The relationship between Siam and Patani changed dramatically in the early Bangkok period at the time of King Rama II: when the status of the latter metamorphosed from tributary state to 'provincial city of

Siam' (Ibid.). Consequently, Siam was able to control, manipulate and appoint Patani's government. As Puaksom (2008, p. 77) noted, Patani had now completely "lost its sovereignty and its tributary status".

Under King Rama V (King Chulalongkorn), great administrative reforms centralised Bangkok's power at the time of Western colonialism: when Britain was expanding its influence and power over the Malaysian Peninsula (Aphornsuvan 2007, 2008; Puaksom 2008). Patani came under Thai rule as a result of administrative centralisation in 1902: confirmed by the signing of the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909, when Siam was forced to give up the four southern Malay states – Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu – in order to preserve its independence.⁶ As a result, Patani was bound within the modern territorial state: borders were fixed, power was centralised, and Patani now found itself an integral part of the Siamese state (Puaksom 2008). The dissatisfaction of Malay Muslims started to grow in consequence.

The reforms aimed to decentralise the old power of the southern region by reorganising Patani into seven districts under a single administrative collective unit called '*monthon Pattani*' (a group of provinces), governed by officials from Bangkok. These included: the removal of the rajas and aristocrats of Patani and their replacement with Thai bureaucrats, tax concessions, the replacement of traditional law with the Siamese legal code, and the introduction of a new educational system (Aphornsuvan 2007). King Rama V also recommended that the 'Thai-isation' policy be launched in order to prepare the officials who would take posts in the area, with the aim that they would eventually become Thai both in mind and manners (Puaksom 2008). Thailand was then highly centralised, with all of its provinces administered by Bangkok-elected officials (McCargo 2008).

In reference to the Malay Muslims of Patani, Syukri (1985 cited by Aphornsuvan 2007, p. 29) stated that 1902 was regarded as "The year of the ultimate fall of the country of Patani, the loss of the sovereignty of its rajas, the destruction of the right of suzerainty of the Malays in the country of Patani." The Thai state then had full rights and power over the former Patani region; hardly surprisingly, this was strongly opposed by Patani's leaders (Le Roix 1998; Puaksom 2008). That said, the cultural and social identities of the Malay Muslims were largely unaffected: "The Thai government divided the area into seven provinces which were governed by appointed bureaucrats under a centralized administrative

structure, but still managed dissidence more or less by leaving the Muslims alone” (Croissant 2007, p.2). However, the Thai state gradually began to push the creation of Thai national identity for Malay Muslims, especially in 1921, when the national curriculum was first used in the region (Abuza 2009).

2.1.2 The Thai nation building and the Thai-nisation of the Malay Muslims

The incorporation into the Thai state of the former Patani region separated Muslims of Malay descent from Malay culture. The Thai government sought to forcibly assimilate the Muslim minority into mainstream Buddhist and Thai culture. The assimilation policy changed the Malay Muslims’ way of life, and they had to endure pressure from the Thai state while seeking to preserve their religious and cultural identity (Aphornsuvan 2007; Abuza 2009). Suhrke (1977) highlighted the Malay Muslims as an example of the dilemmas of a small minority group faced with a majority-directed integration policy.

The three pillars of Thai national identity – ‘Nation, Religion and Monarchy’ – provide a reminder that the structure of Thai society was created specifically to dilute other ethnic identities, and instead celebrate Buddhism as the national religion (Liow 2009). As we have seen, the ongoing southern conflict is largely a result of Thai nation-building through policies which caused a great deal of anger and resentment among the Muslim minority. As Aphornsuvan (2008, p. 94) stated:

“Political conflict and violence between the minorities and the state often come as a result of state expansion, which attempted to introduce the values and institutions of the dominant ethnic group into minority communities and made the majority ‘national’ culture a prerequisite for full entry to the nation.”

The Thai state now had more control over Muslim minority issues, resulting in growing resentment and hostility among that minority towards it. Education, especially in the Thai language, represented a vital means with which to enforce the assimilation policy – so much so that there is now almost total literacy in Thai among the Muslim population. This includes funding and instruction in secular subjects within the framework of Muslim religious schools (Albritton 1999). Compulsory state education was first implemented in 1921; followed by the closing of Islamic schools, which led to deep resistance to both the study of the Thai language and the government itself.

According to McCargo (2008, p. 5), Malay Muslims viewed the state educational system as "an agent of assimilation intended to eradicate their Malayness." Moreover, the intervention of local rules and customs meant that hitherto cherished institutions such as *masjid* and *pondok* (traditional Malay religious schools) were replaced with central rules and regulations.⁷ All of this fostered growing anger and resentment amongst southern Muslims, sowing the seeds of a breeding ground for the insurgent activities of armed political groups in subsequent decades (McCargo 2006a, 2008; Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu 2006).

In June 1932, the system of absolute monarchy was overthrown and replaced with one of a 'Constitutional Monarchy.' The system of *monthon*⁸ was abolished; and Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun were incorporated into Siam. A change to the system of 'constitutional monarchy' brought with it a little hope to the Muslim minority, because it allowed them to practice their rights and gain recognition under Thai democracy (Ishii 1994).

Nevertheless, the Muslim minorities had to endure further hardship during the Second World War, when they faced economic deprivation and severe insecurity, while corruption among government officials led them to lose hope in the Thai government. The Second World War also gave rise to Thai Nationalism, with the Phibun government implementing a strict Thai-nisation policy, a policy of nation-building based solely on the Thai race. Phibun aimed to reform and reconstruct the social and cultural aspects of the country to create what he regarded as modern and civilised practices, but this allowed for little tolerance of minority and local cultures.⁹

The policy of nation-building included the creation of a national history, and in tandem, the removal of most local histories: including the history of the Malay Muslims. Malay Muslims and other ethnic groups "were labeled as minorities and were forced to relinquish their own cultural and religious practices in order to become Thais" (Aphornsuvan 2007, p. 11). The terms 'Southern Thais' and 'Islamic Thais' were employed as a result of this policy, which aimed to tone down the distinctiveness of ethnic Malays, and to emphasise the Thai-ness of the Muslim minorities. In other words, although Thailand was willing to tolerate religious differences, it did not consider that there should be other important differences among its citizens (Aphornsuvan 2007; Funston 2008).

Under Phibun's government, the Muslim minority endured its most severe amounts of political oppression, resulting in the emergence of the radicalisation movement of the Malay Muslims (Aphornsuvan 2007, p. 43). The most sensitive change involved the abolition of Islamic judges and Islamic laws relating to family (especially marriage, divorce and inheritance law) in 1944, and their replacement with Thai civil laws (Ibid.) Chaloemkiat (2004 cited in Aphornsuvan 2008, p. 108) asserted that "the most disturbing were Thai attempts to convert Muslims to Buddhism". Phibun's administration attempted to forcibly assimilate the Malay Muslim minority by discriminating against Malay language and culture for the sake of Thai nationalism.¹⁰

In 1945, following the Second World War, the government of Khuang Aphaiwong implemented the Islamic Patronage Act of 1945, with the aim of restoring the south and reforming Phibun's policies (Aphornsuvan 2007). The new policies included: the reform of Islamic affairs, the reappointment of *Chularatchamontri*,¹¹ the restoration of Islamic family law, and of the rights to observe Friday as a religious holiday. This is considered to have represented a positive development in the relationship between the Muslim minority and the Thai state. As Scupin (1998, p. 35) stated: "Through the Patronage Act the '*ulamd*', the mosque councils, and the *madrasas* were centralized under the authority of the Chularajmontri... The Chularajmontri would advise the monarchy and be considered the spiritual leader of the Muslims in Thailand."

The brief period between 1945 and 1947 represented the beginning of an open dialogue between the two; however, such patronage policies could not stop growing Malay Muslim nationalist sentiment and disaffection from the Thai rule (Aphornsuvan 2008). Forbes (1982, p. 1067) considered that, following the Phibun period, the new government gradually became aware of the need to reach the Muslim minority. It emphasised Thailand's religious plurality, and that Muslims were expected to act as loyal Thai citizens. Thus an attempt to negotiate and bring the Malay Muslims under Thai patronage was made. For example, a commission was sent in 1947 to investigate the situation in the south and provide sympathetic support to the Muslims (Aphornsuvan 2008). In that year, the Provincial Islamic Council of Pattani, led by Haji Sulong, had drafted a 'seven-point demand' concerning political rule and the rights and religious affairs of the Muslims.¹²

The government could not accept all the demands, especially the idea that a particular ethnic group could demand separate rights or regional autonomy. The most that it could do was accept that the Muslim minority could become part of the Thai nation as 'Thai-Muslims' (Aphornsuvan 2008, p.112). However, the subsequent coming to power of the 'Revolutionary Party' (*Khana Patiwat*) resulted in more troubles for the Malay Muslims. The seven-point demand was ignored: all hope of dialogue with the government was now at an end (Aphornsuvan 2008, p.115). With the subsequent government when Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat came to power, the conflict instead intensified, with the assimilation policy strengthened through the resettlement of ethnic Thais in the South, and the assertion of control over Islamic religious schools (Funston 2008). This resulted in the emergence of Malay organisations such as BNNP (1959), BRN (1960) and PULO (1968)¹³ (Forbes 1982; Scupin 1998; Cline 2007; Funston 2008).

PULO (The Patani United Liberation Organization) was the largest and most prominent active separatist organisation during the 1990s but has since lost its influence as a result of effective government action and declining support from Malaysia (Chalk 2001; Rabasa 2003). These groups, as Reynolds (2004, p. 11) stated, "have called for the provinces to be incorporated into Malaysia. They complain of heavy-handed treatment from the police and armed forces but stress that most Muslims want only respect for their culture and peace in the region." After decades of oppression, the Muslim minority had now started to act against the Thai state by setting up organisations with the political goal of negotiating with the government.¹⁴

2.1.3 The Muslim minority

The vast majority of Muslims in Thailand reside in its southernmost provinces - Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat – which are adjacent to the Malaysian border. Although Muslims represent only 4-5% of the Thai population, they constitute the largest religious minority in the country and differ significantly from wider Thai society (Knodel et al. 1999). Thai Muslims are not homogeneous, but they do all share faith in Islam.¹⁵ The majority are *Sunnis* following *Shafi* schools (Bajunid 2005). Thai Muslims are comprised of 'Malay Muslims', who speak Malay and reside primarily in the southern border provinces, and 'Thai Muslims' (or *Thai Islam*), who reside in central and north Thailand. Historically, the Muslims of south Thailand resided in a cultural region embedded within Malay culture, whereas the Muslims of

central and north Thailand have been influenced by Buddhist traditions, thus making it easier for them to assimilate into Thai culture (Scupin 1998).

After 1902, when Pattani became a Thai province, the distinction between the Muslim minorities from the former Patani and Thai Muslims from other parts of the country became more obvious (Aphornsuvan 2007, p. 10). The Malay Muslims call themselves '*Jawi*': a term which has long been used by the inhabitants of old Patani in order to designate themselves (Le Roix 1998). Most Muslims from the south are Malay in origin: sharing a common ethnic identity, language, culture, traditions and religious beliefs resembling those of the Malays. McCargo (2008, p. 5) noted that the southern region is distinguished by "an intense regional pride and a profound religiosity."

In this sense, their Malayness is not merely racial or ethnic, but is instead the faith which binds the Muslims altogether (Ibid.). They hold strictly Islamic values and regard Islam as one distinct identity (Yusuf 2007; McCargo 2008; Liow 2009). They consider themselves as Malays, as Muslims, as people of Patani; and in all three distinct identities, clearly distinguish Muslims in the south from the rest of Thailand (McCargo 2008). To the Muslims, Islam is more than just a religion: it is also a religious system, way of life, ideology and form of civilisation.

For this reason, the preservation of their identity has become the principal task – individual and communal – necessary to maintain their practice of Islam (Bajunid 2005; Yusuf 2007). Yusuf (2007, p. 321) referred to the uniqueness of the Malay Muslims as 'ethno-religious Islam': they place a very strong emphasis on the ethnic aspect of their faith, give primacy to their ethnic identity, and view their life experience from the perspective of religious aspects. In this sense, ethnicity and religion cannot be separated, resulting in the formation of an 'ethnicised view of Islam' (Ibid.).

The Muslim population maintains quite an ambiguous position in Thai society, with their customs, language and religion marking them out as an ethnic minority (Suhrke 1970). Around 80% of Malay Muslims have never been assimilated culturally and psychologically into predominantly Buddhist Thailand (McCargo 2008). Not only do they carry a strong sense of religious identity, but they also live as a minority in a non-Muslim state where the identities between them and the majority overlap,

particularly as a consequence of assimilation or integration policies (Bajunid 2005). However, instead of initiating a military and political struggle against the Thai Buddhist state, more Muslims have strengthened their religious ties and are involved in revitalising their Islamic identity (Scupin 1998, p. 255).

While other minority groups can merge within the main Thai society by using the common Thai language, Malay Muslims have found it harder to blend in. Most have little knowledge of Thai language. According to Aphornsuvan (2007), older generations of Malay Muslims do not want to learn Thai for fear of becoming Buddhists. They speak the *Yawi* dialect, not Thai. Normally, those who speak Thai are considered as thoroughly integrated citizens, whereas those Malay-speaking Muslims are considered not as aliens, but as a minority within Thailand (Albritton 1999, p. 237). As Albritton (1999, p. 244) highlighted, "It is precisely this level of integration and sense of 'Thai-ness' that permits the luxury of political competition within the Muslim community." In other words, the level of integration of Muslims into Thai society depends largely on the extent to which they integrate Thai culture and language.

The Thai-nisation of the Malay Muslims was, then, considered as a threat to the fundamental tenets of Islamic life and culture, especially when it came to enforcing education on the part of the Thai government. However, the low education standard of the Malay Muslims led them to experience economic deprivation and unemployment (Suhrke 1970). Smythe (1960, p. 282) noted that the government effectively treated Malay Muslims as colonial subjects: Thai officials from Bangkok, who do not speak their language, had to use interpreters to talk with them in the same way as colonial powers communicated with their colonies.

The growing difficulties facing Malay Muslims in Thailand have also occurred in tandem with material and moral advantages being enjoyed by the majority Muslim population in neighbouring Malaysia (Le Roix 1998). Not unnaturally, this caused immediate resentment among Malay Muslims, who felt a sense of profound deprivation in comparison with their Islamic neighbours across the border (Scupin 1998). As a result, many Malay Muslims hold dual nationality, and they see Malaysia as an alternative where they can find work or seek exile in (McCargo 2008).

The perception of Malay Muslims is that they were colonised by Siam, treated as second-class citizens, and regarded as inferior because of the discrimination imposed from Bangkok by ethnic Thai officials (Funston 2008). Nonetheless, Albritton (2010) argued differently, claiming that most devout Muslims in the region consider that the state sufficiently accommodates the Muslim minority, and has granted all of the essentials necessary for Muslim life.¹⁶

2.2 The history of the past rebellions

The first violent clash between the Muslim minority and the Thai authority occurred in 1922 when the Muslims refused to pay land taxes to the government. The cause of this rebellion stemmed from the use of the Compulsory Primary Education Act, which required all Malay Muslim children to attend Thai primary school (Aphornsuvan 2008). This rebellion caused King Rama VI to revise Islamic learning and taxation of the Malay Muslims in the south (Ibid.). This showed that the Thai authorities had become aware of the emerging sense of Malay Nationalism in the southern region (Ibid.). The accession of the new constitutional government in 1932 changed the situation for Malay Muslims, with the constitution providing the opportunity for them to enjoy a public space in which to speak their needs. The tensions between them and the Thai authorities thus reduced for a brief period, though mistreatment by the ministerial and provincial government still existed (Ibid.).

However, the 1932 constitution gave an opportunity to the Muslim leaders to criticise the government's policy and its authority: such criticism was considered unacceptable by government officials. The Thai officials sent from Bangkok to the south were those considered as incompetent and those involved in illegal business and corruption (Funston 2008). As Aphornsuvan (2008) noted, complaints and petitions regarding the cruelty and unjust practices of the Thai officials, particularly the police, were also regularly being made and organised. This period marked the rise of Haji Sulong, the Muslim leader who started to negotiate with the government, and who was considered a symbol of the Malay Muslims' struggle against the Thai state.¹⁷

Sulong provided an example of the willingness of Muslim leaders to enter dialogue and negotiate with the Thai government. The resistance movement was mostly a reaction to the government's mishandling

of the conditions in the south (Ibid. p.122). Sulong and his associates were later arrested and charged with treason. His arrest offended Muslim sensibilities so much that a huge crowd of Malay Muslims gathered at the court for his trial.

This later resulted in a clash between the police and Malay Muslims in the 'Duson ngor rebellion' of 1948.¹⁸ The event represented the turning point of the whole conflict, and was swiftly followed by the Khuang government's rejection of the seven-point demand posted by Sulong. Aphornsuvan (2007, p.46) stated that the government used Sulong "to justify systematic suppression of the Muslim opposition" and Sulong was a significant figure in the revival of Malay nationalism at the time of the birth of democracy in Thailand, signifying the transition from the old raja to the new generation.

2.3 The rise of the current insurgency

This section looks into the beginning of the current southern conflict violence from the peaceful era to the first wave of violence in 2004, with the main focus on the three major incidents in 2004. This section ends with a summary of the violent incidents over the past ten years.

2.3.1 The peaceful era

Outbreaks of violence then declined greatly between the 1980s and 1990s, due to a number of contributory factors. These included the establishment of new conflict resolution institutions, such as SBPAC (1981) or CPM43 (1980);¹⁹ more conciliatory security measures; wider understandings of cultural pluralism; better understanding on the part of government leaders; and improved relations with Malaysia (Funston 2008). The new policy included 1981's *Tai Rom Yen* (Peaceful South) Project, overseen by Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond. Croissant (2007, p.2) underscored that: "It was not until General Prem Tinsulanonda became prime minister in March 1980 that the government enacted any serious attempts to bring order to the reigning chaos."

General Prem's government (1980–88) supported Muslim cultural rights and religious freedoms, offered the insurgents a general amnesty, and implemented an economic development plan for the South (Ibid.). At the time, attitudes towards ethnic minorities had changed from assimilation to integration: a new concept of 'Thainess' included the celebration of cultural differences, local history

and knowledge, and greater religious freedom including the use of Islamic names and the building of public prayer rooms (Funston 2008). Muslim representatives also at last started to play roles in Thai politics.

2.3.2 The year 2004: escalation of the insurgency

Violence resumed in 2001, when attacks on police outposts, episodes of arson, and organised weapon thefts increased; however, the scale of the attacks was much smaller in comparison with the events of 2004. According to Jitpiromsri (2013), from 1993 to 2003, there were 722 records of insurgency-related incidents. In comparison, fully 3,000 incidents occurred in 2004 alone. As a result, 2004 was marked as the start of the current insurgency when violent incidents increased in terms of the number of victims and the scale of the attacks. However, the violent events were confined to the area of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkhla (see Figure 2.1 and 2.2).



Figure 2.1: Map of regions affected by low-intensity conflict in Thailand's Deep South (Source: McCargo 2009a, p. 55).

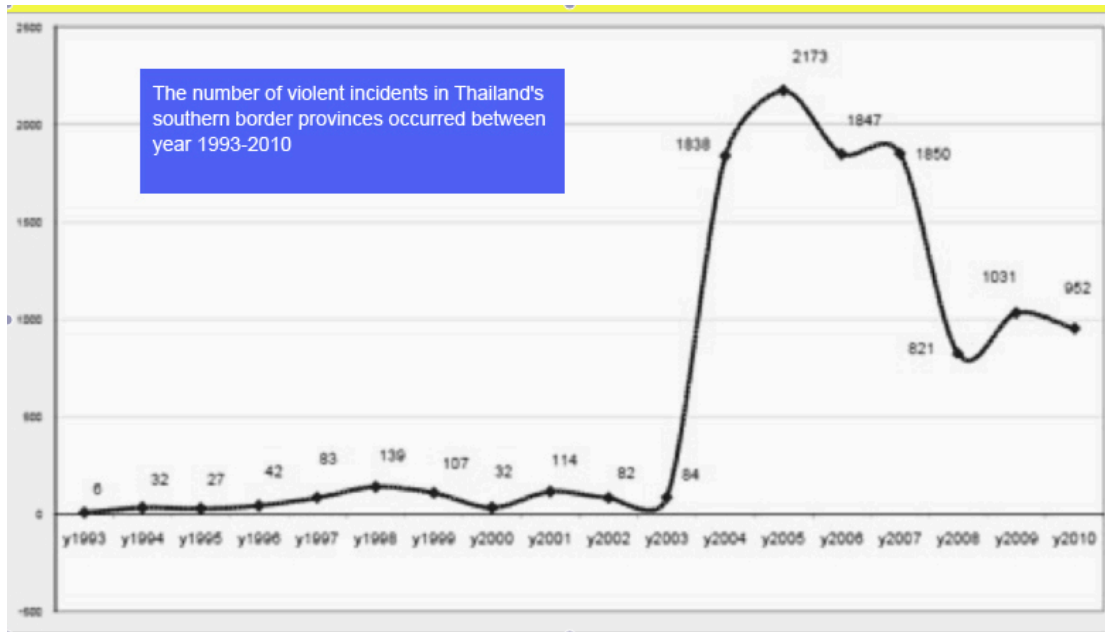


Figure 2.2: The number of violent incidents in Thailand's southern border provinces occurred between 1993 and 2010. (Source: Deep South Watch, 2012, 4 April 2012. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3077> [Accessed 18 November 2014].

Figure 2.2 indicates that the number of violent incidents occurring prior to the year 2004 was considerably low, while the number of violent incidents in the year 2004 was twenty times higher than in 2003, making it a remarkable year for the current insurgency. Abuza (2009, p.53) stated that activities from 2001-2003 were of a level low enough to merely blend into the overall criminality of the region, but to date the start of the insurgency to a specific point in 2004 is in part "politically motivated and journalistically convenient." In this sense, the raid on the army camp in January 2004 marked the rise of the current southern conflict, and provided the common media reference point for the start of the insurgency.

Assassinations, shootings, bombings and arson attacks on temples, schools and government buildings now began to occur on a daily basis (Albritton 2010). The Thai state struggled to comprehend an insurgency which could not be identified in any organised form. It featured no leadership, nor any clear political objectives (unlike in the cases of the separatist movements in the Philippines and Indonesian Aceh). Some scholars are sceptical as to whether the current insurgency will become internationalised and transformed into any kind of regional or global jihad (Connor 2006, p.153). However, the Thai government often downplays the political motives of the insurgency, stating that violent incidents are

the result of ordinary crime.²⁰

2.3.2.1 Major incidents in 2004

Since January 2004, a low-level insurgency has developed into a full-scale campaign of violence. For the first time, a religious aspect of the conflict was highlighted by the killing of Buddhist monks and innocent local Buddhists. As a result, the killings of monks in the Muslim-dominated area has worsened the relationship between Buddhists and Muslims in the country.

The three major events of 2004 involved the arsenal raid (4th January), Kruese Mosque incident (28th April), and Takbai incident (25th October). McCargo (2008) believed that all three major incidents were designed to discredit and humiliate the Thai state and to worsen the relationship between the Thai state and the Muslim minority. The first incident, McCargo (2008) argued, highlighted the complacency and incompetence of the Thai army; the second bore witness to the excessive eagerness of the Thai authorities to violate the ancient Kruse Mosque; and the third demonstrated the cruelty of the security forces. All three major incidents in 2004 were selected for this research because they played an important role in the rise of the current southern insurgency. The details of each incident are provided in the following section.

Arsenal raid incident (4th January 2004)

An unexpected raid on the Fourth Development Battalion's Narathiwat Army Camp is generally viewed as marking the beginning of the current southern insurgency. The incident started when hundreds of young men burnt down 20 schools across the region and raided an army ammunition depot in Narathiwat Province. They made off with more than 400 weapons, including RPGs, machine guns and rifles and killed four soldiers at the scene. In Yala, attackers burnt rubber tyres and planted fake explosives on the roads.

These were very well-planned attacks, which required military skills and training. The government admitted that the attacks were well coordinated. Moreover, the incident contained a religious overtone when Buddhist soldiers were separated from Muslim soldiers and killed (The Nation, 7 January 2004).

Prime Minister Thaksin criticised the soldiers for negligence and expressed emotionally that those soldiers “deserved to die”, drawing much criticism from the Thai public for his comments.

After the arsenal raid incident, the situation deteriorated, and daily killings increased. Victims included innocent local people. Attacks were made against monks, Buddhist temples, and even local Muslims who associated with the Thai government. The killing of monks brought religious aspects into the picture. The government employed a hard-line response, implementing martial law in the three provinces and deploying additional army troops. Some 30,000 soldiers were stationed in the region. The police and army tightened up their security measures, and, according to Funston (2008), some 200 suspected Malay Muslim insurgents were abducted by security forces. Between 4th January and 27th April 2004 (the period between the arsenal raid and the Kruese Mosque incidents), attacks were quite limited and remarkable in their lack of sophistication (Abuza 2009). Only five bombings and three arson attacks occurred, resulting in 31 dead and 42 wounded. The victims were mostly government officials.

Kruese mosque incident (28th April 2004)

This incident occurred when a group of young Muslim men planned coordinated attacks on police posts at 11 government locations and security checkpoints in Pattani, Yala and Songkhla provinces. After the attacks failed, 32 militants, mostly young Muslim teenagers, sought refuge in the Kruese mosque, which local Muslims regarded as the holiest mosque in the region. The eight-hour conflict ended when the military was ordered to attack the mosque, and gunned down all attackers, killing all 32 Muslims and greatly damaging the mosque.

In total, 108 attackers and five security personnel were killed and 17 were arrested on that day.

Although the government sought to downplay the incidents by calling the attackers ‘local bandits’, the attacks were nonetheless well coordinated. The independent commission conducted by the National Reconciliation Centre (NRC), which was set up to investigate the incident, found that the authorities “failed to launch genuine negotiations for the surrender of the militants.”²¹

The incident provoked both a controversial military and police response, and huge anger among the Muslims. Local people believed that the actions of the police and military amounted to an insult to Islam: their holiest, most sacred mosque had been desecrated. Moreover, of the 108 attackers killed and 17 arrested, most were poorly armed teenagers who died as a result of a shoot-to-kill order. Although the events took place at various locations across the region, the Thai public named it the 'Kruese' incident after the name of the mosque. The bodies of the dead Muslim men were buried unwashed and without prayer. Thus, they have come to be viewed by local Muslims as *shahid* (martyrs). Moreover, the fact that the Army stormed the mosque and killed the Muslim attackers inside raised religious issues in Thai society. As Satha-anand (2006, p. 33) noted, the sanctity of the mosque was violated, and "the political cost of such an act in the eyes of Muslims, both in Thailand and abroad, has turned out to be almost incalculable."

After the attacks, the army found printed material entitled '*Berjihad di Pattani*' (The Struggle for Patani)²² on one of the bodies, which arguably signifies the arrival of radical Islam in the region. Some scholars proposed that the Kruese incident and *Dusun ngor* uprising of 1948 are symbolically connected.²³ The religious undertone of the incident symbolised the fracture between the Buddhist Thais and the Thai Muslims, leading to ever-widening mistrust and misunderstanding between the two communities (McCargo 2009b, 2009c).

From 28th April to 24th October 2004 (between the Kruese mosque and Takbai incidents), a new pattern emerged: militants began to attack those they believed to be supporters of the state, including Muslim 'collaborators.' A total of 51 people were killed, both Buddhists and Muslims; 78 people were injured (Abuza 2009, p.63).

Takbai demonstration incident (25th October 2004)

On 25th October 2004, around 2,000 people, mostly Muslim youths, demonstrated in the district of Takbai, Narathiwat Province. They were protesting against martial law and demanding the release of six Muslim youths, arrested by the police under the accusation of involvement in supplying weapons to militants. The authorities failed to negotiate with the demonstrators, and the police instead called for Army reinforcements. Later, the security forces used gunfire and tear gas in an attempt to control the

situation. Seven demonstrators were killed by gunshot wounds. Later that day, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested. The army ordered the protestors' shirts to be taken off and their hands to be tied behind their backs, after which they were loaded into trucks to be taken for interrogation at the Army Camp in Pattani, approximately 4 hours away. The demonstrators were stacked five or six deep in the unventilated trucks. By the time they reached their destination, 78 of them had died from asphyxiation in addition to the seven who died from gunshot wounds.

The Takbai incident resulted in domestic and international indictments of the Thai state as a key perpetrator and major cause of the southern problem, and many questions were asked about the excessive use of force by the government (Askew 2007; Funston 2008; Abuza 2009). The death of 78 demonstrators in transit to an army camp appeared like a massacre rather than merely an incompetent military response (Abuza 2009). The public called for justice, resulting in the appointment of an independent fact-finding commission. Their findings confirmed the mishandling and lack of professionalism by the Thai security forces (Funston 2008, p. 29).

The conflict then deteriorated further due to a culturally insensitive remark from Prime Minister Thaksin, who blamed the militants for Takbai, claiming that many of the protesters appeared to be drug-addicted and in a similar state to those involved in the Kruese incident. He added that the deaths had occurred because the transit took place during the month of Ramadan, and advised the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) to go back and read the Koran properly.²⁴

2.3.3 Summary of violent incidents from 2004-2014

Since 2004, several major incidents of violence have occurred in the region. The major incidents in 2005 include: the killing of an Imam in Narathiwat, which led to the exodus of Malay Muslims to Kelantan (Malaysia); two marines being taken hostage and later killed after villagers accused them of killing members of their village; and a monk and two temple boys being killed inside Phromprasit temple in Pattani. The major incident of 2006 was the Gujngruepo incident in Narathiwat when two female Buddhist teachers were separated from their Muslim colleagues and taken hostages by villagers. The villagers demanded the release of the two suspects arrested for the killing of the two marines in

2005. The two teachers were severely beaten before being rescued by the armed forces, teacher Kru Juling later died of her injuries seven months later.

On 16th September 2006, Prime Minister Thaksin was ousted by a bloodless coup led by Army Chief General Sonthi Boonyaratglin. His complete mishandling of the situation in the south was among a number of factors which greatly diminished his public support. The new Prime Minister, Surayud Chulanont, issued a public apology for Thaksin's administration of the south; and promised new initiatives, including the dropping of charges against the 58 Takbai protesters, the abolition of blacklists, a promise to adopt Malayu as a working language, an improved relationship with Malaysia, the resolution of the conflict through peaceful means, and the re-establishment of the SBPAC and CPM 43.²⁵

Despite these promises, the violence continued to increase. Only a few of the promises were actually implemented. As Abuza (2011, p.4) stated, "However, little was actually done, furthering popular mistrust of the government. Moreover, the insurgents did not seem to care who was in charge in Bangkok and were unwilling to give the central government a chance. Violence soared in 2007, peaking at an average of more than four people a day being killed by May." The worst years of the violence so far were considered to be those of 2006-2007 (Ibid.).

The major incidents of 2004-2006 from the start of the current insurgency until after the 2006 coup can be summarised as follows:

2004

4 January 2004 – The arsenal raid incident

22 and 24 January 2004 - Three Buddhist monks (in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) were killed, marking the first time that monks had been targeted.

12 March 2004 - Muslim lawyer, Somchai Neelapaijit, defending many cases for accused southerners, 'disappeared'.

28-29 March 2004 - 39 government buildings in Pattani, Songkhla and Yala were torched in coordinated attacks.

28 April 2004- The Kruese Mosque incident

17 September 2004 - The first high-ranking official, a judge, was killed in Pattani.

25 October 2004 – The Takbai demonstration incident

2005

3 April 2005 - Three bomb attacks in Songkhla, including at Hat Yai International Airport.

14 July 2005 - Synchronised attacks at various locations in Yala by up to 60 attackers causing blackouts and chaos, and resulting in the issuing of an emergency decree on July 16.

30 August 2005 - Villagers claimed that officials had killed their religious leader (*Imam*). Protests resulted in the exodus of 131 villagers to Malaysia.

20 September 2005 - Two marines were held hostage at Tanyong Limo, Narathiwat. Later, they were beaten to death.

18 December 2005 – Around 1,000 villagers from Narathiwat seized two schools and held two teachers hostage, demanding the release of two villagers detained by police.

2006

18-19 January 2006 - Arson attacks across the four provinces.

2 March 2006 - More than 20 locations in Songkhla and 18 in Patani suffered arson attacks.

19 May 2006 - Two female Buddhist teachers were separated from their Muslim colleagues and severely beaten. One of the teachers later died from her injuries in January 2007.

15 July 2006 - 20 bombs exploded in Narathiwat, 18 in Pattani and 12 in Yala, killing three people and injuring many more.

16 September 2006 - 5 people were killed, including the first Westerner in the conflict, and approximately 60 injured, as a result of 6 explosions in Hat Yai.

As we can see from the summary provided above, between 2004 and 2006, violent incidents in the region continued and increased in terms of both number and scale of attacks; the targets included innocent people such as monks or school teachers. Figure 2.3 presents the number of monthly incidents and the number of deaths and casualties from January 2004 to April 2014.

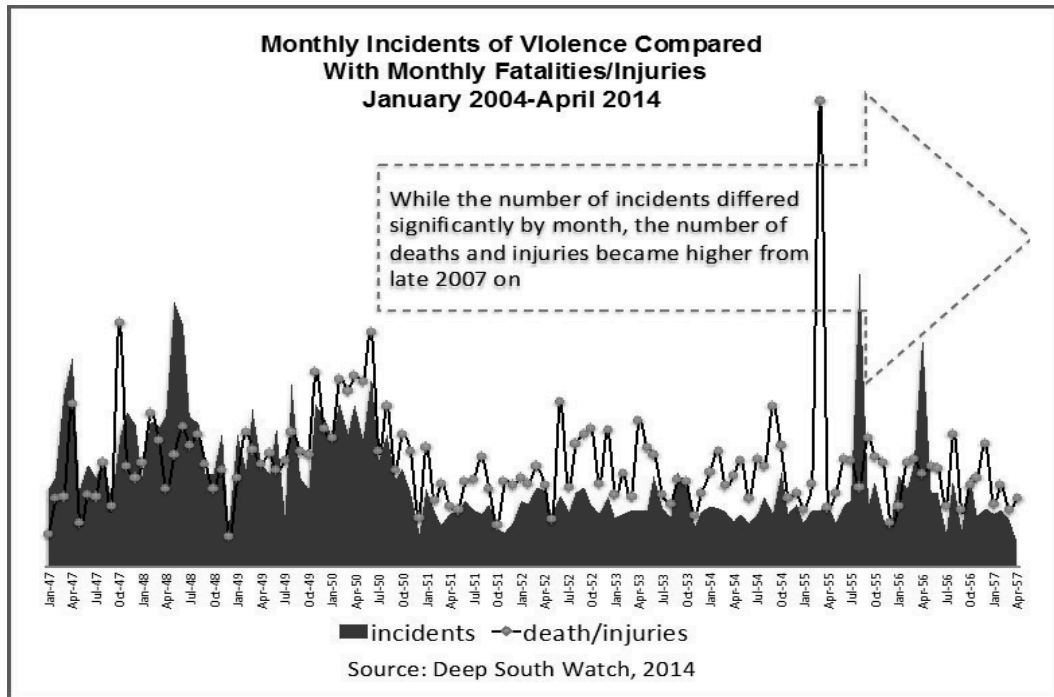


Figure 2.3: Comparison of monthly fatalities and injuries across 114 months (January 2004 –April 2014). (Source: Deep South Watch (2015). Available at: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/6631> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

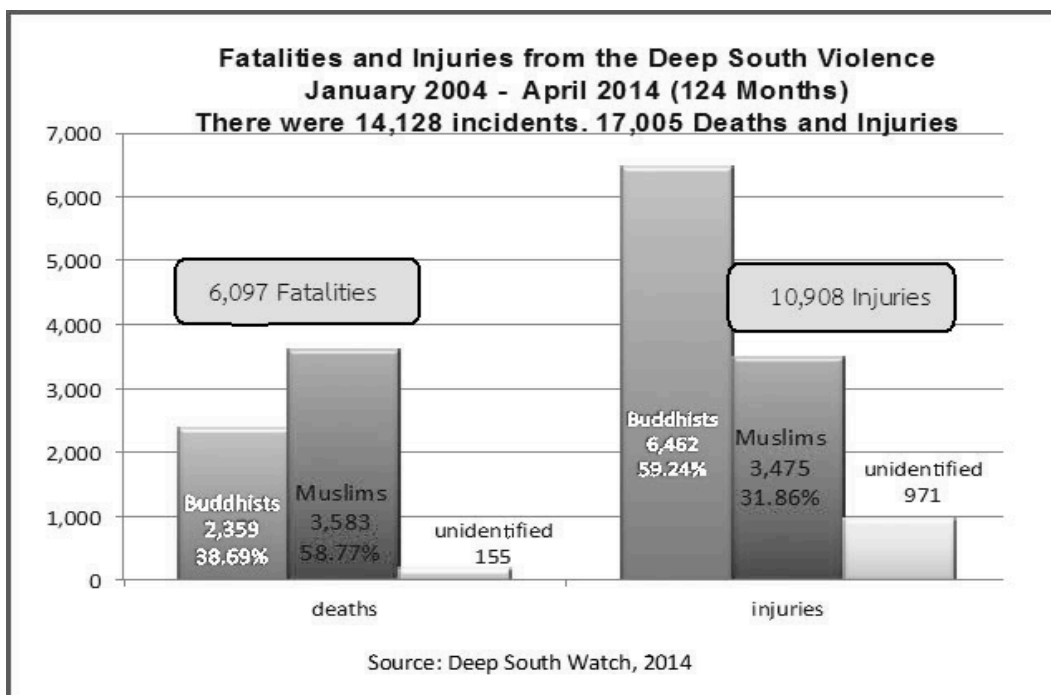


Figure 2.4: Comparison of fatalities and injuries from the southern violence between Buddhists and Muslims people from January 2004- April 2014. (Source: Deep South Watch (2015). Available at: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/6631> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

Figure 2.4 indicates that between January 2004 and April 2014, there were 14,128 incidents of violence, causing a total of 6,097 fatalities and 10,908 injuries. The majority of the dead were Muslims (3,394 deaths: 53.97%), while 2,213 of those killed (38.45%) were Buddhist. Conversely, most of those injured were Buddhist civilians (6,024 injured: 59.05%); while there were 3,211 Muslim injuries (31.47%). This all signifies that although the reasons behind the southern insurgency involved hostility towards the Thai state and its officials, the targets were no longer limited to Buddhist Thais. Local Muslims, especially those with some connection (perceived or otherwise) with the state, were also targeted.

2.4 Understanding the southern conflict and its dynamics

In order to understand the dynamics of the current southern conflict situation, this section aims to explain theories on the causes of the conflict posed by several scholars and also includes their proposed resolutions. This section ends with a summary of the current situation and the future outlook.

2.4.1 Theories behind the return of the violence

Since 2004, the escalation of violence in Thailand's southern border region has raised questions over the causes and factors behind the incidents. Scholars and academics have put forward various theories aiming to identify the domestic, historical, political and ideological dimensions of the attacks: the discourse surrounding the causes of the violence varies considerably. The key explanations revolve around religious and ethnic differences, historical grievances, governance, and poverty in the southern border area.

The Thai government prefers to view the conflict as a struggle for territory, and insists that the perpetrators are either common bandits or some renewed version of old separatist groups, while the National Reconciliation Center (NRC) perceives it in terms of abstract principles: calling for truth, justice, equality and transparency (McCargo 2006a; Sagunasil 2006). As Aphornsuvan (2008) highlighted, views on the subject are polarised, with one group, containing foreign academics and journalists, depicting it as a result of the government's mishandling of Muslim minority issues, while the opposing group features mainly Thai academics, whose views are conditioned by loyalty to the state and a sense of nationalism. Despite the differences in assumptions and theories, all groups

(academics, officials, Muslims and Buddhists) agreed on one point: the 'separatism movement' emerged from the centralised administrative policies launched by the Buddhist Thai state.

Many scholars have identified radical Islam as a clear threat to the region, due to the changing patterns cited above, the scale of well-planned attacks, and the increasing number of casualties. Suggested links between the conflict and the international jihadist movement, involving such groups as *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), might appear at first glance to be persuasive (Cline 2007; Yusuf 2007; Funston 2008; McCargo 2008; Albritton 2010). However, Cline (2007, p.284) argued that although the southern insurgency does provide a base for a wider jihadist group, such linkages do not appear to exist: many of the grievances remain more ethnic than religious, and much more local than regional or international. McCargo (2008, p. 188) agreed that the violence was inspired by the separatist movement in the region, and that "a ruthless and well-organised militant movement was responsible for most of the violence taking place in the Southern border provinces", but the conflict is not part of the global war on terror.

Scholars did agree, though, that radical Islam has played some role. Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu (2006) contended that the factors behind the attacks are not social, but borne of ideological beliefs from radical Islamic movements, which distinguishes the current situation from past separatist movements. Another Thai scholar, Sagunhasil (2006), argued that the southern conflict is derived from a radicalisation of Islam. Sagunhasil used the '*Berjihad di Patani*' leaflet found at Kruese Mosque, which urged Muslims to fight against the Thai state, as evidence for this viewpoint. The leaflet together with the suicidal actions of the militants at Kruese, according to the scholar, are proof that the radical ideology of jihadist doctrine had arrived, which explains the change in tactics of the militants since early 2004.

Abuza (2009) argued that the insurgency in the south was not related to the global war on terror, and would have happened at around the same time even without the terrorist attacks on the US in 2001. Abuza believed that the insurgency was motivated by Wahhabism.²⁶ However, as many scholars believed, the fact that Prime Minister Thaksin supported the US and its policy in the war on terror may have played a part in further infuriating Muslim minorities in Thailand; and may therefore be one of

the reasons behind the returning of violence. During Thaksin's first term (2001-2005), the security situation in the South deteriorated hugely (Ganjanakhundee and Pathan 2004). Thaksin is said to have used a heavy-handed policy to control the situation, including extrajudicial killings and by constantly shuffling security officials in the region.

Some commentators pointed to actions by the Thaksin administration as the key reason: in particular, the dissolution of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC), a multifunctional agency acting as an intelligence agency and mediator between the Thai state and Muslim population (McCargo 2006a, 2008; Cline 2007). As SBPAC had been successful in integrating Muslims and acting as a social, cultural and political forum where Muslims could raise complaints and express their grievances, its dissolution had a very significant affect: a key institutional apparatus on the border "that formerly guaranteed a level of equilibrium and dialogue between the state and Muslim communities of the border provinces" (Askew 2007:p.x) had been dismembered.

Funston (2008, p. 23) claimed that the 'war on drugs' in 2003 provided a basis for the violence: around 2,500 people were subject to extrajudicial killings, with Thaksin's mishandling of the situation having "revived the traditional feeling of discrimination." The then Prime Minister Thaksin also exhibited a lack of sympathy for Malay Muslims, as his remarks after the Kruese and Takbai incidents demonstrated. McCargo (2006b) focused specifically on Thaksin's role saying that Thaksin chose the southern region as a battleground for his attempted seizure of power from the palace or the 'network monarchy'²⁷; and the tensions between his networks and those of the palace helped trigger off the violence.

Pathmanand (2006) concurred, stating that Thaksin exploited southern violence in order to stir up nationalist sentiment, and provoked Buddhists against the Muslim minorities as a way to preserve his electoral popularity among the Thai majority. Thaksin knew that most Buddhist Thais would be easily influenced by patriotism; so he led the new wave of Thai nationalism by deploying hardline policies and military methods with which to fight the insurgency. However, as Abuza (2009, p. 64) argued, this counter-insurgency policy was a failure, and was a victim of "political interference, rapid transitions in the military leadership, unclear lines of authority, and a state of political denial."

Many Thai intellectuals shared the assumption that the recent violence was very strongly related to historical discontent (Albritton 2010). As McCargo (2008) posited, the conflict is a 'war over legitimacy': Thai rule over the region has long since lacked legitimacy and a sense of justice for the Muslim minority – meaning that historical and political grievances, rather than religious ones, continue to predominate. McCargo's explanation is worth quoting at length:

"Patani Muslims do not rebel because of deep-rooted socioeconomic or psychological grievances, and nor are they primarily animated by jihadist ideologies. Their cause is a political one that centers on local questions of legitimacy; they want to regain control of territory they believe to be theirs, and doing so involves violently rejecting the claims of the Thai state on that territory (McCargo 2008, p. 187)."

However, Aiewsrivongse (2004) considered that separatist movements from the past had nothing to do with the current insurgency: they merely gave support but did not take any concrete action. He characterised the incidents as a 21st century peasant's revolt, arising from a desperate need for resources and development in the region, but with no specific purposes or target. Satha-Anand (2006) countered that the root causes are historical. Abuza (2009, p. 29) pointed out that the Buddhist and ethnic Chinese communities dominated the southern Thai economy, whereas Malay Muslims remain plagued by lack of education, healthcare, welfare or employment. Abuza highlighted a strong sense of "internal imperialism and relative deprivation" (Ibid.) among the Muslim population, whose social grievances include education, assimilation, social justice, morality and institutionalised racism (Abuza 2009, p.32).

Other arguments focus on local issues such as ethnic-religious conflict. Reports from the International Crisis Group and US State Department suggested that the insurgency is driven by these ethno-religious grievances. Yusuf (2007, p.320) emphasised the nature of a local conflict rooted in a clash between two ethnic groups - Thai Buddhism and Malay Islam - with the latter in the minority, and adopting a Malay-Muslim, nationalist and separatist stance. In this sense, ethno-religious identity is indeed a large determining factor in the forming and shaping of the conflict.

Funston (2008, p. 19) highlighted the traditional factors of Malay Muslims' perceptions of discrimination and mistreatment by the Thai state, which was reinforced by Thaksin's administration, and claimed that this sense of injustice "has been powerfully exploited by the insurgents." Croissant (2007), also stated that structural factors – historical concerns, religious differences, and social and economic marginalisation – have resulted in local grievances and a conflict between two ethnic groups, with the Muslim minority only rebelling when they perceived their cultural identity to be under threat from the Thai authorities.

Thus according to this argument, the political and cultural discrimination by government officials in favour of the Buddhist majority, together with economic deprivation, were the main reasons behind the conflict. Albritton (2010), however, asserted that the fracture between the Buddhist Thais and Muslim minority is not primarily religious but ethnocentric, represented by orientations to Malay or Thai culture and identity. On the other hand, Askew (2007, p.4) proposed that the violence is simply the product of Thailand's disorderly state: a key problem which many governments have long since failed to resolve.

Interestingly, McCargo (2009b) noted that religious tolerance in Thailand is declining because of the growing sense that Buddhism is under threat from Islamic insurgents in the south, which has increased anti-Muslim fears and sentiments among majority Buddhists. The connection can be drawn here between the Thai media and the representation of the conflict and its result in creating fracture between the two communities, which is the main focus of this study. The growing sense of fear of the Buddhist majority toward the Muslim minority is partly affected by the way the media present the conflict, and shape the perception of the majority Thais on the southern issues. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 3, the Thai mediascape.

Overall, this section explored theories on the causes of the southern conflict in order to provide a background for the understanding of the southern conflict and its dynamics. The next section explains possible resolutions of the conflict as proposed by several scholars.

2.4.2 Southern conflict: Towards the resolution

Several scholars and academics have considered different solutions to the southern conflict. McCargo (2010, p.279) evaluated a multitude of perspectives from academics, NRC members, politicians, ministers and former Prime Ministers,²⁸ only to find that each had arrived at broadly the same conclusion: "...Security responses, arrests and emergency legislation were unlikely to contain the violence. Governance in the region had to be urgently restructured." In other words, a hardline response is unlikely to solve the conflict. Jitpiromsri and McCargo (2010, p. 180) also proposed that the Thai state should address the distinctive character of the region and explore the details of proposals for ways of letting the Muslims run their own affairs.

In this sense, these scholars suggested that new local governance should be restructured according to the distinctive character of the region, with locals allowed to participate in its running. McCargo (2009a; 2010) suggested some forms of autonomy, but to the Thai people, the word 'autonomy' means 'independence', which poses a potential threat to national integration and even national security, meaning that it has long been considered as 'off the table'.

Another solution proposed is that the Thai government take the issue of the southern insurgency more seriously as a national matter because, right now, the Thai government does not seem to see the conflict as a prime consideration (Jitpiromsri and McCargo 2008; McCargo 2009a). Abuza (2011, p. 25), too, considered that the government has not pushed for the reforms that could make a real difference and would start to win the hearts and minds of the people. The lack of professionalism of the Thai authorities and continued violations of human rights are still pressing issues, which continue to create mistrust among the locals. Moreover, Abuza proposed that as long as the violence continues, the insurgency will remain a low priority for the Thai government, which is focused on national political disputes and is reluctant to adopt a more conciliatory approach to the conflict.

In order to bring about future stability in the southern region, scholars agree that the Thai government needs to stop its overemphasis on military responses. As Croissant (2007, p.1) underscored, the "immediate consequences of the counter-insurgency such as the erosion of respect for human rights and other political rights and the deepening political divide in Thai society..." has become not a solution, but a cause of the continuing violence. Therefore, the Thai government needs to combine

measures which stress the political, cultural, and economic root causes of the problem; and continue to foster economic development and education, all of which will gradually restore stability to the region (Chalk 2001; Croissant 2007).

Jitpiromsri (2011, p.15) focused on the need to get at the root causes of the problem – which are issues of ethnicity, identity and religion – and to directly deal with these issues by creating new forms of governance. He concluded that the conflict can only be resolved through peaceful means and such changes must be associated with the process of creating and broadening a public space between the various parties involved.

In sum, scholars share the common opinion that the Thai government should take the southern conflict more seriously; the southern administration needs to be tackled at the root causes of the conflict with the aim of restoring political, cultural and economic stability to the region; and most importantly, all the changes should be put forward by peaceful means.

2.5 Current circumstances and the future

On 10 February 2013, five soldiers were killed by a car bomb, and the insurgents took the dead soldiers' rifles. The incident was widely discussed, as video footage was released to the public. The Thai Army attacked the insurgents' military base three days later, resulting in the death of at least 17 Muslim insurgents, including a commander.

However, 2013 was also notable for the first peace talks. The Thai government and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) – one of the main insurgent groups operating in Thailand's southern border provinces – began negotiations in Kuala Lumpur on the 28th February.²⁹ The government and BRN representatives signed an agreement entitled, 'General Consensus on the Peace Dialogue Process', which agreed to talks on a peace dialogue facilitated by Malaysia in order to end the ten-year-long conflict. This agreement amounted to the first formal public engagement between the government and a separatist group in the history of the conflict – a significant step toward a peaceful resolution.

Pathan and Tweedie (2013) noted that it also represented the first-ever tacit acknowledgement on the part of the Thai government that both the conflict itself and the potential of a negotiated solution to it are inherently political. International Crisis Group (ICG) analyst Matthew Wheeler also claimed that the peace process represented a new phase in a conflict he termed "the most effective insurgency in Thai history".³⁰ Other separatist groups – the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and Barisan Islam Pembebasan Pattani (BIPP) – have also shown an interest in engaging in talks.

However, in August 2013, BRN broke off formal contact, stating that Thailand had failed to answer their demands. The next round of peace talks was postponed indefinitely, with the BRN announcing that they would not return to the negotiating table unless both the Thai parliament agreed to its five demands, and Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, placed peace negotiations on the national agenda.³¹ Chingchit (2014) believed that the peace talks were undermined because of "a lack of command and commitment by the representatives of both sides, the uncertain and contested role of Malaysia, and the Army's entrenched interests and stronger role."

Moreover, it is widely thought that the senior BRN leader, Hassan Taib, who joined the talks, no longer has command over young militants operating on the ground; and given that the violence has continued, it can only be an indication that not the whole of BRN is fully committed to peace negotiations (Ibid.). Meanwhile, the government had to shift its focus to the prolonged anti-government protests in Bangkok from November 2013; the government's only real focus was on restoring clam and staying in power.

After months of political turmoil, the Thai military seized power in a coup on 22 May 2014. After this, the military government under General Prayuth Chan-ocha came to power and the peace talks with BRN were put on hold. The military-led government announced plans in August 2014 to hold another round of peace talks with the separatists. In September 2015, a round of informal peace talks between representatives from Thailand and the 6 insurgent groups was held in Malaysia; however, until now, no formal peace talks between the government and the BRN have taken place.

The process of peace talks has been widely discussed by academics, activists and media

professionals.³² Pathan (2014) commented that Thailand under the leadership of General Prayuth plans to take a different strategy from the former government by 'dictating' the terms to the BRN and other separatist organisations and not the other way around. At the same time, the BRN is not yet prepared to come to another round of talks. For that reason, plans for the next round of peace talks right are still on hold and violent situations in the region remain on-going. Nevertheless, the Deep South Incident Database (DSID) revealed a downturn in the frequency and degree of violent incidents in 2014, with a decrease in the number of incidents, deaths and casualties.³³ This fall in the number of violent incidents proves that there is still hope that the peace talks may be able to help bring about a resolution of the conflict in the future.

To sum up, this chapter explored the dynamics of the southern conflict and its history. The chapter reviewed the past rebellions, the rise of the current insurgency via the major incidents in 2004, and theories behind the return of the violence from various perspectives and commentators. It concluded by providing information on the current situation, including the abortive peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN in 2013. Although talks were only held on three occasions, and the latest round was indefinitely postponed due to Thailand's political situation, the concept of finally ending the ten-year-long conflict through peace negotiations is widely supported by the Thai public.

The next chapter provides a background of the Thai media, especially within the context of Thailand's southern conflict.

Chapter 3

The Thai mediascape

In 2004, after PM Thaksin came to power, freedom of expression in Thailand became difficult because his government's policy included increased intervention and control of the Thai media. It was the year that the Thai media started to criticise the government's handling of the southern conflict, although at the same time, the Thai media was also widely criticised on the ground that their reporting of the southern conflict was one of the reasons triggering violence. Since this research focuses on the reporting of the conflict situations in southern Thailand in 2004, it is important to look at the background of the Thai media to understand the relationship between the media and politics at the time. Moreover, an understanding of the history of journalism in Thailand and the background of newspaper businesses, including English-language newspapers, is crucial to understand the unique characteristics of the Thai media and its influence on Thai society.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part explains the history of journalism in Thailand. The second parts focuses on Thai print media, especially the background of English newspaper businesses in Thailand. The third part explores freedom of expression in Thailand, with a focus on the year 2004. Finally, the last part sets out a critique of Thai media and the southern conflict.

3.1 The history of journalism in Thailand

This section explains the history and development of Thai journalism with a focus on the newspaper business.

3.1.1 The establishment of the newspaper business

Journalism in Thailand developed under the influence of several political, economic, social and ideological factors. Newspapers were important means of conveying the ideological beliefs that caused changes in Thai society. The printing press came to Thailand with the Western missionaries in the mid-1800s. The first publishing in the Thai language began during the reign of King Rama III, when printed material was used to teach Thai to the English settlers. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an American missionary, was a pioneer of the printing press in Thailand and established the first Thai newspaper, *The Bangkok Recorder* (1844-1845), with machinery imported from India. Other newspapers in this

period were the *Bangkok Calendar*, printed in English from 1847 to 1850 by J. H. Chandler, and the *Bangkok Daily*, printed by Dr. Samuel John Smith (McCargo 2000; Forum-Asia 2005; Siriyuvasak 2007). *The Bangkok Recorder*, which served the upper class society more than the general public, was considered the first step in the history of Thai newspapers. However, it ceased publication after just two years because of its small circulation and the limits on freedom put in place by King Rama IV, who accused the missionaries of using the newspapers to publish false stories (Siriyuvasak 2007).

King Rama IV later set up a printing press of his own and started to print the *Royal Gazette* or *Ratchakijjanubeksa* in order to publish official announcements, to counter missionary propaganda, and to clarify issues published in *The Bangkok Recorder*, which was re-opened in 1864 by Dr. Bradley (McCargo 2000; Forum-Asia 2005; Siriyuvasak 2007). *Ratchakijjanubeksa* was considered by Thai people to be the first Thai language newspaper. The King's relatives also established a privately owned newspaper called *Darunovadh*, intended to give information to its readers without comment or political opinion. *Darunovadh* was considered the first newspaper to be published for the wider public. The early period of the Thai printing press was under the influence of the King and the royal family. Most of the content was from royal sources. Readership was limited at that point, comprising the royal families, upper class society, and foreigners. Thus, in the beginning, the Thai press depended largely on the support of the monarchy, but this gradually changed.

3.1.2 Thai media before the 1932 revolution

During the reign of King Rama V, freedom of the press became more open when many newspapers were owned by members of the public and more newspapers in Thai, Chinese and English were launched. The content changed from royal matters to more open criticism of the ruling class and the government, along with other types of article such as news stories, features, and entertainment pieces. The Thai press, which had initially served the upper classes and foreigners, then started to serve the common Thais. Educational reform caused an increase in literacy levels, which also expanded readership. Even though the independent newspapers were faced with bankruptcy and competition from the royal-owned newspapers, they gained more popularity among the masses. However, freedom of expression was still limited. Often the owners of these newspapers were accused, tried and

imprisoned because they stated their political opinions and asked for the rights of expression (Siriyuvasak 2007).

During the reign of King Rama VI, newspapers were able to access the masses to a greater extent. It was called the 'Golden Age of Thai Journalism' because the country's economy was good and people had a better education (Ibid.). Because the King studied in Europe, he was influenced by the culture of exchanging opinions and ideas, and so he welcomed fair criticism of his government (Ibid.). During his time, journalism as a profession began to grow, and daily news and political news started to attract public attention.

Criticism was allowed in the news coverage, and the competition between newspapers to attract readers was high. However, it was still a case of freedom under an absolute monarchy. The popularity of the monarch declined as a result of the emergence of a new class of educated and literate Bangkok people (McCargo 2000). The first law to control the press came into effect in 1922 and was called, 'The Document and Newspaper Law of 1922' (Siriyuvasak 2007). This period showed the development of Thai society: the readership of newspapers expanded and more freedoms of expression were granted.

3.1.3 Thai media after the 1932 revolution

The rise of democracy in Thailand started with the changeover from the system of an 'Absolute Monarchy' to a 'Constitutional Monarchy' by the People's Party. It was the first time that the rights to speak, write and advertise were guaranteed to the people by the Constitution of 1932. This period also marked the start of a relationship between journalists and politicians. Politicians and social elites built a good relationship with newspapers in order to use them as a means of disseminating their propaganda (McCargo 2000; Wongtheerathorn 2008). When Field Marshal Phibun came into power, he had absolute control over all newspapers and used them to promote his policy of Thai nationalism. Phibun borrowed the propaganda techniques used by Hitler and Mussolini to create his own cult, and passed a number of authoritarian laws, which gave his government the power of almost unlimited press censorship (Wongtheerathorn 2008).

The first Printing and Publishing Act was enacted in 1941 during Phibun's administration. It was seen as draconian and there were various failed attempts to abolish it before it was finally replaced by the Press Registration Act (Siriyuvasak 2007). The media in Thailand were continuously threatened under the authoritarian regime of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat from 1959 to 1963, a period known as the 'Dark Age of Thai Journalism' (Ibid). The media were controlled under Announcement No. 17, which wielded absolute control over the press. There were no guarantees of the rights to speak, write or comment, and those who offended the King or criticised the government were punished. Announcement No. 17 was considered a symbol of the diminishment of press freedom in Thailand (Wongtheerathorn 2008).

The revolution of 14th October 1973 by students and the people brought about the end of the military dictatorship and the dark age of Thai journalism. The press was guaranteed complete freedom, which was unprecedented in the nation's history (Siriyuvasak 2007). Many new newspapers with various political perspectives were established. However, the freedom of the Thai press flourished only until the bloody coup of 6th October 1976, when the Printing Act and Revolutionary Announcement No. 42 were implemented to control the freedom of the press (Ibid.). Many newspapers were shut down and strict censorship was enforced. Once again, Thai journalism was under the control of the military.

The conflict between the left-wing students and the government in October 1976 ended years later. From 1980, the press started to enjoy more freedom. Major changes in the structure and policy of newspapers and the newspaper business were developed and flourished. Newspapers which held strong political views, such as *Daily Mirror*; focused on opinion and criticism, such as *Matichon* or *The Nation*; or produced business and financial news, such as *Manager* or *Bangkok biz News*, were first introduced to the Thai public. The newspaper market flourished along with the country's economic growth and media became a major business, which served the interests of the urban middle-class (Forum-Asia 2005). The newspaper business started to use new production and communication technology. The growth of the advertising business was now closely related to the newspaper industry, which relied heavily on sale revenues and income from advertisements (Ibid.).

Thai journalism, thus, went through good and hard times. The development of journalism depended largely on the support of the monarchy in its early period. Power changed to the hands of the governments in the second period and politics played a key role in the early 1900s. Then, the newspaper business became more economically led. The development of Thai journalism revolved around social, political and economic factors, including technological developments in printing and telecommunication.

3.2 Thai print media: newspapers

While other media, such as radio and television, are either owned or operated by the state, subjected to the influence of the state, and often considered conservative in their reporting, Thai newspapers represent the primary privately-owned source of current news for most Thais (Tunsarawuth 2006; Article 19 2009). While Thai newspapers are the primary source of news that is more critical of the government, they are also subject to the highest number of defamation cases (Article 19 2009). The Thai print media has had a close relationship with Thai politics and has performed an important role in the Thai political scene since its establishment (McCargo 2000; Siriyuvasak 2005, 2007; Paireepairit 2012). McCargo (2000, p. 165) believed that the Thai media could be unreliable because it has long functioned as a means for different groups to advance their political and economic interests and ideas, which means that the political or power groups use their connections with media owners for their personal and political interests, and that "the unreliability of the Thai press is deeply rooted in its history, organisational culture, newsgathering system and working practices."

The Thai print media are dominated by large corporations and big publishing companies, such as Matichon Plc, Post Publishing Company, Nation Multimedia Group, Manager Group, Vacharapol Company and GMM Grammy (Paireepairit 2012). These companies also own TV and radio stations and book and magazine publishing businesses, and their owners often have close personal relationships with politicians and the government.

The Asian economic crisis, which hit Thailand in 1997, heavily affected the Thai press, especially the print media. Many newspapers closed and others were taken over. According to Forum-Asia (2005), 12 out of 25 newspapers were shut down, mostly Thai-language newspapers such as *Siam Post* and also

the English language newspaper *Asia Times*. Today, there are 32 Thai-language newspapers on the market. *Matichon*, *Siam Rath*, *Kaosod* and *Naewna* are considered to be the quality publications, focusing mainly on politics and economics. *Phujatkarn Daily*, *Krungthep Thurakij*, *Post Today*, *Than Sethakij* and *Prachachat Turakij* are business newspapers.

The most popular Thai-language newspapers are *Thairath*, *Daily News* and *Kom Chad Luek*. Their styles of reporting are highly sensational with big headlines and pictures, and their sales base is daily rather than monthly or yearly subscription. These newspapers play a large part in the Thai newspaper market because their daily circulations are the highest, and thus they depend on creating sensational headlines to draw attention. There is no investigative reporting in the Thai newspapers (Article 19 2009), and this reflects the reading culture of Thai people, who favour dramatic and sensational headlines with a lot of pictures and less content. Also, the majority of Thai politicians and political journalists are unable to read English well, so they rely mainly on the Thai language press (McCargo 2000).

3.2.1 English-language newspapers in Thailand

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the two major English-language newspapers in Thailand are *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*. The rise of English newspapers was considered a sign of a more incisive and critical press, and both newspapers sought to practice objective journalism to an international standard (Ibid.). They presented themselves as an alternative to Thai newspapers. They were seen as accurate and reliable, with a mix of a foreign and local staff, and an investigative reporting style. Both newspapers share the same target audiences: the elites and educated Thais and foreigners in Thailand.

However, the market of the English-language daily newspapers in Thailand is limited by the relatively small number of English-speakers, and 90 per cent of the sales are made in Bangkok (Forum-Asia 2005). Their sales are mostly through subscription, and the readers of these newspapers mainly comprise the middle and upper class and expatriates. International news organisations such as CNN and the BBC also draw resources from these two English newspapers. The main focus of both newspapers is Thai politics and international news, but they also have sections on business, travel

and entertainment. Compared to Thai-language newspapers, the English-language newspapers in Thailand have more reports on international and Southeast Asian news and are considered to be amongst the leading newspapers in Asia (Prado 2010).

Organisation	<i>Bangkok Post</i>	<i>The Nation</i>
Type of organisation	Public company	Public company
Ownership	Post Publishing Company PCL	Nation Multimedia Group PCL
Subsidiary companies	Post International Media Co. Ltd. , Post-ACP Co.Ltd., and Post-IM Plus Co. Ltd.	Krungthep media Cp. Ltd. (KTM), Komchadluek media Co.Ltd. (KMM), Nation News Network Co. Ltd. (NNN), Nation International Edutainment PCL (NINE), Nation Broadcasting Corporation PCL (NBC), WPS Thailand Co. Ltd., NML Co.Ltd., Nation U Co., Ltd.
Primary source of revenue	Advertising	Sales and Advertising
Other media operations under the same ownership	Bangkok Post, Post Today (a Thai-language business daily), M2F (a fee Thai-language daily newspaper) and Student Weekly (an English-language magazine for high school and college students)	The Nation, Daily Express (English), Krunthep Turakij (Thai business newspaper), Kom Chad Luk (Thai newspaper), Nation Channel (Thai & English TV), Nation Radio (Thai), Nation Weekend (Thai news), NJ (Nation Junior) Connect, Biz Book, Biz Week, Phuket Gazette and OK nation.
Digital media	Bangkok Post online, Post Today online, E-newspaper Subscriptions and M2FJob.com	Bangkokbiz News online, i-newspaper website, Komchadluek online, Nation weekend online, Nation multimedia online, Nation book online, Nationegmont online, NBC website, NML website, Nation U website
News content orientation	Daily local and international news	Daily local and international news
Presentation of southern conflict news	Front page; Home section: Violence in the South (page 2,3,4); Editorial; Opinions	Front page; Local section: Southern Violence/or Southern Unrest (Page 2A, 3A, 4A); Analysis; Editorial; Opinions
Southern news production	- Headquarter in Bangkok - stringers based in southern province-- under Regional News desk	- Headquarter in Bangkok - Southern news center based in Hat Yai, Songkhla - stringers based in southern provinces.

Table 3.1: The differences between *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

Bangkok Post

Bangkok Post was founded by an American editor, Alexander MacDonald, and his Thai associate, Prasit Lulitanond, in 1946. In the newspaper's early days, the news managers and shareholders were mainly foreign. Before then, the only English-language newspaper in Thailand had been the *Bangkok Times*, which had closed during the Second World War. During the dictatorship of Phibun, Macdonald, a former US agent, was ordered to leave the country, and *Bangkok Post* was accused of supporting the opposition and not government policy (Post 2013). Another newspaper, *Bangkok World*, was established to counter the monopoly of *Bangkok Post*. However, due to declining sales, it did not negatively affect *Bangkok Post*, and later closed down in mid 1980s (Post 2013).

Bangkok Post is considered a conservative publication. It is staffed by a mix of foreigners and Thais and belongs to the Post Publishing Public Co. Ltd., whose main activity is the publication and distribution of English daily newspapers, magazines and books. *Bangkok Post* is the company's main newspaper, with a circulation of 80,000 copies a day, representing 55 per cent of the market (Forum-Asia 2005). *Bangkok Post* claims to be Thailand's number one English-language newspaper in terms of readership, circulation sales and advertising sales (Post 2013).

The newspaper has four main sections. The first section includes local, regional, and international news and analyses as well as sport news. The second is a business section, which includes business, finance and stock market news. The third section is 'Outlook', which features lifestyle, public interest, social, entertainment, travel, and fashion news as well as general features. The fourth section is classified advertisements. *Bangkok Post* has expanded its coverage of business news through the launch of Asia Focus as a separate section. Asia Focus covers business and investment news in Asia and ASEAN and also covers lifestyle news. This news section was a part of the newspaper's strategy to increase coverage of ASEAN and regional news in line with the beginning of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.

The Post Publishing's newspapers include *Post Today*, a Thai-language business daily newspaper; *Student weekly*, a weekly English-language newspaper for students; and M2F, a Monday-Friday newspaper on urban lifestyles. Its publication of international magazines includes *Elle*, *Elle*

Decoration, Cleo, Marie Claire, Martha Stewart Living and Science Illustrated. The company's book publishing house, *Post Books*, also publishes best-selling international books translated into Thai, as well as books written by their reporters and columnists and other well-known Thai authors (Post 2013).

Today, the company's news and information businesses have been expanded to include broadcast and digital media, including *Bangkok Post* and *Post Today* websites, which aim to be the world's windows on Thailand (Ibid.). The *Bangkok Post* website is "the most visited English-language news portal in Thailand" (Post 2013, p.17). Applications on mobile devices have been launched and the company has expanded its multimedia presence with the launch of Thai-language TV and radio programmes. Compared to *The Nation*, *Bangkok Post* is a smaller organisation.

The Nation

The Nation was founded in 1971 by three Thai editors: Suthichai Yoon, Thammanoon Mahapaoraya and ML Sunida Kitiyagara. Each had worked at *Bangkok Post* before: Yoon as a proofreader, sub-editor and later editor of domestic news; Mahapaoraya as an editor of domestic news; and Kitiyagara as an editor of social news (Sabpaiboon 2001). The three fell out with the *Bangkok Post* management over reporting principles, believing that *Bangkok Post* should not focus on reporting international news but should find a balance between domestic and international news (Ibid. p.36). Yoon believed that *Bangkok Post*, as a newspaper published in Thailand, should aim to serve the Thai public and should focus on presenting news in Thailand. Yoon said of his time working at *Bangkok Post* that the staff were mainly foreigners. Only a few were Thais who knew how to speak and write in English, so the main problem he faced was a problem in communication (Ibid. p.33). The Thai staff working at *Bangkok Post* had no decision-making power regarding policy or the objectives of the newspaper (Ibid. p.37).

The Nation started from the idea that Thailand should have an English-language newspaper which was owned and managed by Thai people, and which challenged *Bangkok Post* (Ibid. p.40). The former name of *The Nation* – '*The Voice of the Nation*' – claimed that the newspaper followed a principle of freedom of news and freedom of opinion with the objective to be 'Thailand's independent newspaper'. The aim of this classification was to differentiate the newspaper from *Bangkok Post*, which presented

itself as a foreign newspaper, and therefore focused more on international news and avoided Thai political news, instead producing news that favoured US policy (Ibid. p.349).

The Nation has a liberal approach and comes across as more critical of the government and more likely to address cultural values. It is more multifaceted, more sensitive and more respectful of a diversity of viewpoints (Prado 2010). Today, *The Nation* is operated by the Nation Multimedia Group Plc, one of the biggest media organisations in Thailand, and has a daily circulation of 70,000 copies and a market share of 45 per cent (Forum Asia 2005). The Nation Group's main businesses are the publication and distribution of magazines and newspapers, the importation and production of books for English education, the production of television and radio programs, and the production of *The Nation's* official news website. The Group's print materials include *The Nation*, *Daily Express*, *Krunthep Turakij* (a Thai business newspaper), *Kom Chad Luk* (Thai newspaper), *Nation Channel* (Thai and English TV), *Nation Radio* (Thai), *Nation Weekend* (Thai news), *NJ (Nation Junior) Connect*, *Biz Book*, *Biz Week*, *Phuket Gazette* and *OK Nation*.

Nation Group Plc. claimed that *The Nation* is the only English-language newspaper which acts as a voice for the Thai public with national and regional recognition (Sabpaiboon 2001, p.346). The Nation Group has expanded its businesses into other broadcast and digital media: for example, the launch of *The Nation* website and the launch *The Nation's* TV and radio programs which include *Nation Channel* – the first 24-hour news channel in Thailand – in 2000.

The two English-language newspapers in Thailand have been different from the beginning in terms of objectives, reporting principles and management style. While *Bangkok Post* is seen as a conservative publication, *The Nation* is seen as having a liberal approach and is more open. All of their unique characteristics have made them distinct as the two major English-language newspapers in Thailand today. For that reason, the two newspapers' reporting of the southern conflict, which is the main focus of this study, is different in terms of reporting styles and journalistic practices.

3.3 Freedom of expression and the Thai media

Thai newspapers seem to enjoy more liberty under the law than other forms of Thai media. Compared to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia, they are regarded as well-organised, and contribute greatly to the openness and dynamism of Thai society and freedom, even if they do remain subject to government supervision and intervention from time to time (McCargo 2000). Article 19 (2009, p.1) commented on the Thai media and the freedom of expression that:

"Although the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in the Constitution, the exercise of this right for both individuals and the media is restricted by both long-established and newly enacted legislation. The existence of these laws, and long history of government ownership and control over the broadcast media have limited this right in practice."

In this sense, it may seem that the Thai press and public enjoy guaranteed freedom of expression, but in reality, that freedom is limited due to the old rules and laws and the unique characteristics of the Thai press system.

The Thai press has distinct characteristics. The journalism that appears on its pages often lacks analysis and context, and information is mostly obtained from inside connections. The personal ties between journalists and politicians often influence reporting, and the Thai press is mostly Bangkok-centric. All of this constitutes a significant problem in the newsgathering process and has made the meaning of news in Thailand different from that in other countries (McCargo 2000, p. 2). This is possibly the result of a unique characteristic of the Thai society, which influences the actions of its citizens. Rojanapruerk (2000) commented that people who work in the media have information and knowledge but do not have the right to express their opinions, especially if those opinions differ from those held by their organisation.

The freedom is limited and controlled by the organisations, by their relations to power and politics, and in particular by the Thai cultural norm of respecting elders (Ibid.). McCargo (2000) commented that the system in Thai media organisations is based on hierarchism or seniority relationships. Juniors do not hold important positions in the organisation. In this system, the juniors are irrelevant and voiceless and have to respect and obey the seniors, and they do not have right to criticise them.

The duty of journalists is to document the incidents and not to give opinions. As McCargo (2000, p.168) stated: “Given that reporters are largely powerless in the Thai context, the political power and influence of the media rest largely in the hands of columnists, editors and owners.” In this sense, the Thai cultural value of 'respecting the elders' is inevitably reflected in the Thai journalistic practices. As such, it seems that young journalists and reporters have limited freedom to comment on issues, and the power rests in the hands of people in a higher position.

The news production process is also centralised to Bangkok, which has led to the marginalisation of people from the rest of the country and their disenfranchisement from the political movement in the capital. Another distinct character of the Thai press is that news and comment are considered the same, something which is a significant obstacle and challenge to the professionalism of Thai journalism (Ibid.). The freedom of expression of the Thai media is thus limited by not only the law but also the complicated structure, culture and practices of the Thai media itself.

3.3.1 The Constitutions and mass media

Freedom of expression for individuals and for the media is guaranteed under the 1997 Thai Constitution. The 1997 Constitution was considered a symbol of Thai democratic reform when it was drafted by the elected Constitutional Drafting Assembly. It is sometimes called the ‘People’s Constitution’ (Klein 1998; Aphornsuvan 2001; Kittayarak 2003; Albritton and Bureekul 2004). The Constitution was a political reform that involved and had the strong support of the Thai people (Klein 1998; Aphornsuvan 2001; Albritton and Bureekul 2004).

Forum-Asia (2005) observed that the 1997 Constitution was a significant step towards freedom of expression in Thailand because it coincided with the Asian economic crisis, which changed the structure of the Thai media. Prior to this constitution, Thailand had passed 15 other constitutions since the changeover to a Constitutional Monarchy in 1932, which reflects that past government administrations were insufficient, corrupt and opaque (Ibid.). This, together with the economic crisis in 1997, forced Thailand to create its most progressive and revolutionary constitution (Klein 1998; Kittayarak 2003).

Section 37 of the 1997 Constitution (see Appendix I) guarantees an individual's rights and liberty of communication by lawful means; section 39 protect the right of public members and the media to report news and express views that are not against professional code of ethics; and sections 40 and 41 declare that communication and broadcast should be used for the benefit of the public. Despite these assurances, by 2004 the rights and freedom of expression guaranteed by the 1997 Constitution were disregarded and violated by the Thaksin administration after he came into power in 2001.

The 2007 Constitution, which replaced the 1997 Constitution, and was drafted by the military junta that ousted Thaksin in 2006. The drafting processes had been widely criticised and faced much controversy because the Constitutional Drafting Assembly was appointed by the junta, which implemented laws that made criticism and opposition to the constitutional referendum a criminal act, an action which was widely criticised domestically and internationally (Ganjanakhundee 2007).³⁴

Under section 45 of the 2007 Constitution, the rights and liberties of expression of people and the mass media are guaranteed. The Constitution prohibits any person holding a political position to own or hold shares in a newspaper, radio, television or telecommunication business as a means to exercise political power over the media, as happened in Thaksin's regime. The law also allows the barring of importation of any publications that are deemed *lèse-majesté*³⁵ or contrary to public morality.

3.3.2 Limited freedom of expression during the Thaksin administration 2004-2006

Thailand used to be a leader in press freedom in Asia, and was ranked 29th among 192 countries in the annual survey of press freedom by Freedom House (FH) in 2000 (Chongkittitavorn 2007). This changed after the forming of Thaksin's government, when Thailand's rating dropped to 107th in the 2006 survey due to the restrictive measures imposed on the media (Ibid.).

Thaksin Shinawatra is a former businessman who owns a business empire, which includes mass media and telecommunication companies. His business focus and CEO-style leadership changed Thailand after he won the election in 2000, and he was re-elected for a second term in 2006. His administration of media policies had been widely discussed, particularly with regard to how he used his power to

control the media by announcing policies and campaigns to make it harder for journalists to perform their role as watchdogs (McCargo 2000; Siriyuvasak 2005).

During Thaksin's premiership, the Thai media were heavily politicised and came under strong government supervision. Journalists, activists and academics were sued for criticising Thaksin's administration and his business. Thaksin used his considerable financial resources to censor criticism and compromise the media, and to pass defamation laws and other legal measures "to threaten and punish the media so to create a climate of fear and to silence them" (Siriyuvasak 2007, p.11). Following a military coup, the Council for Democratic Reform under Constitutional Monarchy (CDRM) ousted Thaksin but did not end the limitation of freedom of expression introduced under Thaksin's regime.

In fact, the coup leaders forcefully tightened and suppressed freedom of expression using various means of censorship in order to muffle the voices of Thaksin's supporters (Siriyuvasak 2007). An example was the use of the new Cyber Crime Act, passed in July 2007. The Act bans any criticism of the monarchy and the military,³⁶ and mainly focuses on the information available on the Internet, such as websites or forums, thus banning the voices of Thaksin and his supporters (Ibid.). After the coup, Thailand ranked 126th in the FH survey, which was the worst ranking in the Thai press's history (Chongkittitavorn 2007).

3.3.3 The intervention of the media: the use of defamation law against the media

As discussed in an earlier section, the Thai media have a close relationship with Thai politics, and there is significant political intervention in the functioning of the media. The media have been used by political or business groups for their own or for mutual interests, and have been subjected to close supervision and control when they criticised the government. The use of the defamation law by Thaksin's administration is a good example of this. Thailand's defamation law has been subjected to broad discussion due to its nature and strong penalties. It is often of concern that the Thai newspapers are subjected to close government supervision (Tunsarawuth 2006). According to Article 19 (2009), defamation is a key part of the legal framework restricting speech that is critical of the government, businesses and prominent individuals in both its criminal and civil aspects.

A special case in Thailand's defamation law is '*lèse-majesté*.' In Thailand, defamation is a criminal offence, which has been in force since 1957, and has not been subjected to any major changes since. This law represents a direct threat to the freedom of the press and those who criticise the government, and, because of this threat, newspaper readers have no access to news and information that exposes government wrongdoing unless the newspapers have solid evidence to prove their allegations. The interference in the media has created a fear-factor, which lessened the opportunity for the media to act as a watchdog for society (SEAPA 2010).

Between 2004 and 2006, Thaksin used defamation lawsuits and various means of intervention against those who criticised his administration for buying out the media. According to Siriyuvasak (2005), the Thaksin regime controlled journalism by using state power to direct the flow of information and influence news agendas, using financial support and advertisements, and creating fear for those who were critical of the government. The intervention in Thai newspapers came in the form of structural interference in the newspaper companies.

One of the most prominent examples of this was the buying of large numbers of shares in the Nation Multimedia Group by the relatives of the Transport Minister, Suriya Jungrungreangkit (Thaksin's government), amounting to more than 10 per cent of the Group's shares, and thus making the family the third largest shareholder (SEAPA 2010). This raised the concern that it would have a negative impact on the English-language broadsheet's independent stance. Another method of press intervention was political interference through management control over the editorial line. The most famous case was the removal of the *Bangkok Post*'s editor, Veera Prateepchaikul, who was also the chairman of the Thai Journalist Association (TJA), when he allowed criticism of Thaksin to be published (Ibid.). The removal caused widespread criticism of how Thaksin used his political power to interfere in the editorial policy, and SEAPA issued a statement to "call on Thaksin's government to demonstrate fairness and more openness by allowing Thai media to function responsibly and independently and to adhere to the spirit of media freedom and reform mandated by the 1997 Constitution."

The defamation case against Supinya Klangnarong³⁷ also attracted particular attention nationally and internationally to how the law had become the weapon of choice for controlling defiant voices and

provoking a climate of fear and self-censorship in Thailand. Other forms of intervention included the buying of advertisers by business groups that had a close personal connection with Thaksin or his family, which resulted in a fear of publishing comments critical of his administration, because the newspaper business was financially reliant on advertising revenues from those companies (Hayes 2007).

As we have seen, Thaksin used various forms of intervention to restrict freedom of expression in the Thai media when he was in power. Thaksin's intervention with the media and his southern administration caused widespread criticism and these two are among the reasons for the coup d'état which ousted him in 2006. At the end of his term, the media broke the rules, and openly criticised the government (Siriyuvasak 2007). From this, we can see that the year 2004, which is within the timeline of this study, was the time when the freedom of expression of the Thai media was challenged and limited due to Thaksin's administration and political situation. *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*, which are the two English-language newspapers and the main focus of this study, have inevitably been affected by this difficult time. The context of this study lies in the time when the freedom of the media was limited and in the year when the southern incidents first started. The combination of these factors has proved to be a challenge for the newspapers and an interesting background from which to explore the representation of the conflict in this setting.

3.4 Thai media and the southern conflict: the critique

The Campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR) in Thailand believed that the media are one of the key forces for the resolution of the southern conflict because they play an important role in shaping and affecting people's perceptions of the issue (Deep South Watch 2007). It is the media that provide Thai citizens with access to information about the conflict. Because the violence occurs in Thailand's southern border region, people in other parts of the country are dependent on various forms of journalism for information.

Journalists convey their versions of the events unfolding in the south to their audiences, and the public's understanding of the situation is guided by the media. In other words, the media convey a selective perception of reality (McQuail 2010). The media choose the reporting style and determine

which events to report; and it is hard for people to challenge or reject the information that the media provide. The Thai media's response to the insurgency has been widely criticised. In many instances, the reports on the conflict express prejudice and a negative tone, and fail to focus on solutions – all of which potentially influence the way the majority of Thais view the events in the south. Aiewsrivongse (2004a) condemned the Thai media and their reporting of the southern conflict stating that if anybody is to apologise to the local people in the south, as well as all the officers who were harmed, the media have to be among the first because "you are the one throwing gasoline into the fire."

Furthermore, a study of the portrayal of Muslims in Thai newspapers by Latifi (1999) showed that the Thai media present more negative impressions of Thailand's Muslim minority than positive ones. That is to say: the news in the Thai media regarding the insurgency often presented an image of the southern Muslims as terrorists and separatists, or part of a resistance movements and lawless society.

Interestingly, a study conducted by Media Monitor (2005) revealed the same results: that prejudice against Muslims is obvious in Thai newspapers; that the inequality in the allocation of 'voices' in Thai newspapers is clearly seen (the voices of those affected by the conflicts were often missed); and that southern Muslims were negatively represented in connection to terrorism, insurgency and violence. Media Monitor (2005) further claimed that the Thai media faced difficulty in reporting such complex issues: the 'why' in the traditional formula of 'who, what, where, when, why, and how' appears least often. This point suggests flaws in the Thai media in terms of failing to explore the causes of the incidents. These findings were again echoed in 'An open letter to the Thai media' from Al-Hakim (2013), in which the author expressed criticism of the Thai media in their representation of southern Muslims. It is interesting to see that the Thai media and their representation of the southern conflict have been criticised over the course of 10 years, suggesting an ongoing problem in the reporting of the conflict and a gradual increase in awareness of the issue.

Generally, the reporting of the conflict mainly concentrates on the violence – sensational details of attacks and casualties. In addition, the source of information often appears to be limited to the Thai authorities because it ignores the dynamics of the deep-rooted conflict on both sides, which often leads to the belief that the problems arise from southern Muslims, who want to separate from Thailand. This way of reporting is likely to have resulted in a false perception of the conflict and in potentially

widening the gap between the Muslim minority and the Thai majority. It was because of such failings of the Thai press in reporting the complex issues of the conflict that media campaigners demanded a change in reporting style (Deep South Watch 2007).

The response of the media to the southern conflict today is different from during the early years of the conflict. At present, the insurgency attracts less national coverage, despite the fact that the Thai media agreed that the southern insurgency is one of the most serious issues concerning the nation's unity (Thammasathien 2010). In his paper, Thammasathien (2010) argued that the reporting of the southern insurgency is "problematic and unreliable" for three reasons: 1) the tendency of the Thai press to emphasise the drama without examining the root causes; 2) the problem of the news gathering system from the conflict area; and 3) biased coverage that results from the press allowing the coverage to be influenced by the government.³⁸

In her doctoral thesis, Changkamol (2013) conducted an analysis of six newspapers and their reporting of the southern conflict in 2008, and found that the newspapers still lacked investigative reporting; that the root causes and invisible effects of the violence were missed out; that the newspapers relied on a few leading people and elites as their main reference sources; and that the coverage was mostly categorised as 'war journalism'. Another doctoral thesis by Kularb (2013, p.v) revealed that the news coverage tends to support the state's administration and policy in solving the southern conflict and undermines other interpretations and proposed solutions.

To conclude, this chapter presented an overall picture of the media scene in Thailand, which included the emergence of the Thai print media and a history of journalism in Thailand, the background of the Thai and English newspapers, and a critique of the Thai media. The critique and the findings of this study clearly show that there is something wrong in the reporting of the southern conflict and that the Thai media and their practices are part of the reason for this failing. The Thai media, as we have seen, have not been doing their job properly. Due to a variety of reasons, including political intervention, lack of journalistic skills, lack of historical background of the conflict, flawed newsgathering processes, dependence on authority, and nationalistic feelings, the Thai media's reportage has resulted in a biased and prejudiced representation of the conflict.

Because of this way of reporting, the Thai majority can be seen to have a misperception of the bigger picture of the conflict. The media have the power to correct this misperception, which would contribute to finding a solution for the conflict. For that reason, peace journalism should be considered as an alternative way for the Thai media to report on the southern conflict and a method of reporting that can help to resolve the conflict in one way or another. The following chapter presents a review of the literature on peace journalism.

Chapter 4

The Literature Review on Peace Journalism

There has always been criticisms of the way in which war has been reported, but the search for an alternative has proven difficult. During the 1970s, peace researchers, activists and academics began to develop a new field in journalism: peace journalism. The aim of peace journalism is to provide an alternative to the traditional way of reporting war. The term peace journalism was coined by Johan Galtung, a Norwegian scholar and peace researcher, who envisioned peace journalism as a self-conscious, working concept for journalists covering war and conflicts (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005; Lynch 2007; 2008). The Gulf War in 1991 and the changes in war reporting during that period played an important role in starting a critical debate about conflict coverage, which has contributed to the interest in peace journalism in the past decades (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005).

The starting point for this research is my personal interest in peace journalism, which I see as a better practice for reporting war than traditional journalism. In this research, peace journalism is both a normative ground and an analytical tool. As a normative ground, peace journalism with its main concept that the media can play a social responsibility role in transforming conflicts with their reporting is the main focus of this research. As an analytical tool, the peace journalism framework is used for conducting a content analysis of the conflict coverage (more details in Chapter 5, Research Methodologies).

The first part of this chapter focuses on conflict dynamics and theory, before moving on to the flaws of traditional journalism in reporting conflict. Peace journalism is then presented as a viable alternative. Its theory and practice will be discussed, as will the practices of peace journalism in various global contexts. The chapter further explores peace journalism in the context of Thailand's southern conflict and ends with a review of the criticisms made against peace journalism.

4.1 Reporting conflict

This section explores conflict dynamics and theory and then moves on to explore war journalism and the flaws of traditional war reporting. The section ends by proposing peace journalism as an alternative concept for reporting conflict.

4.1.1 Conflict and its dynamics: theory and practice

The idea behind peace journalism is to report conflict in a way that will help lessen the conflict. As such, it is important that journalists who engage in peace journalism have an understanding of the conflict and its dynamics. This section explores the concept of conflict and conflict resolution in relation to peace journalism as proposed by scholars and peace researchers.

The definitions of conflict are varied, but generally it has to do with a situation of disagreement over an issue. Conflict is when the goals of various parties stand in each other's way to such an extent that they are incompatible (Lynch and Galtung 2010). According to Howard (2001, 2003), conflict can be defined as a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share; this situation is not necessarily negative, and does not have to lead to violence. In many circumstances, however, conflicts are unavoidable, especially when the causes and motivations are complicated, deep-rooted, or considered unsolvable, or when human lives are at risk. Conflicts often link to war, but not all unstable situations lead to armed conflict or war (Howard 2001, 2003). Since media is "an active part of any conflict" (Tehrani 2002, p. 2), in conflict situations, journalists will face difficulties since all sides in the conflict will try to control the media, and the information presented can be unreliable or censored (Goretti 2007). Therefore, the reporting of conflict can be both a personal risk and a challenge to journalistic ethics.

In terms of conflict resolution, Howard (2003) stated that professional journalists do not seek to reduce conflict, but by providing information, the media make the public far better informed about the conflict behind the violence, thus assisting in resolving it. This also is the main ground of peace journalism with its focus on finding the causes and motivations for a conflict and on depicting the truth from both sides (Galtung 1996, 1998, 2000b; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). Peleg (2006) defined conflict as a human interaction that involves parties with incompatible interests. He further argued that the

relationship between peace journalism and conflict theory is reciprocal and contributive, and that conflict theory can contribute to and support the consolidation of peace journalism (Ibid. p. 5).

Some scholars have studied the relation between conflict theory and peace journalism. Blaesi (2004), for example, conducted a study on the role of conflict stages and the implementation of peace journalism and found that the pre-condition of different stages of conflict can impact the chances of successful peace journalism practice. Kempf (2005) studied the de-escalation oriented coverage of the post-war conflicts and found that the level of conflict escalation may have an impact on the readers' response to the conflict, and that the cognitive framework such as the background or conceptualisation of the conflict can produce an impact as well.

Overall, the literature presented above shows that an understanding of conflict dynamics is crucial for journalists who wish to involve peace journalism in their practices. With conflict analysis, journalists can examine the causes of the conflict, seek out players with other points of view, and deliver information for the public's better understanding of the issue.

4.1.2 War journalism

To better understand what peace journalism is, one needs to look at the opposite concept of 'war journalism'. The study of war and the media coverage of conflict – or 'war journalism', as peace scholars have labelled it – existed long before the emergence of peace journalism (Keeble *et al.* 2010, p.2). Much of conflict coverage is dominated by war journalism, which focuses on conventional news values: negativity, personalisation and emphasis on the elites (Galtung and Vincent 1992, p.7). War journalism sees negativity, as well as information gained from the elites, as the news value that can sell the stories (Galtung 1998). From this, we can see that the main characteristics of war journalism are a focus on war and violence and a focus on the elites, without exploring the causes or the solutions of the conflict.

According to Galtung (1996, 1998, 2002), war journalism dehumanises the enemy; focuses only on the visible effects of the violence; is oriented by propaganda, elitism and victory; and tends to concentrate on institutions and official sources. Such reportage concentrates on the visible consequences of violence such as death toll, damage, and the reporting of untruths by the enemy. War journalism only

focuses on the conflict at the time without giving any background on the formation of the conflict. As Galtung (2002, p.2) stated “[T]he task of peace journalism is to make conflict transparent; the task of war journalism is to make war secret.” Moreover, war journalism is characterised by taking one side; using military triumphalist language; focusing on action; and giving a superficial narrative with little context, background, or historical perspective (Knightley 2000).

Because most news stories only deal superficially with the 'why' or the reasons behind the conflict and so "...without some exploration of underlying causes, violence can be left to appear, by default, as the only response that 'makes sense'" (McGoldrick 2006, p. 4). Echoing this view, the war focus in war journalism is characterised by "...calling for hatred and more violence to avenge and to storm 'them'" (Lynch and Galtung 2010, p. 16). Therefore, these qualities of war journalism can affect its audiences by creating an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy, provoking fear, and suggesting that the only way out is to use war or violence since it defines the conflict as something that needs to be 'won' through violent means.

Traditional war reportage centres around the notion of conflict as news value, while what is believed to be good journalism is based on 'fairness', 'balance' and 'accuracy' (Lynch 2002, 2007, 2008; Lynch *et al.* 2005). The most important distinctions between war and peace journalism is that war journalism represents conflict as confined to a closed space and closed time, while peace journalism presents conflict by making it transparent and less harmful to the psychological wellbeing of the news consumers (Lynch 2010). Pilger (2010, p. *xi*) believed that the main difference between war and peace journalism is that "[w]ar journalism reports what power says it does. Peace journalism reports what it does." In war situations, often the media are committed to the interests of power and not the common people who are at the receiving end of the violence, and news and opinion always come from the top and not the bottom – in other words, the media report conflict by citing 'authorities', while the voices of those suffering from the violence often go unreported.

Furthermore, the conflict is "conceptualised, reductively, as war and violence, and that a war is reported much like a sports game..." (Lynch and Galtung 2010, p. 5). That is, in war journalism, the conflict is often regarded as war and violence. Kempf (2002, p 60) echoed this view by stating that

"war discourse reduces conflicts to force and violence", and that war is often reported the same way as sport. Galtung (1998) compared war journalism and peace journalism to sport journalism and health journalism, respectively. Like sports journalism, war journalism is zero-sum. It focuses on the 'game' per se, who is winning, who is losing – one side wins, the other loses. The result of this war/sport style of reporting is that the readers do not understand the causes and goals of each party. Peace journalism, on the other hand, is seen as health journalism, which focuses not just on the disease itself but describes its cause and also its possible remedies (Ibid.).

From this ground, the aim of peace journalism is to explore the background of conflict formation so as to provide a better understanding of the conflict. It seeks out causes and solutions, and gives voices to all sides involved. Galtung came up with the opposing framework classifications of war and peace journalism based on four broad practices and orientations as shown in table 4.1:

WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM	PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM
I. WAR/VIOLENCE-ORIENTED Focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone Making wars mysterious/secret "Us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us" See "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war Dehumanization of "them"; more so the more frightening the weapon Reactive: waiting for violence before reporting Focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)	I. PEACE/CONFLICT-ORIENTED Explore conflict causation, x parties, y goals, z issues general "win, win" orientation Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture Making conflicts transparent Giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity Humanization of all sides; more so the more devastating the weapons Proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)
II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED Expose "their" untruths "Our" cover-ups/lies	II. FACT-ORIENTED Expose untruths on all sides / uncover all cover-ups
III. ELITE-ORIENTED Focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece Give name to their evil-doers Focus on elite peace-makers	III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED Focus on suffering everywhere; on women, the aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless Give a name to all evil-doers Focus on people peace-makers
IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED Peace = victory + ceasefire Conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand Focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up	IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED Peace = nonviolence + creativity Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war Focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation

Table 4.1: War and Peace Journalism model

(From Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, p. 6) as informed by Galtung's 1998 war and peace journalism framework)

Table 4.1 illustrates that war and peace journalism are seen as two opposing frameworks and they follow two different approaches to report an event. Lynch and Galtung (2010, p. 52) stated that "They are two angles, two discourses, with underlying cognitive and normative assumptions. Both are based on reporting facts." In war journalism, the main features are war/violence oriented; propaganda-oriented; elite-oriented; and victory-oriented. On the other hand, the main features of peace journalism are conflict/peace oriented; truth-oriented; people-oriented and solution-oriented. Apart from these orientations, Galtung's classification of war and peace journalism involve the use of language: that the language of war journalism is demonising, victimising and emotive, while the language of peace journalism will avoid those characteristics.

4.2 Peace Journalism as an alternative way of conflict reporting

This section explains the concept of peace journalism and its theoretical framework.

4.2.1 What is Peace Journalism?

Peace journalism is derived from the insight first offered in *The Structure of Foreign News* by Galtung and Ruge (1965)³⁹ that news content is governed by representational conventions, which produce discernible patterns of inclusion and omission. They proposed that the gatekeeping decisions on particular stories can be shown to be taking place according to discernible patterns, and that news is a systematic process, which inhabits and upholds its own conventions for presenting the reality.

Galtung (1996, 1998, 2002) used the media distortion of reality theory as his departing point. In sum, the theory holds that news does not present all facts, but only some facts (often distorted), because journalists function as gatekeepers, deciding what should be kept in and what left out. News stories, thus, only present surface realities and there are always contradicting narratives. Often the media are also manipulated in an effort to win the support of the public. This results in an inaccurate representation of the conflict. Further, as Galtung argued, war journalism leaves out the most important part of the story – how a conflict might be transcended. Thus, war journalists fail in their job to inform themselves and their public about what they can do to lessen the conflict.

Peace journalism, for its part, is about helping journalists to become more sensitive to a broader and more complex view of events, and educating them about ways of reporting to defuse – and not escalate – the problem (Galtung 1998, 2002; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). As Galtung proposed, the idea of peace journalism is to report the conflict with the objective of promoting conflict resolution, in line with the ideals of good journalism such as truthfulness, objectivity, neutrality and detachment. Peace journalism is a way for the media to fulfil their social responsibility and transform the conflict. Fundamentally, it aims to escape from war journalism practises that construct the conflict as a polarised and zero-sum game (Galtung 1998; 2002).

Peace journalism advocates reporting truthfully on the views of all sides of the conflict, as opposed to reporting just details of the violence and propaganda (Galtung 2002). In this sense, a peace journalist would move beyond event-based reporting to process-based reporting by exploring the deeper and

more complex issues to help the readers to understand all possible causes of the conflict and by reaching out to people from all parties involved in the conflict to be their voice.

Galtung (1998, p. 8) proposed that “peace journalism is a journalism of attachment to all actual and potential victims”. Attachment, to Galtung, meant being attached to all sides of the conflict – not just to one side. In other words, journalists who engage in peace journalism will give space to all the voices in the conflict to create a balanced news story. In this sense, peace journalist works in the same way as objective journalists who cover all sides of a story, report the views of all people concerned, without interpreting the content (Galtung 2002, p.2).

While Galtung’s (1998) meaning of ‘attachment’ means attached to all sides of the conflict, Bell (1998, p. 16) gave a definition of his term 'journalism of attachment' as a journalism "that is aware of its responsibilities, that will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor". Bell (1998) who had experience of covering the Bosnian ethnic cleansing between 1994-1995, argued that it is hard for journalists to remain impartial and that objectivity is "illusion and shibboleth (p.16)." His basic idea, which challenges the notion of objectivity in journalism, is that journalists should take sides and look for the truth on who is right or wrong in order to preserve morality in journalism. In this sense, 'journalism of attachment' stresses the moral and social responsibility role of the media. It closely aligns with the concept of 'peace journalism' that journalists should expose the truth of all sides, and include background of the conflict in their reporting.

The concept of peace journalism was further developed by Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick (2005), who adapted Galtung’s framework. They came up with the list of 17 do's and don'ts for journalists, which is used widely by many peace journalism contributors. The list, according to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, p. 5), aims to provide a more accurate representation of the conflict, and allows journalists to “update the concepts of balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting."They saw peace journalism as a possible road map that “...traces the connections between journalists, their sources, the story they cover and the consequences of their journalism” (Ibid.) and a set of tools that “both conceptual and practical [are] intended to equip journalists to offer a better public service (Ibid.)."

McGoldrick (2000, p.19-20) defined peace journalism as “a new form of journalism...which looks at how journalists could be part of the solution rather than part of the problem." Lynch (2007) believed

that if journalists on both sides of the conflict paid more attention to the conflict and its effects, their reporting would be more accurate. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, p.5) defined peace journalism as:

"...when editors and reporters make choices, about when to report and how to report it, which creates opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent, development responses to the conflict."

From the above definition, peace journalism aims to provide a deeper understanding of a conflict situation to the society so that they view it, and respond to it, after considering the more complex – and arguably reliable – narrative (instead of surface reality). Journalists are actively encouraged to think about the consequences of their reporting and there is an emphasis on their social responsibility. They are expected to point out solutions wherever possible. The underlying objective, thus, is to change conventional journalistic routines in order to help create peace for society.

Other kinds of journalism that relate to the concept of peace journalism are, for example, 'conflict sensitive journalism' (Howard 2003), 'constructive conflict coverage' (Kempf 2002, 2005, 2007), and 'Human rights journalism' (Shaw 2012). I will come back to discuss these concepts later in this chapter. In addition, the principles of peace journalism are not limited to news text. They can be applied to other forms of reporting, such as photojournalism (Aslam 2011), or what Allan (2011) called 'Peace photography'. Ottosen (2007) agreed with this view when he proposed that by exploring visual elements in the news, such as photographs or cartoons, it could potentially lead to a more critical and investigative reporting of wars and conflicts, which will further strengthen the practice of peace journalism. In this sense, peace journalism can be applied to other forms of news, such as photos, cartoons or TV reports.

4.2.2 Theoretical framework of peace journalism

The theory that supports peace journalism is the 'framing theory'. Many scholars proposed that, theoretically, the framing theory forms the foundation of war and peace journalism (Lee and Maslog 2005; McMahan and Chow-White 2011; Fong 2009; Ross 2007). According to Entman (1993), frames contain key ideas, stock phrases, and stereotypical images to reinforce a particular interpretation, and through repetition, placement, and reinforcement, the text and images provide a dominant

interpretation more readily perceivable, acceptable and memorable than other interpretations. In other words, framing is how the media select particular issues and highlight them in the media text in the process of news making (Entman 1993). As Entman (1993) put it:

"To frame is to elect some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993, p. 50-51).

Framing also relates to the agenda-setting theory as McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) suggested that framing is the extension of agenda-setting – or as they put it, ‘second level agenda-setting’. The first level of agenda-setting deals with the selection of issues by the news media, while framing deals with the selection of elements within a particular issue. As Ghanem (1997, p. 8) put it, "...traditional agenda setting posits that the media tell us what to think about, and framing deals with the issue of the media telling us how to think about an issue." In other words, framing is when journalists write a news story by choosing particular topics from among other topics and giving the meaning to the topics in whatever way they want to express it.

Further, Scheufele (1999) proposed that framing is both a macro and a micro level construct. At the macro-level, the term framing is used to refer to a mode of representation that journalists use to present their information to the audience, while at the micro-level, it refers to how the audience use the information presented and how they form impressions regarding the issues. De Vresse (2005) stated that frame-building in the news refers to factors that influence the structural qualities of the news frame. The outcomes of this process are the frames manifest in the text, and frame-setting refers to the interaction between media frames and an individual’s knowledge and predisposition.

The study of framing often explores the extent to which and under what circumstances the audience reflects the frame made available to them. The consequences of framing can be at the individual or societal level (Weaver 2007). At the individual level, framing can affect attitudes on issues based on certain frames, and on a societal level, it may shape social level processes, such as decision-making or collective actions (Ibid.). At a methodological level, framing can be studied by a systematic content

analysis or a more interpretive textual analysis. The study of framing is more concerned with 'how' the issues or objects are presented in the media rather than 'which' issues are reported (Ibid.).

In the same way for peace journalism, the peace journalists have to make choices about what issue to report and how to report the conflict in a way that can create opportunities for the public to consider and to value non-violent responses to the conflict (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, p. 5). In this sense, framing is generally concerned about the presentation of issues to influence the public's perception, which is similar to the peace journalism model as it sets out guidance for journalists of what to include and not to include in news reporting in order to influence the public with the ultimate goal of finding a resolution to the conflict.

4.3 Peace Journalism in perspectives

This section looks at different approaches and perspectives of peace journalism posed by different scholars.

Conflict sensitive journalism

Howard (2003) combined conflict analysis techniques together with peace journalism and proposed that conflict sensitive journalism is the journalism that is sensitive to conflict. The main idea is that conflict can be reduced through good reporting and "news reports can be constructive, by making citizens better informed, and possibly safer, by also reporting on efforts to promote conflict reduction (p.15)." Howard (2003, p.5) defined conflict sensitive journalists as follows:

"...(a conflict sensitive journalist) applies conflict analysis and searches for new voices and new ideas about the conflict. He or she reports on who is trying to resolve the conflict, looks closely at all sides, and reports on how other conflicts were resolved. A conflict sensitive journalist takes no sides, but it is engaged in the search for solutions. Conflict sensitive journalists choose their words carefully."

The conflict sensitive journalist will analyse the conflict situation and provide information that makes the public well-informed, as well as proposing a possible solution to the conflict. Compared to peace

journalism, 'conflict sensitive journalism' puts more focus on analysing the conflict but shares the same goal of reporting in a way that leads to the resolution of the conflict.

Ethically responsible journalism

Taking media ethics as his departing ground, Tehranian (2002) explored peace journalism in the global conflict setting with an attempt to call for the standard of global media ethics, and to answer the question of whether it is possible to develop peace journalism based on global media ethics in a world that is dominated by government and commercial media monopolies (Ibid. p.58). Most media ethics are performed professionally at the individual level; however, in this globalised world, as Tehranian (2002) argued, the media ethics need to be performed at all institutional, national and international levels.

For that reason, a standard of global media ethics is required, and it should be "a pluralism of content to reflect the diversity and complexity of the world" (Ibid. p.58). Most of the stories are told by powerful media sources, which will inevitably lead to a hegemony of opinion; peace journalism and media ethics cannot survive in such an environment (Ibid). From this, Tehranian (2002) concluded that, "ethically responsible journalism is a *sine qua non* of peace journalism" (Ibid. 58), and for "peace journalism to take on a sustained life, the voiceless around the globe must be empowered" (Ibid. p.79).

Peace journalism through conflict theory: the role of media as a third party

Taking conflict theory as an approach, Peleg (2006) proposed that many insights of conflict theory can support peace journalism and can be used as a powerful tool for journalists and readers to explore conflict and bring about its resolution. In his study, Peleg (2006) used conflict theory with its focus on analysing the structure and players in the conflict and found that peace journalism has a role as a third party because it can facilitate both sides to get to know and to understand one another more deeply, and to bring about a creative solution to the conflict.

Fisher (1997), too, saw the media as a third party in the conflict. He stated that protracted conflicts usually require a third party to mediate or facilitate interaction between the rival parties because the conflict might generate mistrust preventing the parties from communicating directly. The functions of the third party in the conflict can be described as "balancing the situational power of parties and

synchronizing confrontation efforts, pacing the phases of the dialogue, promoting openness [and] enhancing communication" (Ibid. p. 143). Peleg (2006, p. 1) concluded that peace journalism as a third party can best enhance aspects of reconciliation and resolution by changing the norms and habits in reporting conflict and, in this way, the media will act as facilitator, mediator, or arbitrator between the sides in the conflict.

Constructive conflict coverage: escalation and de-escalation model

Kempf (2002, 2003, 2005, 2007) also used conflict theory to explore conflict coverage and came up with escalation and de-escalation models of conflict coverage. The field of psychology was also applied to explore the responses of audiences towards these two models. Constructive conflict coverage explores the transformation of conflict at each stage, and looks into the causes of the escalation-oriented form of conventional war reporting in order to find answers of how it can be transformed in to de-escalation oriented coverage (Kempf 2003).

Kempf (2005) claimed that because of the structural constraints during wars and crises, only a small number of journalists frame a conflict in a firmly de-escalation-oriented way. He proposed several constraints that can impact on audience responses to peace journalism (Ibid. p.3).⁴⁰ In his view, journalism and the media play an essential role in the social construction of reality that can be fulfilled through the types of news coverage they choose, which can be an impetus both to escalation or de-escalation. In this sense, to produce good journalism, journalists need knowledge, competencies and qualifications that go beyond journalistic practices (Kempf 2007, p.5).

The complexity of media and conflict reality and the practical use of peace journalism

Blaesi (2004) believed that peace journalism cannot be practical unless conducted under the real circumstances of today's media. In order to find the circumstances in which journalists can actually work in times of conflict, it is important to focus on the news production process. Blaesi (2004, p.2) based his study on the qualitative analysis of interviews with German journalists and proposed that the production process can be described as 'a complex interaction of six factors', which are: structural aspects of the media, conflict situation on-site, personal features of the individual journalist, the political climate, lobbies, and the audience.

The findings revealed that peace journalism can be used at its best in conflicts where neither one's own country nor its close allies are involved. If one's own country is involved, then the practice of peace journalism will be harder due to the consequence of political climate and the negative consequences that one can face during the time of conflict (Blaesi 2004, 2007). Blaesi concluded that the model of peace journalism should be used but also adapted to the complexities of media realities in different conflict situations.

Blaesi (2007) conducted another study in an attempt to find how the different stages of conflict (non-violent, violent and aftermath) can affect the practice of peace journalism, and to determine which stage is best for putting peace journalism into practice. The finding showed that peace journalism practice is harder in times of war because the psychological processes that take place in a society in wartime cannot be simply switched off. Consequently, the model can be used best in the nonviolent stage of conflict (Ibid. p.8). He concluded that peace journalism must be implemented in societies in times of peace and only then it will have an increased chance of sustainable realisation in wartime.

Three conceptual frameworks and Peace Journalism

Hackett (2006) analysed three conceptual frameworks and their relationships with journalism and other relations in order to determine whether the use of peace journalism is possible, and for these three models "to help identify the tasks, challenges and potential strategies for peace journalism movement" (Ibid. p.1). These three models are the 'Propaganda Model' (Herman and Chomsky 2002), 'Hierarchy of Influences' (Shoemaker and Reese 1996) and 'Journalistic Field Model' (Pierre Bourdieu 1993).

The findings concluded that all models help identify the tasks, challenges and potential strategies for the peace journalism movement differently. Nevertheless, they have limitations because all three models were developed in the context of Western nation states, which assumed that each operated within a well-established institutional setting with a stable relationship with mass audiences and in a stable economic and political situation (Ibid. p.10). Consequently, all of these models may have less to offer for the implementation of peace journalism in other countries, and, within the dominant Western countries, social and economic changes have affected the face of journalism and the notion of 'objectivity' has declined (Ibid).

Human Rights Journalism: a close concept for a non-violent approach

Shaw (2012) explored the dimensions of peace journalism with human rights journalism and claimed that human rights journalism has "the potential to complement PJ to make it more global, long term, pro-active and sustainable in just peace-building" (Ibid. p.47). According to Shaw (2012, p. 46), human rights journalism is "based on human rights and global justice, a journalism that challenges political, economic, social and cultural imbalances of society at both local and global levels".

In the same way as peace journalism, human rights journalism has elements of critical conflict analysis and stresses a non-violent approach, which will lead toward the solution of the conflict. Also, Shaw (2012) maintained that human rights journalism complements the four orientations of peace journalism as proposed by Galtung (1992; 1996) and supported by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) in terms of having a focus on people, truth, solution and peace, or a win-win orientation.

Nevertheless, Shaw (2012, p.46) claimed that the solution-oriented aspect of human rights journalism goes further than that of peace journalism as it aims to end 'triple win' (both parties and the community as 'the third side'). Thus the human rights journalism approach not only supports the peace journalism model but also adds four other values to the model: "global rather than selective reporting; a bias in favor of vulnerable voices; a proactive (preventive) rather than reactive (prescriptive) approach to reporting; and an attachment to, rather than detachment from, victims of violence" (Shaw 2011, p.116).

These attributes of human rights journalism will enable peace journalism to lay justifiable claim to observing the values of "humanitarianism, truth, holism and empowerment (ibid)". In this sense, human rights journalism extends peace journalism to include human rights and the victims of human rights violations at all levels, and proposes further solutions to conflict that include not only the parties that represent the sides in the conflict but also the communities in which the conflict takes place as a whole.

4.4 Challenging peace journalism: the critique

This section looks into the criticisms and the counter-criticisms of peace journalism.

4.4.1 Criticism

Peace journalism has been criticised by scholars and media professionals on different levels namely: structural, theoretical, and conceptual. At the structural level, peace journalism ignores the structural constraints of journalism (Fawcett 2002; Hanitzsch 2004, 2007). Hanitzsch (2007, p.1) stated that peace journalism is "based on an overly individualistic perspective and ignored the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists...", which means that the conduct of peace journalism is not a matter of an individual but it involves a process of news production and other organisational and institutional factors. In the article "Why Peace Journalism isn't news", Fawcett (2002, p. 221) supported this view by saying that it is necessary to consider the power of the "...discursive structures, as well as the power of the political and professional cultures within which journalists operate."

At the theoretical level, peace journalism is to a large extent drawn from 'naïve realism' and based largely on the assumption of powerful, causal, and linear media effects (Hanitzsch 2004, p.483). It overestimates the power of the media and underestimates the impact of personal communication (Ibid. p.489). Despite being a peace journalism supporter, Keeble (2010) criticised the peace journalism theory for placing an emphasis on the professional response and argued that journalism is best seen as political practice, a political strategy to change the society. According to Keeble (2010, p. 51), "the dominant strand in PJ theory focuses too closely on the notion of journalism as a privileged, professional activity and fails to take into account the critical intellectual tradition which locates professions historically and politically..." Keeble called for a radical form of journalism, especially peace journalism, since he saw it as a political practice.

At the conceptual level, Hanitzsch (2007, p. 7) argued that peace journalism is "rather a mistitled concept", and that many principles of peace journalism are the elements embedded in "good and many-sided journalism." In this sense, peace journalism is seen as "old wine in a new bottle" (Hanitzsch 2007, p. 2), and the activists may consider using another form of public communication intended to serve a particular cause such as public relations (p.7). Lastly, Hanitzsch (2004) suggested that journalism cannot be engaged actively in the peaceful settlement of conflict as that is the responsibility of politicians and the military (p. 484). Journalism can contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, but its potential influence is limited because "a peaceful culture is the precondition of peace journalism rather than its outcome (Hanitzsch 2007, p.7)."

Peace journalism is largely criticised because it challenges the traditional journalistic notion of objectivity. Loyn (2003) argued that the job of the reporters is to witness the truth and such a commitment can only be kept by adhering to objectivity, which is the only sacred goal. Such a goal is possible if and when the reporters "preserve their position as observers not players" (Loyn 2007, p.3). Journalists should do their job in reporting the truth and should preserve their position as observers, not players. In this sense, peace journalism might also confuse journalists about their roles as neutral disseminators of facts because the journalists' tools should only be sharpened and not altered (Loyn 2007, p.5). Loyn (2007, p.1) claimed that the opposite of peace journalism is good journalism, and peace-making is not the business of a reporter.

Nevertheless, the supporters of peace journalism also agreed on peace journalism's controversial issue of objectivity. Shinar (2007, p. 4) saw that one of the professional reasons that causes peace journalism's lack of popularity is the principle of objectivity. Kempf (2007), too, stated that some peace journalism supporters seem to underrate values of objectivity, neutrality and detachment (Ibid. p.2), which are the professional norms of good journalism, and that turning away from the call for objectivity endangers the acceptance of the peace journalistic project (Ibid. p.7).

4.4.2 Counter-criticism

Advocates of peace journalism have responded to the criticisms mentioned above. Kempf (2007) claimed that peace journalism focuses on the social responsibility role of the media, which will lead to good journalism. As such, he replaced Loyn's (2007) dichotomy of "good journalism or peace journalism" with the formula of "good journalism = responsible journalism = peace journalism" (Kempf 2007, p.3). Lynch (2013, p. 51) also agreed with this view by stating "peace journalism embodies an approach to reporting conflicts that can be regarded as good journalism." On the issue of 'structural constraints', the supporters of peace journalism agree that it requires structural change at a different level in order for its implementation to become more effective (Blaesi 2004; Tehranian 2002; Hackett 2006).

In direct response to David Loyn's (2003, 2007) criticism, Lynch (2007), the main supporter of peace journalism, viewed that Loyn lacked critical awareness in general, and that Loyn refused to

acknowledge the structural characteristics of news representations of conflicts. Lynch (2007, p. 7) argued that making news involved the 'framing' of facts, and that some facts are kept while others are not. Peace journalism is only one form of framing with objectivity, and, in this sense, Loyn misrepresented the dividing lines in the debate over peace journalism because he focused too much on the facts. On Loyn's criticism against journalists seeking to become 'active' players in the stories they cover, Lynch (2003, p. 5) argued that journalists are always involved because it is their responsibility to choose which facts are reported. As to Hanitzsch (2004, 2007), Lynch (2007) argued that his conventionalist view still lacked critical engagement with conflict and peace issues.

In response to the criticism that news reporting and peace-making are different things, Peleg (2007, p. 5) stated that the two can be brought together by modifying one to accommodate the other in order to deliver a report with a peace objective. In defending against Hanitzsch's (2004) argument that peace journalism seeks to divert political responsibilities from politicians to journalists, Peleg (2007, p.5) explained the matter by saying that the task of peace-making is not only the responsibility of the politician, but also that of the population at large. Peace journalism does not see its audiences as a "passive mass that needs to be enlightened" (Hanitzsch 2007, p.6), but its purpose is to enhance the readers' ability to form a judgment and interpret the facts when a wider range of accounts are presented for them to consider (Peleg 2007, p.7). Peace journalism is also not "an old wine in a new bottle" (Hanitzsch 2007) because it escapes the confines of conventional journalism, and is not merely a more elaborate version of it (Ibid. p.7). Peleg's argument in defence of peace journalism is worth quoting at length:

"Peace journalism is not merely good journalism; it is different journalism and a departure from the traditional way of covering news stories, particularly conflict and violence, not only in nuances and emphases but in substance. Peace journalism is not to report what is seen but to report what can be seen; not simply to reflect reality but to explore reality and unearth what is not ostensibly reflective: to wisely utilize structural and organizational imperatives and to be subdued by them; to regard and cultivate readers' interests but not to be manipulated by them. This is the profound shift in the nature of journalism that the new philosophy offers (Peleg 2007, p.7)."

As for the notion of objectivity, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) argued that journalists are involved no matter what; they cannot be completely objective. When reporting the conflict, they see only parts of the reality so it is a matter of making choices of what to report (Ibid). Lynch (2007, p.7) maintained that peace journalism does not call on the journalists to cross the line and set out to involve themselves but to allow their journalism to be based on their observer status. Lynch and Galtung (2010, p. 52) further claimed that the main issue is about the selection of which story to report and how to report it within the context of the event. They stated: "Objectivity is not the issue. Selection is the issue, the criteria applied and the codes and the context in which the event is placed and interpreted (Lynch and Galtung 2010, p. 52)."

Furthermore, Hackett (2011, p. 42) stated that PJ constitutes an *epistemological challenge* to the objectivity regime and challenges dominant *news values*. However, peace journalism can legitimately present itself as "a more complete and accurate form of journalism than the standardised and stunted practices of 'objectivity'", but the normative dimensions of objectivity, for example, ethics of truth-telling on matters of public interest, should be maintained (Ibid, p. 61).

Peleg (2007) stated that objectivity is a noble idea but completely unsustainable. Journalists should take to it in a more realistic way by looking for neutral perspectives on any controversial issue and should carefully study and report opinions from all sides. This does not mean that journalists have no stance on the issues of the conflict, but that their personal opinions should be left out and not interfere with the facts (Ibid. p.5). Lastly, Bell (1998) claimed that it is hard and impractical for journalists who report on wars to remain objective.

4.5 Peace journalism in practices

The first part of this section looks into the implementation of peace journalism in different international conflict settings. The second half looks into the Thai media and their practice of peace journalism including a review of Thai literature on peace journalism.

4.5.1 Peace journalism in the international context

Several studies have been conducted on peace journalism in various contexts over the past decades. This section presents an overview of these studies, which reflects the attempt to promote peace journalism in different conflict settings.

Most research on peace journalism has been conducted by looking at different conflict settings in different parts of the world with the use of a content analysis and interviews. Findings vary because every conflict setting has a different social and economic background, political structure, and media organisation structure. Perez (2000) presented an in-depth analysis of media coverage of the war in Iraq as a case study in order to determine how the war was presented through the US media. The study applied Galtung's peace journalism discourse with the cognitive linguistic frames of George Lakoff (2002), with the assumption that the combination of the two approaches would give a full understanding of how the situation is interpreted in a certain way, and how that can help identify a peaceful solution. The study concluded that journalists can apply peace journalism endlessly to cover a variety of issues, not just in conflict reporting, and that the peace discourse and cognitive linguistics frame can be applied more generally in peace media.

Orgunes and Terzis (2000) explored the reporting of the conflict between Greece and Turkey. The authors investigated the role of the media in the conflict by interview method with the objective of finding some institutional, technical and cultural factors that influence the media's disposition in the coverage of conflict, and to identify possible solutions. Their findings revealed that the history of nation-building played an important role in shaping the national identities of both nations, and that the mass media of both nations were used "to reinforce the myth of the unitary state, on one hand by emphasising the similarities among the members of the nation, and on the other hand by creating a fear of the 'other'..." (Ibid. p.408). Stereotypes and negative images designed to dehumanise the 'other' were also used (Ibid.).

Both national media played an important role in the preservation of their national identities and in fuelling the conflict "by shaping social attitudes and political decisions in times of conflict" (Ibid. p.409). The interviews revealed that the main constraints for the solution-oriented way of reporting are: the national ideology seen in the media culture; the commercialisation of the media; changes in media ownership; and the interlocking interest between the media, politics, and business factors (Ibid. p.405).

These constraints left the journalists with only a limited choice of how to report the conflict, and they used these constraints as an 'excuse' when confronted with their diffidence and submission to the system (Ibid. p.417). The interviewees also suggested that to find a solution to the conflict, an in-depth communication between the media of the two countries is needed (Ibid. p. 405).

Using the case study of the Northern Ireland conflict, Fawcett (2002) involved nationalist and unionist newspapers in Northern Ireland, which joined together in peace journalism initiatives, to examine the conciliation and conflict framework. The case study illustrated how rhetorical and narrative structures shaped and constrained the way in which newspapers report conflict (Ibid. p.213). The paper concluded that the rhetorical and narrative forms used by news media facilitate certain frames or discourses by shaping and constraining the manner in which newspapers report conflicts (Ibid. p. 221). At the same time, those structures can position newspapers as both politicians and storytellers in their coverage of conflict, which suggests that newspapers are likely to act in the manner which they believe best suits their purpose. Fawcett (2002, p. 221) proposed that, to promote peace journalism and a win-win framework, it is necessary to address the power of these discursive structures, as well as the power of the political and professional cultures within which journalists operate.

Considered pioneers in using the peace journalism framework as a mode of analysis, Lee and Maslog (2005) studied Asian newspapers and the coverage of conflict by examining the extent to which four Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines were framed as either war or peace journalism based according to Galtung's framework. The findings from a content analysis suggest that, overall, the news coverage of conflicts in these countries is war-oriented. The Indian and Pakistani coverage of the Kashmir issue shows the strongest war journalism framework, while the coverage of the Tamil Tiger movement and the Mindanao conflict showed some application of a peace journalism approach (Ibid. p.311). The three main indicators of peace journalism are the avoidance of demonising language, a nonpartisan approach, and multiparty orientation (Ibid. p. 311). The war journalism indicators are a focus on the here and now, an elite orientation, and a dichotomy of good and bad.

In 2010, Lee conducted another study comparing the news coverage of three Asian conflicts: India and Pakistan's dispute over Kashmir, the Tamil Tigers movement in Sri Lanka, and the Indonesian civil wars in Aceh and Maluku (Lee 2010, p. 361). What distinguished this study from others is that the author chose to include vernacular newspapers in the analysis. The findings showed that peace journalism is subjected to structural limitations in this context and that structural changes are needed for it to be adapted to suit a mainstream approach. The conclusion was that characteristic forms in the media and institutional constraints, such as language, story, type, production source and contextual variables (the conflict's length and intensity), shape the patterns of war and peace journalism (Ibid.).

Spencer (2005) examined the role of the news media in a range of international conflict situations, by focusing on how conflict-oriented reports tend to reinforce violence rather than propose solutions to conflicts. The study explored news coverage of conflict situations in Vietnam, Rwanda, Bosnia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland and Iraq. The findings revealed that the reports lacked any attention to conflict prevention and that "news coverage is all too often concerned with entertainment and drama at the expense of detailed analysis and deconstruction... this has negative consequences for public understanding about how others are perceived" (Ibid. p.2). The media have a great impact in shaping political decisions and public policy, and by focusing on moral and ethical questions about journalistic responsibility, Spencer further stated that "journalists are viewed as humans first and journalists second" (Ibid. p.5). Hence the journalistic responsibility is more important for people than journalistic practices or any other interests.

Goretti (2007) explored how peace journalism is applied in the conflict in Uganda by studying the media coverage of the two main newspapers – one government newspaper and one private newspaper – in northern Uganda over a period of three years. The findings showed that most of the coverage on the conflict was written in the form of news stories, which showed that the journalists play an important role in keeping people informed about the war, and that people's perception can be shaped easily depending on how the journalists report the conflict (Ibid. p.1) The findings from a content analysis showed that the government paper expressed bias and confrontation in its report, while the private-owned newspaper was more balanced and used various sources for its reports, which were written in a more conciliatory tone (ibid.). Coverage of peace initiatives could still be seen to a reasonable extent

but the coverage still focused more on the government's peace efforts (Ibid.). The study suggested that journalists should take their responsibility seriously especially during times of crisis because the reporting of conflicts differs from the reporting during normal conditions and is "fraught with ethical challenge (Ibid. p. 8)." Thus the journalists should never forget their duty to serve the public instead of individual or group interests, and that the ability to weigh stories and make quick judgment of what to report is important because many conflict situations are urgent (Ibid.).

Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2008) explored war journalism in the article "War Journalism in the Threat Society." 'Threat society' is a historical change that took place after the Global War on Terror, which created public fear that has become a permanent state of mind, and leading to a "culture of fear challenging journalism in a more dramatic way than perhaps ever before" (Ibid. p.2). This culture of fear "seriously challenges conflict and peace journalism in many new ways (Ibid. p.1)." The authors explored the consequences of this culture of fear on war and peace journalism by exploring the Norwegian media coverage of the Iraq war to find the extent to which peace journalism is suitable for presenting global situations and whether it had enough potential to change the global news agenda. The findings revealed that because the Global War on Terror has much more encompassing effects than any previous war, the peace journalism strategies seem to be deficient and impractical in many ways because the coverage focuses on situations of military violence and how they are reported, and it could eventually lead to open violence (Ibid. p. 14).

Ross and Alankus (2010) examined the headlines and contents in the print media in both Turkish northern and Greek southern Cyprus to see how they reported the 'Cyprus problem'. The Cyprus problem is an on-going conflict on the island of Cyprus between the population of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and it is believed to be one of the most intractable conflicts in the world. Ross and Alankus (2010) argued that even though they were provided with more opportunities for more open and inclusive coverage and more chances for reconciliation, the press – both inside and outside the conflict – did little to promote the constructive foundation of peace (Ibid. p.243). The press reinforced the fundamental differences between the two sides by stressing their identities, which was a failure to serve as a medium for reconciliation and peace-making. The research concluded that the press was one of the reasons obstructing the reconciliation of the conflict (Ibid. p. 254).

To conclude, different conflict settings have different degrees of peace journalism implementation. Various studies have been conducted to show the attempts to promote and develop peace journalism in different conflict settings around the world. The common method of research is to explore the local media and their conflict coverage within the perspective of peace journalism in order to determine how the media report the local conflict, and whether or not the reporting leads towards the resolution of the conflict (Orgunes and Terzis 2000; Fawcett 2002; Lee and Maslog 2005; Lee 2010; Spencer 2005; Goretti 2007; Ross and Alankus 2010). The method used in these studies, especially the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ elements as used in Lee and Maslog (2005) and Lee (2010), have inspired the methods used in this present research.

4.5.2 Peace journalism in the context of Thailand's southern conflict

This sub-section looks at the implementation of peace journalism into Thai media practices and ends with a review of peace journalism literature within the context of this study.

4.5.2.1 Attempts to promote peace journalism into Thai media practices

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1 (1.1) and Chapter 3 (3.4) on the criticism of the Thai media, we can see that the Thai media have been criticised widely for their reporting of the southern conflict and have been considered as one of the factors instigating a continuation of violence and creating misunderstanding between the Thai majority and the Muslim minority. The Thai Journalists' Association (TJA) and media professionals were aware that the Thai media lacked the skills in reporting the conflict. The Thai media has an inadequate understanding of the social and cultural differences and history behind the conflict, which resulted in them presenting a false perception and misunderstanding among the general public.

The TJA saw the idea of peace journalism with its emphasis on the social responsibility role of journalists and the focus on reporting on causes and consequences of the conflict as a good solution to this problem (Ruangdit 2012). In 2005, the first pilot project on peace journalism, the Issara News Center (INC), was set up with the main objective to promote peace journalism in Thai journalistic

practices and to provide knowledge and information on the conflict to journalists and reporters covering the conflict.

The TJA called for participation from 20 newspapers in Thailand to send their reporters and journalists to join the centre and provided them with the courses and workshops to promote peace journalism. Because of the political situation in 2006, which ended with the coup that ousted Prime Minister Thaksin, the newspapers asked their reporters and journalists to withdraw from the centre and return to Bangkok to report on the political crisis; the project was then put on hold and later dissolved.⁴¹ The Issara News Center was later integrated into the Issara News Agency (INA) under the Thai Press Development Foundation in 2007. Until now, the news agency still produces community news, social policy news and southern conflict news, as well as workshops and post-professional training for journalists.

Another attempt to promote peace journalism in the context of Thailand's southern conflict is Deep South Watch (DSW), which was a platform organisation established in 2006. The objective of DSW is to promote peace in the southern border provinces and to provide political space for various parties in the conflict to present their needs and roles. The aims of DSW "...are not only to create a realistic and comprehensive understanding of the conflict, but it is also expected that these practices will help to lessen the justification for use of violence from all parties..." In other words, the aim is to use non-violent means to constructively transform the conflict.⁴²

The work of DSW involves sharing news and articles on the southern conflict to persuade people to understand the situation and support peace as a solution; providing the platforms on which sides involved in the conflict, particularly those in the conflict area, can have their voices heard; and disseminating knowledge, collecting data on the incidents, and creating public learning spaces through forums, workshops and seminars. In 2010, DSW set up the Deep South Journalism School to provide a young generation of journalists with the skills and training needed for good journalistic practices in order for them to disseminate the voices of people in the conflict area to the greater Thai public.⁴³

The establishment of the two centres – the Issara News Center (INC) in 2005 and the Deep South

Watch (2006) – shows that peace journalism has been applied to Thai media practices since the early years of the southern conflict. This suggests that the Thai media see peace journalism as a beneficial practice that could lead to the resolution of the conflict, or at least, improve the journalistic practices of the journalists who cover the conflict. For 10 years, peace journalism has gained a lot of interest from Thai media professionals and academics. Books and articles have been published and researches have been conducted. The next section provides a review on peace journalism literature in this context.

4.5.2.2 Reviewing of peace journalism literature in the context of Thailand's southern conflict

Under TJA publications, Jamlongrach (2007) gave a background and history of the INC in '*The Red News field*' (*Sa-nham-kaosae-dang*). He concluded that the media team sent to the conflict area found that reporting of the conflict in the mainstream media contrasted with the reality they experienced, and they agreed that the problem was with the reporting style in the Thai media. He proposed a new guidance, taken from the peace journalism model, in reporting the conflict. The main focus was on giving information on the religion, culture and history of the region, and also on balancing the reportage by covering all sides of the conflict. He claimed that the most important thing was to analyse the incident and provide the public with process-based reporting because Thai society still lacks meaningful understanding of the conflict.

In the book '*When the sky is gloomy and the Chedi is broken in the deep South*' (*Mue-fa-mon-chedi-hak-tee-pak-tai*), Peetatawatchai (2007) showed 'the other side of the story' in order to promote a better understanding of the social and cultural life of the southern Muslims to the Thai public. Each chapter focused on different aspects of lives in the conflict area. There were, for example, stories about the villagers in the conflict area and their everyday lives, the life of a victim of Takbai, a Thai temple in a Muslim community, or the life of a Buddhist doctor in the local hospital. This was an attempt to put the everyday lives of local people in the area firmly into the public eye, something which had never been seen anywhere else.

In 2009, the TJA published the first handbook for journalists in Thailand with the focus on giving guidance of how to report a conflict. The '*Handbook for journalists reporting in conflict situation*'

(Ku-mue-rai-ngarn-kao-nai-sa-ta-na-garn-kwam-kad-yaeng) was written by Aiamsamrarn and included information on the southern conflict situation between 2004 and 2009 and a brief history of the conflict. The author collected stories and lessons from the experienced journalists in the field to present a picture of what it was like to report from the conflict area; how journalists should prepare themselves before going to the conflict zone; and how to report in a balanced manner.

In 2012, the Academic Institute of Public Media under the Thai PBS (Thai Public Broadcasting Service) published another handbook for Thai journalists, called *'Handbook for reporting toward conflict resolution: the case of the disturbance in the three southern border provinces'*. The book was based on a collection of researches, academic papers, seminar papers and interviews with journalists who worked in the conflict area. The chapters includes, for example, conflict reporting, peace journalism, and the BBC guidelines for reporting conflict and casualties. From this, we can see that different media institutions in Thailand saw the importance of putting peace journalism, and its idea of reporting conflict with the goal of bringing about peace, into the Thai journalistic practices.

At the academic level, few researches have been conducted on the Thai media and their reporting of the southern conflict. In her doctoral thesis, *'Journalism and the Path to Peace in the South of Thailand'*, Changkamol (2013) focused on the role of newspapers in reporting the southern conflict. The research used a mixture of methods including content analysis, in-depth interviews and participant observations, and focused on the news coverage and articles from six major newspapers in 2008. The coding sheet of the content analysis was adapted from Galtung's peace journalism theory. The findings showed that the news coverage relied mainly on authority sources; focused mainly on what happened; and emphasised the visible effects of the violent incidents. The thesis addressed a number of concerns regarding the problems of employing peace journalism in the Thai media, and proposed a four-point model for peace journalism by Thai journalists.

In another doctoral thesis, *'Mediating Political Dissent: A study of Thai news organisations and southern conflict reporting'*, Kularb (2013) examined the interplay between journalism and political and social institutions in Thailand in the context of the conflict. The study focused on Thai-language newspapers, and used content analysis and interviews to examine news content and news production practices. Kularb argued that the news coverage of the conflict still largely drew on the authority's perspectives, but that a change "...in the discursive contention and political consensus, as well as

diversity and complexity in Thai news ecology could provide opportunities for the counter-hegemonic accounts to emerge and facilitate healthy democratic debates about the southern conflict” (Kularb 2013, p. 1).

The literature on peace journalism in the context of Thailand’s southern conflict presented above indicates that Thai media professionals and academics see peace journalism as a good alternative and a useful technique for reporting in this context. We can see from the previous section (4.2.1.1) that peace journalism has been implemented and applied into practice on different local contexts; however, its success is dependent on a different development in political, economic and social structures, and especially the media institutions. For the Thai media, the attempt to put peace journalism into practice is clearly seen, for example, by setting up centres to educate and train journalists on the idea of peace journalism and to share knowledge on the background of the conflict; by publishing books and stories from 'the other side'; and by establishing guidelines for journalists and reporters to follow.

All of these suggest that the idea of peace journalism is largely welcomed in the Thai media scene. However, while a few studies have been conducted on the performances and output of the Thai media and their reporting of the southern conflict, the number is still limited. This is especially so with regard to the study of the output of the English-language newspapers and their reporting of the southern conflict. For that reason, this research has been designed to fill this gap.

4.5 Conclusion

The literature presented in this chapter shows that there have been attempts to promote peace journalism in different parts of the world. Since it is a new field, more research should be conducted at different levels and in local contexts to find a more practical version of peace journalism. Promoting peace journalism in a local context is also a challenge, since it requires the adaptation of the model because of the differences in the conflict’s historical background, its socio-political-economic background, and the structures of the relevant media organisations.

This research arises from my interest in peace journalism, particularly in the context of Thailand's southern conflict. It aims to fill the gap created by the lack of studies on the performance of the English-language newspapers in terms of this conflict. The results of reviewing relevant literature provided in this chapter, together with a review of the background of the conflict (Chapter 2) and an

analysis of the Thai media (Chapter 3), have informed the research questions of this study. The study looks for answers to 'how' the conflict is represented from the perspective of peace journalism, including 'to what extent' the peace journalism concept was used in the news reports, and 'why' the conflict is reported in this way. The ultimate aim of this research is to look for recommendations on how to improve news coverage in this context. The methodologies of this research were formed in order to find answers to these questions and achieve this objective. The theoretical approaches as well as discussions on the methods will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Research Methodologies

Content analysis and Semi-structured interviews

This research looks at the southern conflict in Thailand through the lens of peace journalism. Given the criticism that the Thai media have exacerbated the conflict with their journalistic practices, the attempt here is to understand the specific nature of the coverage in the Thai press, and to suggest ways in which the Thai media can present the situation in a more constructive manner. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, peace journalism, despite the many criticisms levelled against it, has the potential to offer a more conflict-sensitive coverage that could help the peace process. As set out in Chapter 1, Introduction, understanding the nature of conflict coverage in this specific conflict setting is an essential objective of this research. To understand the conflict coverage in this specific context, the objectives are spread across the following four research questions:

RQ1. How has the coverage of the two English newspapers in Thailand (Bangkok Post and The Nation) represented the southern conflict?

RQ2. To what extent do the two newspapers follow war-oriented and/or peace-oriented approaches in covering the southern conflict?

RQ3. What are the journalists' and the editors' perceptions of factors influencing the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict coverage?

RQ4. What can be an alternative way of covering the conflict in this specific context?

To answer the research questions, this inquiry used an interpretive approach. The objectives were to understand how the two newspapers presented the southern conflict in Thailand, and to learn the Thai journalists' and editors' perceptions of the coverage they produced. As argued earlier in the introduction chapter, media practitioners socially construct reality based on professional and personal

ideology, corporate interest, organisational norms and values and news schema formats (Van Dijk 1988; Fiske 1994). Thus, the way editors and journalists represent the conflict is arguably governed by the professional norm and individual perceptions of the conflict.

Two methods are used in this study. The primary method is a content analysis of selected news reports, aimed at profiling the coverage of the conflict in the *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* English newspapers. *RQ1* and *RQ2* are addressed by this method. The secondary method is semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors involved in the coverage of the conflict. The interviews aim to provide answers to *RQ3* and *RQ4* by eliciting perceptions on the southern conflict, the process of news production, and the challenges in covering the conflict. Furthermore, the interviews explore the journalists' and editors' views on alternative ways of reporting the conflict.

This chapter provides a justification for the two methods. First it presents the theoretical approaches, and then it explains the implementation of these methods for the purpose of this study.

5.1 Theoretical approaches

In this study, two theoretical approaches were applied. The first approach is the mass communication theory, and its concept of media power that focuses on the use of media language, and on how the media represent a conflict situation. The mass media has become a new mediator connecting people with social reality so the media have a crucial role in distributing knowledge and information. McQuail (2010, p. 81-82) proposed the 'mediation concept' of the mass media, which refers to the mediation of contact with social reality or how the media prevents a version of an incident, which the general populations could not directly observe by themselves.

The term 'mediation' could be defined in a variety of ways, ranging from neutrality and informing to negotiation or an attempt to manipulate and control (McQuail 2010). In this sense, the media not only act as a mediator portraying the reality of the society but also forge the elements which are held in common with others. In other words, they provide a shared perception of reality to the public.

Thomson (1990) proposed 'mediated quasi-interaction' to explain the relationship that constitutes a mass communication, which consists of distinguishing characteristics. Firstly, participants are not

inclined to know each other, and messages are produced for a large number of anonymous receivers. Secondly, mediated quasi-interaction is a one-way communication and lacks mediated feedback from the audience. In this way, the media is a means for social institutions to convey their selected versions of events and conditions to the general public; however, the messages are only one-way communications.

McQuail (2010) claimed that the most remarkable idea is that the media sought out institutional advocates as channels for reaching the general public and for conveying their chosen perspective on events and conditions. Since the media are a cultural institution with their own interests and rules in shaping the perception of reality, their supply of information could be distorted to a varying degree according to their own purposes or those of other social institutions. Therefore, the reliability of the media as purely neutral is questionable.

Under the premises of this study, the notion of media will be divided into two main areas: societal and cultural perspectives. This division is derived from the underlying assumption that society and culture could not exist without each other. I consider the mass media to be a mediator of reality on the grounds that the events which happen in the southern part of Thailand are conveyed to the audience through the media which decide on what and how to represent the southern conflict.

The second theoretical approach is the framing theory, which, as mentioned earlier in 4.2.2, is the theory that supports peace journalism. Johnson-Cartee (2005, p. 161) saw news writing as framing and proposed that when writing the news, journalists use their knowledge of the issues they are reporting along with their professional experience and social theory. Framing in news media is important in shaping both the public's and the decision maker's knowledge of the world, as it increases the perceived importance of particular issues by highlighting them, while conversely, makes some issues appear less important by ignoring them (Nelson and Oxley 1999). Framing is how the media report particular issues and highlight them in the media text in the process of news making (Entman 1993). It is based on the assumption that an issue characterised in the news can influence the perception of its audience (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007).

Therefore, framing theory can be applied as the research method with the objective of investigating the patterns appearing in the news content and to determine how certain issues are selected and highlighted. At the theoretical level, as stated earlier in 4.2.2, framing theory is a foundation of both war and peace journalism (Lee and Maslog 2005; McMahon and Chow-White 2011; Fong 2009) because framing, in the same way as the war and peace journalism model, deals with the presentation of issues in terms of what to include and not to include in the news reporting. For that reason, framing theory was utilised in this study to examine the presentation of news within the context of war and peace journalism.

This study aims to explore how the media presented the southern conflict and to what extent war and peace journalism were applied in the news reports. Mass communication theory and framing theory were taken as the theoretical approaches to form the methods specifically designed for this study. The reason for this is that mass communication theory can be applied to explore the representation of conflict in this specific context, and how the reality is constructed and presented by the media. On the other hand, framing theory can be applied to determine the extent to which war and peace journalism were put into practices in the writing of the news stories covered in this study. This sub-section explains the theoretical approaches chosen for this study, the next section will explain how the methods were used to answer the research questions.

5.2 Methods: Answering the *RQs*

As mentioned in the introduction, the study aims to explore the representation of the conflict in the news coverage. Two research methods – content analysis and semi-structured interviews – were applied to answer the *RQs*.

RQ1 and *RQ2* can be answered by a content analysis of the conflict coverage using the war and peace journalism (WJ/PJ) framework created by Galtung (1996; 1998), together with an analysis of news sources, news actors and labels. The framework, which included 13 indicators of war journalism and 13 indicators of peace journalism, was used as an approach to investigate the representation in news content and the elements of war and peace journalism applied in the coverage. The classification of war and peace journalism was applied to each news story in order to determine which WJ/PJ elements were

foremost in the new stories. The 13 WJ/PJ framework comprised two themes: approach-based and language-based. The approach-based criteria focus on the method and procedure when writing news story. It includes the following (also see Appendix II):

- reactivity (waits for war to break out before reporting) and proactivity (starts reporting long before the war starts)
- visibility of the effects of war (reports on damages, number of casualties and deaths) and invisibility effects of war (report on effects on society, culture and people).
- elite orientation (focuses on elites as the main actors and sources) and people orientation (focuses on common people as the main actors and news sources)
- differences (focuses on the differences that led to the conflict) and agreement (focuses on the agreement that can lead to the resolution of the conflict)
- here and now (reports on conflict as it is) and cause and consequence (reports on the causes and consequences of the conflict)
- good and bad dichotomy (labels the good and bad sides of the conflict) and avoidance of good and bad dichotomy (avoids the labelling good and bad sides)
- two party orientation (one party wins and one party loses) and multiparty orientation (gives voices to many sides and parties involved in the conflict)
- partisan (biased towards one side of the conflict) and non-partisan (does not take sides; remains neutral)
- zero-sum orientation (one goal to win) and win-win orientation (many goals; solution oriented)
- discontinuity of report (stops reporting when the war is over) and continuity of report (continues reporting on the aftermath of the war that includes the reconstruction and rehabilitation phases)

The language-based criteria focus on the style of language used by journalists when reporting on conflict. It includes the use and the avoidance of:

- victimising language (the language that tells what has been done to people)
- demonising language (the language that portrays certain parties as wicked and threatening)

- emotive language (the language that is able to arouse intense feelings)

The application of the 13 WJ/PJ framework in the content analysis will enable me to explore both the WJ/PJ elements and the extent to which these elements were used in the news coverage (see further in 5.2.1.2). The study of news actors will look into the main news actors of each news story to determine the prominence placed on each category (see further in 5.2.1.3). The analysis of news sources will show which sources the newspapers most relied on when writing their news reports (see further in 5.2.1.4). The analysis of labels will examine the use of words in referring to the southern conflict phenomenon, the three incidents, and the actors of these incidents, in order to ascertain how the newspapers describe the conflict and the people involved (see further in 5.2.1.5).

All of these analyses can lead to a better understanding of how the conflict is presented. Overall, the content analysis will help explore the conflict coverage and answer *RQ1 & RQ2* on how the two newspapers represented the southern conflict and the extent to which the newspapers engaged in war or peace journalism approaches in their reporting.

RQ3 and *RQ4* will be answered by semi-structured interviews with journalists and editorial staff from the two newspapers and one expert from the media organisation. The research questions were designed in order to understand the interviewees' perceptions of the southern conflict, the process of news production, the difficulties or limitations in covering the conflict, and whether there is an alternative way in reporting the conflict. The study attempts to use the interview method to gain insightful information from journalists and editors who have experience in covering the conflict. The questions were semi-structured in order to encourage full answers from the subjects' own experiences and knowledge. This approach generates a more detailed and insightful answer, which leads to an understanding of the wider sense of social and cultural aspects of the issue and suggestions for alternative ways of reporting conflict.

The main questions revolved around the news making process, the questions of news value, reporting in times of crisis, the social and cultural factors that influence the production of news in this context, and the perception and understanding of peace journalism.

5.2.1 Content analysis

Scholars in media and cultural studies have given several definitions to content analysis. Weber (1990, p. 9) proposed that content analysis "is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text." Krippendorff (2004, p. 18) stated that "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." Both definitions place an emphasis on 'valid inferences' from text. Krippendorff (2004, p. 21-22) also took the context of the text used into consideration in terms of the analysis since he saw that recognizing meanings is the main reason for conducting content analysis.

Traditionally, content analysis is seen as a quantitative method (Berelson 1952; Neuendorf 2002; Mayring 2004; Kohlbacher 2006). Berelson (1952, p. 18) defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication." Neuendorf (2002), too, stressed the systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of messages, which lead to numerical findings. As she put it, "a content analysis has as its goal a numerically based summary of a chosen message set" (2002, p. 14). Kohlbacher (2006, p. 1) stated that:

"...classical content analysis is essentially a quantitative method with the core and central tool being its system of categories...The simplest type of evaluation consequently consists of counting the numbers of occurrences per category."

From the above, it can be seen that several scholars view content analysis as a quantitative approach that leads to valid, numerical findings by counting the frequency of a particular text component (frequency analysis). However, the method, which stresses quantification in classical content analysis, brings with it several limitations. Scholars have tried to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of the quantitative approach to the qualitative one. Krippendorff (2004) and Mayring (2004) saw the importance of the textual content in content analysis, which cannot be measured solely by a quantitative approach. As Krippendorff (2004, p. 15) argued, "Reading is fundamentally a qualitative process, even when it results in numerical accounts." Also, the quantitative approach "ignored the *textual content* that defines and modifies the particular textual units" (Mayring 2004, p. 267).

Patton (1990, p. 14) saw the ability to measure in content analysis as an advantage. This facilitated the comparison and statistical collection of data, which could lead to a broad, generalisable set of findings. On the other hand, the qualitative approach typically leads to detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases, which enhances the researcher's understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduces generalisability (Ibid.).

Given the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches, several scholars have tried to bind the two methods. Mayring (2004, p. 267-269) stated that quantitative stages can be built into the qualitative analysis, which makes it possible to overcome the limitations of a 'quali' or a 'quanti' approach – that is, it is possible for a content analysis to incorporate both components into the analytical process in a justified way. Weber (1990, p. 10), too, agreed with applying both methods in the same analysis when he proposed that the best kind of content analysis applies both qualitative and quantitative approaches to text analysis by including the frequency analysis and frequency of comments coded in each category.

The use of the two components strengthens the researcher's claims for the validity of the conclusions drawn where mutual confirmation of results can be demonstrated (Bryman 1988). Lastly, Patton (1990) suggested that significant patterns of results may emerge through the quantitative method, which allows researchers to use qualitative methods through in-depth study to find the meaning of those patterns.

In line with the work of the scholars mentioned above, this study made use of a content analysis with a qualitative element added to it. As Weber (1990, p. 10) stated, the best content analysis studies use both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of texts. Similarly, Kelle and Erzberger (2004, p. 176) believed that linking both elements serves "to illuminate different aspects of social phenomena" because quantitative methods can be used to investigate the meaning of the social-structural factors of context, and qualitative methods can be applied to study the ways in which these contextual factors are interpreted (Ibid).

For the method used here, I draw on Bryman's definition of qualitative content analysis. As he put it, it is an approach that "emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analyzed (and the categories derived from it) appeared" (Bryman 2004, p. 542).

The quantitative component in the method employed for this study pertained to looking for the war and peace journalism elements in the coverage (see 5.2.1.2) including the number of news actors (see 5.2.1.3), news sources (see 5.2.1.4), and labels (see 5.2.1.5), while the qualitative analysis strived to arrive at an evaluation of the 'meaning' being communicated in the text, in other words, the interpretation of the findings from a quantitative analysis in this study.

5.2.1.1 Units of analysis

The units of analysis were the individual news articles taken from the newspapers' front pages and follow up pages, which included hard news reports and feature articles on the conflict. The analysis looked at headlines, sub-headlines and 25% of the whole news report. These elements were selected because I believe these units are sufficient to indicate the main points of the news reports. As Van Dijk (1988, p. 87) stated, "The importance of topics may be indicated by their expression in headlines or lead", which suggests that headlines and leads can reveal journalists' preferences towards certain explanations of reality.

Moreover, most people do not have time to read the newspaper from cover to cover. Readers always skim the news, so the most important information is always presented first (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2012, p.85). Similarly, McKee (2003, p.75) proposed that people do not consume text as a whole and textual analysis is more focused on recovering information about practices in sense-making so there is no need to study every element of every text for every question.

Date	<i>Bangkok Post</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Total (news) =
Arsenal raid incident (5/01/04 - 11/01/04)	34 news	35 news	69
Kruese Mosque incident 29/04/04 - 5/05/04	56 news	74 news	130
Takbai demonstration incident 26/10/04 - 1/11/04	42 news	57 news	99
Total (news) =	132 news	166 news	298 news

Table 5.1: Data for content analysis from *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

At the first stage of preparing the data, the number of news reports produced by both newspapers after each incident was reviewed to see how many articles were published on each day. The research did not look into the use of photographs, maps or editorials presented in the newspapers. In the second stage, I selected the news and feature stories on the conflict that accorded with the main objective of the research, i.e., a study of the representation of the conflict in news coverage. In order to observe the types of news and topics both newspapers presented in their reporting, I made records on the topics the newspapers presented in their reports.

From my observations, I found 13 distinct news topics in the reporting of the southern conflict, which are: 'Violent incidents'; 'Law enforcement & Follow-up investigations'; 'Southern policy & Security measures'; 'Government's reaction'; 'Criticism'; 'International'⁴⁴; 'Impact on lives'; 'Impact on socio-economic aspects'; 'History'; 'Religion'; 'Aftermath'; 'Human rights'; and 'Solution'. The categorisation of news stories according to their topics and their types of news made it easier to understand how the two English-language newspapers presented the southern conflict.

In the third stage, the 298 news stories were arranged in a form suitable for further analysis. One unit of analysis included a headline, sub-headline (if provided) and news content (25% of the whole story).

In each unit, each news story was arranged according to the publishing date and incident. The units of analysis differed in length and form and the number of news articles each newspaper published was also different, which has to be taken into consideration.

5.2.1.2 Analysis of WJ/PJ

The analysis looked at the elements of WJ and PJ using the framework described, and a frequency analysis to support the results of each unit. The results of the analysis of WJ and PJ were measured on indexes. Each unit was assessed on the 13 indicators of war and peace journalism and a record was made when one indicator was found in one news story.

The 13 indicators comprised two themes: approach and language based. The 10 approach based criteria refer to the outlook and procedure in the production of news stories in this context. They also refer to the style and form of the reporting. The approach based criteria include: reactive/proactive; reports on visible effects of war/reports on invisible effects of war; elite-oriented/people-oriented; focus mainly on the differences/focus mainly to the agreement; focus on here and now/report causes and consequences of the conflict; dichotomize between good and bad guys/avoid labelling of good and bad guys; two-party orientation/multiparty orientation; partisan/non-partisan; zero-sum orientation/win-win orientation; and stop reporting after ceasefire/continue to report the aftermath of the war.

The language-based criteria refer to the use of language and words in the news texts, informed by the WJ/PJ framework. They include the use and avoidance of particular language components, which consist of: the use of victimising language/the avoidance of victimising language; the use of demonising language/the avoidance of demonising language; and the use of emotive words/the avoidance of emotive words.

Later, the frequency of occurrence of each indicator was used for further analysis. That is, when the number of the PJ indicators is higher than that of the WJ indicators, the story would be marked as a PJ story, and when there is a higher number of WJ indicators than PJ indicators, the story would be marked as a WJ story. However, when the number of WJ and PJ elements is the same or differs by only one indicator, I would mark the story as 'balanced'.

An example of the analysis of WJ/PJ can be explained as follows:

Example 1:

Bangkok Post (Unit 6 of 132/6th January 2004)

6/132	Only charred ruins greet pupils	PJ2/PJ3/WJ13/PJ5
	<p>The 600 students of Muang Narathiwat school returned from their holidays yesterday and found just the charred remains of their school.</p> <p>While young students kept popping questions about what happened, the older ones simply stared in disbelief. Isma-ah Masalaeh, a 10-year-old Path-omsuksa 4 student, pointed to the second floor of the building and said: ‘The textbooks and the notebooks I kept in the desk drawer are all gone. I’m afraid those bandits will come back and burn down the school again.’</p>	PJ2/PJ3/PJ5

Results = Peace Journalism

The Nation (Unit 1 of 166/ 6th January 2004)

1/166	20 schools torched, arsenal raided	WJ1/ WJ2/ WJ3/WJ5
	Unidentified raiders kill four soldiers in synchronised attacks throughout Narathiwat; Chivalit blames bandits	PJ12/WJ13/WJ2/WJ3 WJ6/WJ5
	<p>UNIDENTIFIED attackers simultaneously torched 20 schools and killed four soldiers while stealing more than 100 guns from an army camp in this southernmost province early yesterday.</p> <p>The well-coordinated terror campaign appears to be a major signal of defiance against authorities at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>Arsonists slipped into 20 schools in 10 out of the 13 districts in Narathiwat province at about 1.30am yesterday and set fire to the buildings.</p> <p>They also torched two unmanned police posts.</p> <p>Five of the schools were razed, police and local military officials said.</p> <p>At about the same time, a group of gunmen attacked the armoury at the non-combat Narathiwat Rajanakarin Army camp in Joh Airong district, where they shot four soldiers dead before escaping with more than 100 assault rifles and pistols.</p>	WJ2/WJ5/WJ12/ WJ13/ PJ12

Results = War Journalism

During the analysis, records were made when each WJ/PJ indicator was found. The findings contain various elements of both WJ/PJ, and in order to classify a unit of analysis into the WJ/PJ framework, each report was categorised according to the most frequently occurring themes. For example, in example 1: *Bangkok Post*, the most frequently occurring features were of peace journalism; thus this unit was categorised as PJ. In example 1: *The Nation*, the most frequently occurring features were of war journalism; thus this unit was categorised as WJ.

After conducting a content analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators in 298 news stories, a frequency analysis was conducted by counting the number of indicators used in the coverage in order to find the most frequent features of war or peace journalism used when writing news articles. A comparative analysis of the two newspapers was made to determine the similarities and differences between the two newspapers, and to identify the trend in reporting conflicts within the given period. However, I am aware of the limitation of an analysis of the 13 indicators of war and peace journalism in that the method only categorises news reports based on the frequency of occurrence of war and peace indicators. I decided to conduct another analysis on the side so that the findings from the second study can help me validate and cross check the data.

The second analysis is on the four broad orientations of WJ/PJ (Galtung 1998) (see Appendix III). I look at the four main orientations of WJ and PJ, which are: war/peace; propaganda/truth; elite/people; and victory/solution (Galtung 1998). I categorised each news story into one of these four broad WJ/PJ orientations in order to determine the war journalism and peace journalism framework used by the newspapers in representing the conflict. In this sense, each news article is categorised into either a war or a peace journalism orientation. However, news articles that cannot be classified into any war or peace journalism orientation were marked as 'neutral' stories.

The second analysis, therefore, is a subjective form of analysis since I use my understanding of these four frames of war and peace journalism to categorise each news reports to determine whether the article has a war, peace or neutral orientation. The method and the findings of the second analysis are presented in Appendix V. The findings of the analysis on the 13 WJ/PJ indicators will be provided in Chapter 6 (6.1.1).

5.2.1.3 Analysis of news actors

According to the PJ model, PJ news engages all sides of the conflict and is people-oriented more than elite-oriented, and truth-oriented more than propaganda-oriented. In this sense, it is important to look into the news actors included in each news story because the news actor is considered to be the main focus of the news story. News leads and headlines are structured to put a news actor first (Bell 1991, p.194). 'Lead' normally means the sentence that sums up the news story, the answer to the questions of 'who, what, when, where, why' and 'how'. This research looked at news leads in terms of the person mentioned in the lead of each news story to identify the main actor of each news report.

In addition, Bell (1991, p.176) claimed that the lead is the most distinctive feature of news discourse and not the headline, as it is a 'micro story', which compresses the values and expertise of journalism into one sentence. Therefore, to understand how the lead works is to understand the nature of the news article. Most of what was said about the reports was summarised in the lead and in the same way as news values operate to "raise the most newsworthy information into the lead", so the lead concentrates the most newsworthy and important information of the story (Ibid.) Consequently, conducting a study on news actors will reveal the significance the newspapers placed on different categories of actors.

This research used frequency analysis to determine the number of news actors. The same unit of analysis was used across the 298 news reports: 166 from *The Nation* and 132 from *Bangkok Post*. The analysis focuses on the main 'news actor', which for our purpose is the main person mentioned in the news lead, and recorded the number of times the same category of actor was mentioned in each of the three incidents. A comparative analysis of the two newspapers was conducted as the final stage to contrast and compare the differences and similarities between the newspapers in respect of the emphasis on news actors. The news actors were categorised into 10 groups, which were created following observation of the news content.

The categorisation of the news actors reveals the sides involved in the conflict in relation to WJ or PJ. This meant that the category, which was most often mentioned, was the category on which the newspaper placed most emphasis. Whether the news story was categorised as either WJ or PJ also relied upon these categories to some extent. The process of categorisation started from listing the

names and professions most frequently mentioned in the news, and then later grouping them into categories as listed below:

- High authority: refers to a person or people of authority in the government. In this research, it refers to the PM, Deputy PM, Minister or Deputy Minister, Army Commander, Police Commander.
- Official source: refers to an authorised person or people from the state.
- Opposition: refers to a person or group that has political opposition to a government. In this research, it can be an individual from an opposition party, or someone who has a view that is opposed to the government's in this matter.
- Religious group: refers to a person or group that involves or is employed in an organised religious group.
- Academic: refers to an individual or a group representing work in academic fields or one who represents an academic institution.
- Local: refers to an ordinary individual or group living in the community or area where the incident took place.
- Local authority: refers to a person/people who work/s for an administrative unit of a local government or a government official based in the area.
- Organisation: refers to an organised body of people with a particular purpose, such as human rights groups or student groups or an individual who represents the group.
- Foreign source: refers to the sources outside the country. It can be either a foreign authority or foreign news sources.
- Other: refers to those who do not belong in any of the groups mentioned above.

An example of the analysis of news actors follows:

Example 2:

Bangkok Post

(Unit 23 of 132/9th January 2004)

23/132	Sixth-graders greet news of trip to capital
	About 500 sixth-graders from Narathiwat province whose schools were razed in arson attacks on Sunday will be flown to Bangkok to join celebrations for Children's Day tomorrow. Organised by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, news of the trip put smiles back on the faces of some students whose classrooms were torched. However, for those left behind, the mood was less upbeat as many local events to mark the occasion had been cancelled due to the security concerns.

News actor = Sixth-grade students = Local

The Nation

(Unit 3 of 166/ 5th January 2004)

3/166	Govt approach 'wrong from the start'
	THE GOVERNMENT cannot solve the problem of violence in the South if it continues to hold the wrong people responsible for it, Democrat Party chief adviser Chuan Leekpai said yesterday. Chuan called on the government to reassess the situation in the southern border provinces and admit that Muslim separatists remain active in the region. The government has underestimated the extent of the problem in the four predominantly Muslim provinces and misidentified Muslim separatists as mere bandits, he said.

News actor = Democrat party chief adviser = Opposition

Example 2 explains the process of the analysis of news actors. Normally, 'lead' refers to the first paragraph of the news article, which sums up the whole news story. In this analysis, I looked at the first person mentioned in the lead, and assigned them to one of the categories above. The frequency of occurrence of these categories was recorded for further analysis.

The findings of the analysis of news actors will be provided in Chapter 6 (6.1.2).

5.2.1.4 Analysis of news sources

News sources are important in the production of news because they reveal the relationship between the source and the news medium, which is often a two-way process: that is, the media are always looking for content, and content is always looking for a space in the media (McQuail 2010, p.321). Normally, journalists have their own preferred sources, which also link to the prominent figures by institutional means, and a news report will be validated when it gives most weight to established authority as a source (Ibid.).

Bell (1991, p. 190) also believed that "the more elite the source, the more newsworthy the story." Thus, it is in a journalist's interest to present the cited sources in the most authoritative light. Individuals, opposition parties, minorities, the unions and the disadvantaged tend to be ignored as a result. This echoes the views of Becker (1967, p 241), who stated that source credibility and the right to be heard are "differentially distributed through the ranks of the system", and those of Allan (2010, p. 82) who indicated that "the higher up in this hierarchy the news source is situated, the more authoritative their words will be for the journal."

For that reason, news value sometimes depends on who the source is: for example, when something became news just because someone elite said it (Bell 1991, p.193). McQuail (2010) mentioned that, in times of national crisis or conflict, the news media typically draw from official sources close to home so it is assumed that the sources most frequently used are the sources from high authority and officials. Bell (1991, p. 191) claimed that "quantitative research on news sources confirms the qualitative conclusions." Therefore, it is important to look at the distribution and the use of news sources since this shows which news sources are 'preferred' in the writing of the southern conflict coverage.

The analysis was conducted by collecting the names of the sources mentioned in the news stories, categorising each name into each category, and, at the last stage, counting the frequency of each category (the same list of categories as in the analysis of 'news actors' was used). The difference between the analysis of 'news actors' and that of 'news sources' is that the chosen 'news actors' reveal

the importance placed by the newspaper on the main focus of the news, while the study of 'news sources' shows the source of information which the newspaper relied upon when writing the news. One can infer whether or not the main actor and the source of the news are correlated, and there is a possibility that the 'news actor' and 'news source' can be the same person in certain circumstances.

In the analysis, the sources were categorised into the 10 previously defined categories; any source that could not be categorised was placed in the 'other' category. Frequency analysis was conducted to determine the number of times the sources were mentioned in the conflict coverage of each incident. The findings revealed the number of sources used and the frequency with which each source was mentioned according to the categories given. A comparative analysis of the findings from the two newspapers was conducted to identify the differences and similarities in their use of sources.

The process of analysis of news source is shown as follows:

Example 3:

Bangkok Post

(Arsenal raid 4th January 2004)

News source (High authority)	Date	Quoted	PP	=	Total
PM Thaksin Shinawatra	6/01/04/1	3	11	14	
	7/01/04/2	1		1	
	8/01/04/1		1	1	
	8/01/04/6	1	4	5	
	10/01/04/3	2	5	7	
	11/01/04/2	4	3	7	
Total =		11	24		35

The Nation

(Arsenal raid 4th January 2004)

News source (Religious group)	Date	Quoted	PP	=	Total
Nimu Mikaje, Deputy chairman of the provincial Yala Islamic Committee	10/01/04/1	1	2	3	

(Kruese mosque 28th April 2004)

Nimu Mikaje,	30/04/04/5	2		2	
	3/05/04/6	2	3	5	

Takbai demonstration 25th October 2004)

Nimu Mikaje,	281004/4	1		1	
	291004/1		1	1	
Total =		6	6		12

The records show, for example, the number of times *Bangkok Post* used the PM as a source of information. It includes the date and times the source was used for a quote or a paraphrased comment (in the example above as 'PP'). The PM as a news source was categorised as 'High authority'. In the reporting of the arsenal raid incident, the PM was used as a news source at a frequency of 35 times, with 11 quotes and 24 paraphrases. The example from *The Nation* shows the number of times the deputy chairman of the Provincial Islamic Committee was used as a source in the reporting of all of the three incidents under scrutiny. The source was categorised as 'Religious group', with a frequency of 12

times, comprised of 6 quotes and 6 paraphrases. The number of times sources in each category were used was then used for further analysis of the representation of the southern conflict.

The findings of the analysis of news sources will be provided in Chapter 6 (6.1.3).

5.2.1.5 Analysis of labels

The analysis of labels is developed from the language-based criteria of the war and peace journalism framework (see 5.2.1.2), which looks at the selection of labels and language items used by the newspapers in their reporting of the conflict. In this study, I look at aspects of the labels used in the conflict coverage in order to determine how the two newspapers chose labels to describe the conflict, the violent incidents, and the actors.

The southern conflict is partly a result of the difference in ethnic, cultural and religious practices, so the question of identity and difference was taken into account. The purpose of the analysis was to examine how the southern conflict phenomenon, the three incidents under scrutiny, and the Muslim minority, either as perpetrators or victims, were described in the news reports. Also, it is important to see the representation of 'other' or the 'preferred representation' in conflict coverage since it reveals how identity and the difference between 'us and them' is constructed and presented in the news reports, which may influence public perceptions of the Muslim minority and the conflict. The construction of the identity of 'us and them' led to a sense of belonging for one group and a sense of alienation for the other, namely because identity is about the "sameness and differences, about us and them, and defining one means defining also the other" (Pietikainen 2000, p.11).

Moreover, the three major incidents in 2004 differed in their situations. To explain, the arsenal raid incident showed the Muslim minority as the perpetrators and the Thai state as the victim. The Kruese Mosque incident showed the Muslims minority as the perpetrators-turned-victims when the Thai state fought back and killed the Muslim perpetrators in the mosque. The Takbai demonstration incident showed the Muslim minority as the victims and the Thai state as the perpetrator.

Together, these three incidents give a good balance in this analysis since they provide a ground for the representation of the incidents and of the ethnic minority in different situations: when they were either

perpetrators, victims, or both. Thus the difference in nature of the three incidents led to the different choice of labels in the news reports.

In this analysis, labels describing the southern conflict phenomenon, the three incidents, and the actors were examined in order to analyse the different meanings of the labels used, and to determine whether bias, prejudice or inequality were shown in the conflict coverage. The frequency analysis of labels examined the most common labels chosen to describe the situations and actors, by looking at the number of labels and how often the same labels occurred, in order to identify how often the ethnicity and religious aspect of the actors was mentioned in the coverage.

I looked for key labels referring to the conflict, the three incidents, and the actors in the coverage. The qualifiers attached to the labels were also taken into the study. The key labels and qualifiers were grouped together with the date of the news article, and the frequency in which each was mentioned in each news reports in order to identify the pattern of labels used in the conflict coverage of both newspapers.

Example 4:

Data collection of *Bangkok Post* on the words 'militants' in the conflict coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident

Bangkok Post 29/04/04-5/05/04				
	Words referring to actors	Date	=	
	Militants	29/04/04/1	6	
		29/04/04/2	8	
		29/04/04/5	1	
		29/04/04/6	1	
		30/04/04/1	3	
		30/04/04/2	3	
		30/04/04/3	2	
		30/04/04/4	4	
		30/04/04/5	1	
		30/04/04/6	1	
		30/04/04/7	2	

		30/04/04/9	1	
		30/04/04/10	1	
		1/05/04/3	5	
		1/05/04/4	6	
		1/05/04/5	1	
		1/05/04/6	4	
		1/05/04/7	4	
		1/05/04/8	1	
		1/05/04/9	1	
		1/05/04/10	1	
		2/05/04/2	6	
		2/05/04/3	1	
		2/05/04/8	3	
		2/05/04/9	1	
		3/05/04/1	3	
		3/05/04/3	1	
		3/05/04/4	1	
		4/05/04/1	2	
		4/05/04/2	1	
		4/05/04/5	1	
		5/05/04/1	4	
		5/05/04/2	1	
		5/05/04/6	1	
		5/05/04/7	2	
	Separatist militants	29/04/04/2	1	
		1/05/04/4	1	
		5/05/04/2	1	
	Southern militants	29/04/04/3	1	
		2/05/04/7	1	
		4/05/04/1	1	
	Machete-wielding militants	29/04/04/5	1	
		1/05/04/3	1	

	Young militants	29/04/04/8 30/04/04/5 1/05/04/7	1 1 1	
	Islamic militants	30/04/04/6 2/05/04/3	1 1	
	Regional militants	1/05/04/1		
	Teenage militants	1/05/04/4	1	
	Young Muslim militants	1/05/04/8	1	
	Muslim militants	2/05/04/1 2/05/04/9 3/05/04/1 3/05/04/2 5/05/04/2 5/05/04/7	1 1 1 1 2 1	
	Armed militants	2/05/04/1	1	
	Suspected militants	3/05/04/1	1	

Note: In this format, I put the number of the news report on each day after the date. For example, 2/05/04/9 refers to the 9th news story on 2/05/04.

Example 4 explains how I gathered data for the analysis of labels. I counted the frequency of the label 'militants' found in seven days of coverage. The adjectives or qualifiers that attached to the labels would be grouped separately such as 'separatist militants', 'southern militants' or 'young militants'. Then I looked into these adjectives/qualifiers and categorised them into groups based on how they were used to describe the main labels: either by their action (machete-wielding, armed), their religion (Islamic, Muslims), their age (young), their location (southern, regional), or by qualifiers that carry negative connotations (separatist) or neutral meaning (suspected).

Later, I analysed the frequency of these labels used including the frequency of these qualifiers to identify how both newspapers described the conflict, the incidents and the antagonists in their coverage.

The findings of the analysis of labels will be provided in Chapter 6 (6.1.4).

5.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

News stories are seldom produced by a single individual; typically, their production involves a range of people such as journalists, sub-editors and editors, at different stages in the process (Bell 1991, p.33). Therefore, in order to answer *RQ3* and *RQ4* on the nature of news production in this specific conflict setting, it is important to interview the journalists and editors from the two newspapers. Also, as informed by the framing theory, journalists not only use their knowledge of the news they are reporting but also employ their professional experience and social theory (Johnson-Cartee 2005, p. 161). Consequently, the interviews with journalists and editors can provide information on how they frame their news stories.

The semi-structured interview is considered a suitable method because it usually involves close contact between the researcher and the interviewed subject, and is interactive, exploratory and developmental in nature in order to allow emergent issues to be explored (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). The perspectives of the interviewed subjects in the context and conditions of their situation are believed to give insight into their own perspectives and on the interpretation of their beliefs and behaviours and the understanding of the meaning they attach to them (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). In this sense, the interview approach will enable me to gain insightful information on the news production process and the journalists' and editors' perceptions of the southern conflict.

Due to the open nature of the semi-structured interview, the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom and the interviewer can assert control over the direction of the interview when necessary. The interviewer may come across new information never anticipated before or may learn about the limitations of the study from the interview (Drever 2003, p. 3). Therefore, the interview data from a semi-structured interview is expected to be open as new ideas may come up during the interview.

A semi-structured interview combines the advantages of both a structured and an unstructured interview, which will lead to the openness of data gathered when the prepared questions are answered and the new information on the issues is discovered. The advantage of this method is that it provides a

large amount of information, which is fairly flexible and diverse. However, the method also has its disadvantages since the flexibility of the interview may lessen the reliability of the research, and the nature of open-ended questions makes it difficult when analysing the data. The relationship between the research questions and the methods used can also inform the type of finding arising from the research, all of which will be explained in a clearer sense in later sections of this chapter.

At the first stage of the interview, contact was initiated with the prospective interviewees: the editors and journalists from *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*, as well as an expert from a media organisation. Their informed consent under the regulation of the Bournemouth University Research Ethics Code of Practices was obtained by explaining the nature and scope of the research so that both parties knew from the start what the interview was about and what would be recorded for further analysis. Informed consent confirms that the interviewee understands the extent of the research and its uses (Warren 2002, p.89).

Once participation was agreed, appointments were made. All of the interviews were conducted in April 2013. The interviews were more than a simple conversation because the rights and grounds to ask questions on specific issues had been sought, and the interviewees agreed to answer them. I planned the structure of the interviews in advance by setting the main questions, and considering ways to manage the direction of the interview. The interviews were recorded using an application on my mobile phone. The interview records were transcribed word-by-word and translated from Thai to English.

The interviewees were informed of the interview's purpose and the questions beforehand. The interviews were divided into three main parts. First, it started with the introduction outlining the importance of the study. Second, the interviewees were led through the interview questions to ensure that all of the important points would be covered. Lastly, at the end of the interview, the interviewees were asked if they had any other points or any further recommendations related to the study that they would like to add.

The questioning strategy was semi-structured in order to encourage a full answer from the subject's own experience and knowledge, which would shed further light on the complicated process of news

production and news gathering in this conflict. The main questions revolved around their perceptions of the southern conflict, their experience of reporting on it, their attitude towards and understanding of peace journalism, and their recommendations for future practice.

5.2.2.1 Interviewed subjects

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the interviews, only subjects who were experienced with first-hand knowledge of the research topic were selected. They were chosen based on the objective of the study to explore the nature of the conflict reporting in English language newspapers in Thailand. Thus, the suitable subjects were editors and journalists from both of the newspapers as well as an expert from the media organisation. The selections were based on their experience of and responsibilities in the southern conflict.

The differences between the organisations of the subjects is likely to provide useful information, and to show the difference in views or even contending perspectives. The credibility of the findings was enhanced when the interviewed subjects reflected a variety of perspectives leading to a more complete picture when these were brought together (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p.68). My previous personal contact with journalists from *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post* assisted in helping identify suitable subjects for interview from their organisations.

In sum, seven semi-structured interviews were carried out. The interviewed subjects included two journalists and one editor from *The Nation*; two journalists and one editor from *Bangkok Post*; and one expert from the Thai Journalists' Association (TJA). All interviewees had experience of covering news on the southern conflict since 2004, and some were publicly considered experts in the field. Three interviewees used to work in the conflict area as 'reporters' sent from Bangkok and had taken part in the TJA's Issara News Centre project when it was first launched in 2005 (see Chapter 4, 4.5.2.1). The perception of the expert in the field is important as this will show how an independent expert, not directly associated with either of the two newspapers, perceived the conflict (See Appendix VI for list of the interviewees).

5.2.2.2 Interview questions

The interviews began with preliminary questions about the interviewees' profiles, their responsibilities, their experience of working with the newspaper, and the area in which they specialised. After the introduction, the interview proceeded to the main questions. The goal of the interview was to encourage participants to talk about their perceptions, experiences and understandings rather than to elicit closed answers. The interview questions were combined with main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p.129).

The main questions were designed to structure the interviews and cover all of the major points of the research questions and problems, while the follow up questions were asked to illicit explanation of concepts or events that the interviewees brought up. The combination of main questions, follow-up questions and probes was used in the interviews to encourage full and clear answers from the participants. The main interview questions were carefully and thoroughly designed so as not to restrict and predetermine the answers while at the same time covering all of the research's areas of concern (Ibid., p.135).

The main interview questions were:

What is your perception of the nature of the southern conflict?

What is the process of reporting the conflict in your organisation? What is the structure?

How, in your opinion, is the conflict being reported? And why is it reported in such a way?

What are the limitations/problems in reporting the conflict?

What are other factors influencing the reporting of the conflict? (political influence; public opinion, etc..)

Do you have any recommendations on how the reporting of the southern conflict can be improved?

The interview questions revealed the interviewees' perceptions of the southern conflict; the process of news production in their organisations, including the factors influencing the coverage and factors influencing the writing of news stories; and their opinions on the solution of the reporting, all of which was of help in answering *RQ3* and *RQ4*.

5.2.2.3 Interview data analysis

Interview data analysis is the process of converting raw interviews into evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation of published reports (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p.201). At the first stage, the interviews were transformed into transcripts. I had to refine the concepts, themes and events, and then coded the interviews to be able to manage the key concepts and themes discussed.

Transcription is the first and important stage in performing interview data analysis because the transcript needs to be as precise as possible. After transcription, a summary of each interview was made, which included the main points of the interview that addressed the research questions or any other new concepts or themes found in the interview. Analysis then took place: by coding the data; by putting labels on the concepts and themes found in the transcripts; by finding the concept that represents the idea that is important to the research questions; and by identifying themes for a summary statement to explain what is going on in the interview (Ibid. p.207).

Relevant concepts and themes can be found throughout all data and the exact same themes can be found in different places because the interviewees do not usually give straightforward answers to the questions (Boeije 2010, p.47). Therefore, the transcribed interviews were more or less cut into pieces during the analysis. Different interviews were compared and contrasted with each other, and I had to decide the dominant topics and issues that relate to the same theme. The decision of what to code and how to define the key concepts is a crucial part of the analysis in which I compared how ideas are expressed across interviews in order to refine the meaning. At the last stage of interview analysis, all concepts and themes were put together and new information was shown in order to see how it could contribute to an understanding of the topics studied, and how it could answer the research questions.

All interviews were carefully conducted, recorded, and translated from Thai into English. Each question and answer was transcribed word-for-word since accuracy is required when creating a description and explanation of the research setting or to set up the process with clarity and understanding (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p.71). In this research, word-for-word transcription was used as it provided a complete record of the original interview and thereby reliable data. The translation from

Thai to English was made and the accuracy was checked. The data were analysed using a qualitative interview analysis. The analysis started with preparing the data, making the data manageable, and at the same time keeping the original information without distorting it.

The interview analysis started from intensive and repeated readings of the transcribed interviews; the readings were guided by prior theoretical knowledge and the research questions (Schmidt 2004, p.254). The aim of the interview analysis was to note the topics that were mentioned and the individual aspects of these topics, which could be related to the context of the research questions (Ibid). The data were summarised into topics, which categorised the important information for the study, and then allocated by relevance to the research questions. The interview data were later coded, a process in which particular passages in the text of an interview were ascribed to a particular category (Ibid. p.255).

The categories found from the interviews were, for example, the perception of the southern conflict, southern conflict and the Thai media, the process of the news production of the conflict, and limitations and problems in reporting the conflict. These topics then lead to further analysis by contrasting the topics with individual aspects using the idea of categories previously developed (Ibid.). This stage focused on analysis of the individual's perspectives to identify how they emphasise certain points, resist particular ideas, and argue certain issues as well as to see the connection they make with the different issues and their general tone. The aim of this was to develop an understanding and to see how each individual made sense of the interview topics.

After categorising the individual data, I looked further at identifying group views, as a common point of view from interviewees may emerge after the data have been scanned. The interviewees from different newspapers may share the same view on certain issues, but have different views on others. The inter-relationships between people from the same group and different groups were taken into account, as was their personal backgrounds regarding different responsibilities and levels of experience. The variety of the respondents' perspectives was significant and revealed their personal valuation and perceptions regarding the same issues.

5.3 Ethical consideration

The interviewees' informed consent was obtained in order to ensure that they had a clear understanding of the nature of the research, and its possible implications for them. They were provided with information about the aims and objectives of the research; how the data would be collected, recorded and analysed; and what participation was required of them. There was a responsibility on myself as the researcher to be considerate, to keep the data collected confidential, to conduct risk assessments for any primary data collection, and to assure that all interview subjects willingly participated in the interviews.

Due to the nature of the research, I was aware that information gained from the interviews may contain opinions on sensitive issues, which may prove risk to the interviewees in relation to data protection and personal safety. Therefore, the anonymity and confidentiality of the interviewees are required in order to assure that the information they provide cannot be traced back and their identities remain concealed. The method used to preserve anonymity and confidentiality in this research is the use of pseudonyms (see Appendix VI for the list of the interviewees).

In addition, to ensure that my research process and findings, from both the content analysis of the southern conflict coverage and the semi-structured interviews, are trustworthy and valid, it is necessary for me to set forth that my background as a researcher from Bangkok did not affect the results of the study. Nevertheless, the qualitative researcher does not stand outside or above the study because research reflects the viewpoints of the observers and theory-laden (Denzin 2001). Even so, it is crucial to announce my best intention to remain as neutral as possible during the research process. The research process, as noted in this chapter, followed the research ethics regulations specified by Bournemouth University.

5.4 Limitations in methodology

The limitations can be divided into two parts: the methods chosen and the scope and data of the research. First, with respect to the limitations of the research methodologies, namely a content analysis and semi-structured interviews, the following issues became apparent during the conduct of the study. This approach to content analysis proved advantageous in providing a rich source of data but it is a subjective form of critique that relies heavily on personal interpretations of the contents being examined. Given that the same contents can be interpreted differently according to the person

conducting the research, it was necessary for me to limit myself to identifying and evaluating those features that could be counted in a relatively straightforward manner.

The findings from content analysis with both qualitative and quantitative approaches may converge, and there is no guarantee that the findings from both approaches can fulfill the requirements of the study. As pointed out by Kelle and Erzberger (2004, p. 174), the limitations of the integration between qualitative and quantitative research cannot be determined on the basis of a single model, and one cannot assume that the results of the qualitative and quantitative methods are fundamentally convergent, and may be used for reciprocal validation. Qualitative and quantitative results achieved under different conditions can be combined to give an appropriate general picture (Ibid.)

Semi-structured interviews also have their limitations. While the method provides rich and diverse data, the flexibility of the interview may lessen the reliability of the research, and the nature of open-ended questions will lead to various kinds of data, which are difficult to analyse, and so difficult to compare and contrast across different interviews. The structured nature of the interview strategy can help organise the order of the questions so that the interview does not go off topic. However, its drawback is that this flexibility may lessen the reliability of the data to some extent since the method depends almost entirely on the honesty of the interviewees and the proficiency of the researcher in managing the encounter. Therefore, the method can affect the validity of the research since it almost entirely depends on the interviewer and interviewee. It is hard to guarantee the honesty of the interviewed subjects and the efficacy of the interview also depends on my skill and experience.

Moreover, it is necessary to acknowledge the limited number of the interviewees as the results of the findings could have been different if more interviews with journalists and editors were conducted.

My choice of research methods may lead to questions over the reliability of the findings. Reliability is "the extent to which a measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials" (Neuendorf 2002, p.112), and "reliability is presented when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions" (Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p. 178). By using a content analysis as a research method, the study may not provide repeatable results since no two researchers will interpret the data identically. In my effort to resolve this difficulty and secure the reliability of the data, as

mentioned earlier in 5.2.1.2, I conducted a 'second study' on the other framework of Galtung (1996; 1998), comprised of four broad orientations of war and peace journalism. This will help to cross check and validate my findings from the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators. The method and the findings are provided in Appendix V.

The second limitation is the scope and data of the research. Since this research was derived from my interest in exploring the conflict coverage of the two English-language newspapers on the three major southern conflict incidents in 2004, the primary focus on these newspapers intentionally overlooked Thai-language newspapers, which is not to deny their importance – or the obvious value of a comparative study between English-language and Thai-language journalism. Since most studies on the reporting of Thailand's southern conflict focus more on Thai language newspapers, this research was carried out in order to fill this gap. The study's focus on *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post* was justified, in part, on the basis of their popularity among elite Thais with a high level of English proficiency as well as expats, politicians and foreign press agencies. The findings of the study apply only to these two English-language newspapers and not to other newspapers.

Another limitation was the timeline of the research, which focused on three major incidents in 2004, the first year of the conflict. At the time of writing, the conflict in the southern region of Thailand has gone on for 10 years, with no end in sight. Clearly further research covering different incidents and timelines will be needed.

The conclusions provided by the study (see Chapter 6) were limited to the given data and scope of the research, which leads to the question of the 'generalisation' of the findings, or external validity. Generalisation refers to "the extent to which they may be applied to other cases, usually to a larger set that is the defined population from which a study's sample has been drawn" (Neuendorf 2002, p. 12). I have tried to avoid extrapolating from my data to characterise wider trends or patterns beyond what my evidence is able to support. The findings of this study may not be applied in a larger context, in my view, since it is a micro-study that focused on specific events within a limited time period, and only to two specific English-language newspapers, which are in no way representative of the Thai news media more generally.

This chapter explored the methodologies used in this research, which are a content analysis and semi-structured interviews. It started by explaining the nature, the alternatives, and the limitations of both methods, and the reasons why both are considered suitable for the study. The research questions were brought up to show how these methods were operationalised in order to provide answers to them. The last section of this chapter explained the actual processes of conducting both the content analysis and the semi-structured interviews in the course of this research, and ended with identifying the limitations of the methods. We now turn to the findings of the study in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

The representation of the southern conflict in news coverage

This chapter introduces and evaluates the findings of my empirical study with a view to providing answers to the research questions. As explained earlier in Chapter 5, this study examines the news coverage produced by *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*. The empirical analysis reveals the prevailing war and peace journalism frames, the dominant news actors and news sources, and the use of language in representing the incidents and the perpetrators. This chapter explains the findings from the content analysis of the news coverage.

6.1 Content analysis of news coverage

A content analysis was applied to the study of conflict coverage in order to explore the representation of the southern conflict by the two English-language newspapers. The study applied Galtung's war and peace journalism concept and frameworks (1986; 1998) to identify the main indicators of war and peace journalism, the dominant news actors, the dominant news sources, and the use of language in representing the southern conflict and the perpetrators as they appeared in the two English-language newspapers.

Since the study was on the reporting of the conflict, my preliminary assumption was that a high proportion of war journalism stories would be found in most of the news coverage. A second assumption could also be made, which is that the situations of each incident would affect the implementation of war and peace journalism in the coverage. That is, the reporting of the arsenal raid incident would have more WJ features, including a larger number of authority individuals as news actors and news sources, because the incident happened unexpectedly. I also presumed that the number of pro-peace elements would appear higher after the Kruese Mosque incident and Takbai demonstration because the consequences of these two incidents directly affected the lives of the local people, which also reflect the government's mishandling of the situations.

The study focused on the reporting of the three major incidents in 2004, encompassing 21 days of reporting of a total of 298 articles: 166 from *The Nation* and 132 from *Bangkok Post*. The unit of

analysis are: 1) headlines; 2) sub-headlines; and 3) 25% of the individual news articles from front pages, follow-up pages and the dedicated southern conflict section. Other type of articles, such as 'opinions', 'comments' or 'editorials', were taken into analysis only if they were placed under the southern conflict section. The two newspapers each had a specific news section on the southern conflict. For example, news stories on the southern conflict were placed in the 'Home' page under the 'Violence in the South' section in *Bangkok Post* and in the 'Local' page under 'Southern violence', 'Violence in the South' or 'Southern carnage' in *The Nation*.

The first incident, the arsenal raid (5th January 2004), generated 35 reports from *The Nation* and 34 from *Bangkok Post*; the second, the Kruese Mosque incident (28th April 2004), generated 74 reports from *The Nation* and 56 from *Bangkok Post*; and the last, the Takbai demonstration incident (26th October 2004), generated 57 reports from *The Nation* and 42 from *Bangkok Post*. *The Nation* produced 34 more reports on these incidents than *Bangkok Post*.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 5 (5.2.1.1), I first categorised the news data according to topics in order to gain the overview of the conflict coverage of both newspapers. The categorisation of news data of the two newspapers in the reporting of the three incidents is provided in tables 6.1 and 6.2.

<i>Bangkok Post</i>	Arsenal raid (34 news)	Kruese Mosque (56 news)	Takbai demonstration (42 news)	Total = (news articles)
News Topics				
Violent Incidents	8	9	5	22
Law enforcement & Follow-up investigation	5	6	2	13
Southern Policy & Security measures	5	5	3	13
Government's reaction	3	7	5	15
Criticism	1	6	6	13
International	1	2	3	6
Impact on lives	7	11	8	26
Impact on socio-economic aspect	1	2	3	6
History	-	1	-	1
Religion	1	1	3	5
Aftermath	-	1	-	1
Human rights	-	3	2	5
Solution	2	2	2	6
Total =	34	56	42	= 132 news

Table 6.1: The categorisation of news types and news topics in *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the three incidents

<i>The Nation</i>	Arsenal raid (35 news)	Kruese Mosque (74 news)	Takbai demonstration (57 news)	Total = (news articles)
News Topics				
Violent Incidents	4	8	5	17
Law enforcement & Follow-up investigation	5	11	6	22
Southern Policy & Security measures	2	3	4	9
Government's reaction	1	7	4	12
Criticism	2	3	8	13
International	4	8	3	15
Impact on lives	10	18	10	38
Impact on socio-economic aspect	2	1	3	6
History	2	6	-	8
Religion	-	2	7	9
Aftermath	1	1	-	2
Human rights	-	2	3	5
Solution	2	4	4	10
Total =	35	74	57	= 166 news

Table 6.2: The categorisation of news types and news topics in *The Nation'* s coverage of the three incidents

Table 6.1 and 6.2 show the categorisation of topics in the representation of the southern conflict by *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*. The categorisation of news into topics shows that both newspapers employ both an event-based and a process-based reporting style of the conflict. The event-based style focused on violent incidents and major law and security issues that involved major leaders, which were presented in 63 articles in *Bangkok Post* and 60 articles in *The Nation*. On the other hand, the process-based style of reporting, for example, news stories and articles on social, cultural and religious issues; the history of the conflict; and the aftermath and solution of the conflict, included 50 articles in *Bangkok Post*, and 78 articles in *The Nation*.

Interestingly, the most commonly-occurring topic of the two newspapers in their reporting of the southern conflict is 'Impact on lives', which accounted for 26 articles in *Bangkok Post* and 38 articles in *The Nation*. This point shows that both newspapers presented the southern conflict from the local perspectives right from the first year of its occurrence, which is in contrast to my preliminary assumption that the reporting of the conflict would start off with a war journalism style of reporting. Violent incidents and law enforcement and follow-up investigation, however, were revealed by the analysis to be the second most commonly-occurring topics, which suggests that the event-based style of reporting was as well used.

The categorisation of news stories into topics helps us to see the topics covered in the presentation of the conflict as well as providing an overview of the conflict coverage of the two newspapers. This suggests that both newspapers reported the conflict in terms of all types of news, not just the violent incidents, and this point will result in the analysis on the implementation of war and peace journalism, which will be illustrated in the next sub-section.

The next sub-section will present an analysis on the implementation of war and peace journalism elements in the news.

6.1.1 Proportions of war-oriented and peace-oriented elements in the news

The proportion of war-oriented and peace-oriented stories was determined from a content analysis

method, which included an analysis of text and frequency. Content analysis was employed to examine each article's headlines, sub-headlines, and the first 25% of the whole article's content. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 5 (5.2.1.2), the research looked at the relative emphases on WJ/PJ by applying the WJ/PJ framework (Galtung 1968; 1998) to identify the proportion of WJ/PJ indicators used in each news report.

Frequency analysis was applied (i.e. a record was made when each WJ/PJ indicator was found). This means that the number of WJ/PJ indicators in each news article may vary and one article may have both WJ and PJ indicators. I classified each news article under either war or peace journalism based on the results of the analysis. To explain, when a news article had more PJ indicators, it was classified as PJ. On the other hand, when a news article had more WJ indicators, it was classified as WJ. However, when the proportion of WJ and PJ indicators was the same or relatively close (i.e. the difference was by one indicator), the news story was classified as a balanced report.

The findings revealed that, out of the 298 news pieces analysed, a total of 1,681 WJ/PJ indicators were found. Of these, 776 were WJ indicators, and 905 were PJ indicators (see figure 6.1).

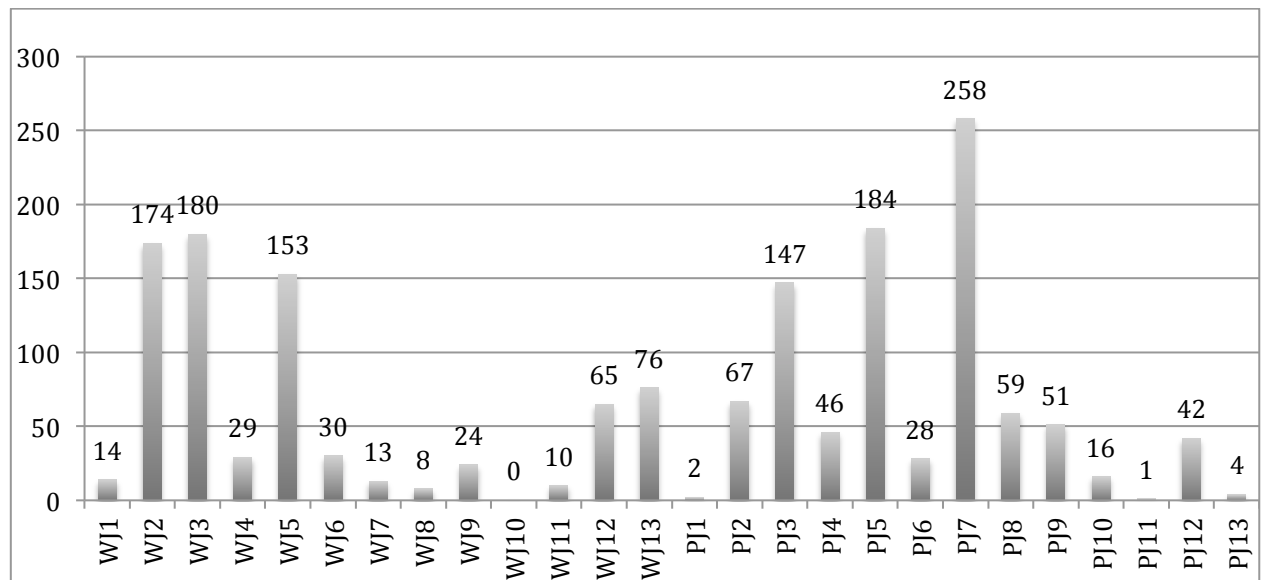


Figure 6.1: The number of 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in all of the 298 news articles (not separated by newspaper) on the three incidents

Based on the frequency count of 1,681, the three most prominent peace journalism indicators found were PJ7 (multiparty orientation) with 258 indicators, followed by PJ5 (report causes and consequences of the conflict) with 184 indicators, and PJ3 (people-oriented) with 147 indicators.

Multiparty orientation (PJ7) refers to when a news report gives voice to many parties involved, which shows an attempt to include all sides of the conflict in the news. In Thailand's southern conflict, the various sides involved are the Thai government (e.g. the prime minister, ministers, army commander, police commander), the opposition parties, the senate, the attackers, local people, local authorities, religious institutions, national and international organisations, and neighbouring countries (Malaysia and Indonesia). When a news story gave voice to more than one side involved, PJ7 would be marked as one of the indicators. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

Muslims pray to bless soldiers

Thammarak vows to ensure return of peace

Hundreds of Thai Muslims in Narathiwat yesterday prayed to bless army soldiers in search of bandits who raided a military camp in Cho Ai Rong district and killed four soldiers on Monday.

The group was greeted by the Defence Minister Gen Thammarak Israngkura who reassured them that the government and military would bring peace to the South.

(Bangkok Post, unit 21/132, 9th January 2004)

This example is a news report that was published four days after the arsenal raid incident. One of the article's indicators is a multiparty orientation (PJ7) because it includes the voice of the people (Muslims) and the voice of the authority (Thammarak, Defence Minister) in the same story. The headline shows that the main actor of the story is 'Muslims' or the local people, while the sub-headline also shows an emphasis on high authority, both of which are key actors in the southern conflict. From this, it shows that *Bangkok Post* attempted to give space to different parties involved in the conflict and not just to the people in a position of high authority.

The second most frequently-occurring PJ indicator was PJ5 (report on causes and consequences of the conflict), which is when a news article does not focus on a here and now perspective of the conflict but

gives information on the background and consequences of the incidents. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

A symbolic date?

The young separatists' choice of April 28 as the date for Wednesday's attacks was probably not a coincidence, an academic said yesterday.

Thammasat University political scientist Chaiwat Satha-anandha said clashes in Rangae district in Narathiwat on the same date in 1948 between Malay-speaking Muslim villagers and police were the climax of a revolt that left 400 villagers and 30 police dead.

(The Nation, unit 60/166, 30th April 2004)

The news article from which this example was taken was published two days after the Kruese Mosque incident. The report focuses on the comment from a well-known scholar, Chaiwat Satha-anandha, who drew a link between the Kruese Mosque incident on the 28th April and the Dusun ngor incident, which coincidentally happened on the same date (see Chapter 2 (2.2) for more details).⁴⁵ *The Nation* focused on the historical background of the incident, indicating that the news story has a PJ5 focus, or that it reports on the causes and consequence of the conflict, which is one of the peace journalism indicators.

The third most frequent PJ indicator found from the content analysis was PJ3 (people-oriented). This refers to when a news story focuses on common people or members of the public as an actor and/or main source of information. In this research, when reporting space was given to people, either as news actors or news sources, PJ3 is marked as one of the indicators of the story. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

Sixth-graders greet news of trip to capital

About 500 sixth-graders from Narathiwat province whose schools were razed in arson attacks on Sunday will be flown to Bangkok to join celebrations for Children's Day tomorrow.

Organized by prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, news of the trip put smiles back on the faces of some students whose classrooms were torched.

However, for those left behind, the mood was less upbeat as many local events to mark the occasion had been cancelled due to the security concerns.

(Bangkok Post, unit 23/132, 9th January 2004)

This example is an excerpt from a news report in the aftermath of the arsenal raid incident, when 20 schools across the three southern border provinces were set on fire. The news article focuses on events that took place after the incident, when the students whose schools were burnt down were granted a trip to Bangkok for Children's Day (planned by the PM) as a way to support them after the incident. The focus on the common people makes it classifiable as people-oriented (PJ3), one of the peace journalism features of this news report.

The three most prominent WJ indicators found in the 298 news articles were WJ3 (elite-oriented) with 180 indicators, followed by WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the conflict) with 174 indicators, and WJ5 (focus on here and now) with 153 indicators.

Elite-oriented (WJ3) refers to when a news story focuses mainly on elites as actors and/or main sources of information. In this study, such elites include people in positions of high authority, political leaders or high-ranking military and police officials. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

Chettha backs force at mosque

Minister says assault was not overreaction

A rift over the deadly force used by security forces to end a siege at Krue Se Mosque has widened, with Defence Minister Gen Chettha Thanajaro speaking out in support of Internal Security Operations Command deputy director Gen Panlop Pinmanee, who was abruptly called back to Bangkok for disobeying orders.

(Bangkok Post, 43/132, 30th April 2004)

One feature of war journalism is the orientation on high authority as a main actor and source of information (WJ3). The above news article focuses on the reaction of the Defence Minister, expressing in support for the military action in the Kruese Mosque incident, which had taken place two days earlier. In this news report, high authority is both a main actor and a source of information. To explain, the news item mainly reported that the Defence Minister supported Gen Pallop, director of the ISOC and the person in charge of the mosque attack, with regard to the attack, which caused the deaths of the

32 Muslim assailants. The source of the news was taken from the Defence Minister's public comment. Therefore, the focus on high authority as a main actor and source of information was the reason for identifying WJ3 as one of the indicators of this news story.

The second most commonly-occurring indicator of war journalism was the focus on the visible effects of the conflict (WJ2), which refers to when the news article reports mainly on the death toll and casualties and gives details on the visible effects of the violence. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

78 perish in custody
Protesters suffocated in military trucks;
More than 60 still missing; Activists demand PM's resignation

SEVENTY-EIGHT protesters died of suffocation or from convulsions after they were arrested and herded into trucks to be transferred to a military camp for detention following a clash on Monday in Muslim-dominated Narathiwat province.

(The Nation, unit 113/166, 26th October 2004)

The example above is taken from a news report published one day after the Takbai demonstration incident. The article focuses mainly on the death toll and number of missing people (eg. 78 perished in custody; more than 60 still missing; 78 protesters died), which is one of the features of war journalism. In reporting of the conflict, it is hard to avoid reporting the visible effects of the incident when the incident involved so many dead and injured people. Thus, WJ2 is one of the indicators found most frequently across the 298 news articles included in this analysis.

The third most frequent war journalism feature was the focus on here and now (WJ5), which refers to when the newspaper concentrates only on what is happening in the conflict without giving details on the background, or when the report of the incident is presented in a breaking news format. An example of this indicator is found in the following excerpt.

Pattani hit, martial law declared
Troops mass for security and manhunt; M'sia sends reinforcements
to border; Thaksin: Negligent commanders 'deserved to die'

THE GOVERNMENT imposed martial law in the three southern most provinces yesterday as a second day of suspected terrorist-inspired violence took the lives of two policemen.

(*The Nation*, 4/166, 6th January 2004)

The example was taken from a report on the arsenal raid incident, when Pattani (another province in Thailand's southern border) was under attack on the day after the incident and martial law was declared. The article reports on the 'here and now' and focuses only on what happened in the incident without giving information on the causes and consequences. With the 'here and now' focus, newspapers report news on the conflict like an item of breaking news or report only on what happened in the incident so that readers will only get the sense of what is happening without knowing the background and context of the conflict.

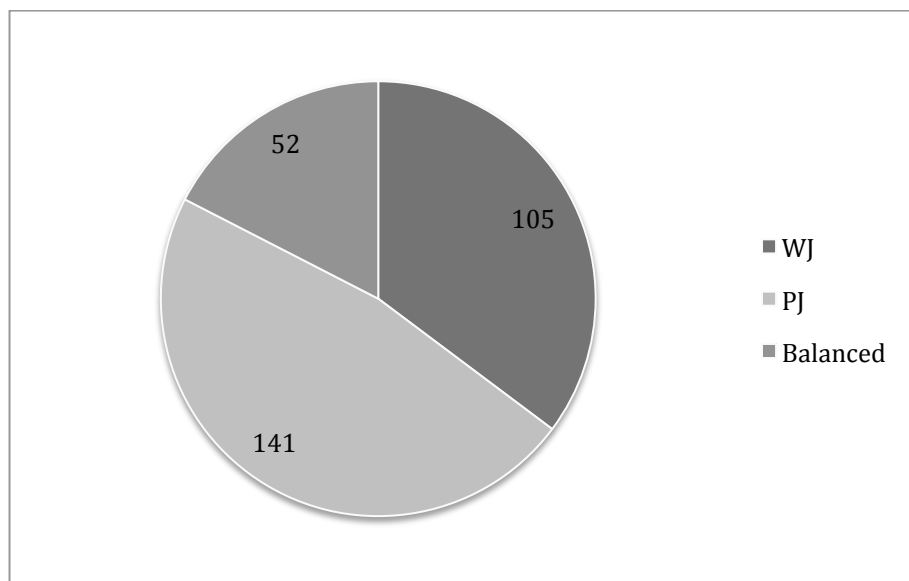


Figure 6.2: The number of peace journalism, war journalism and balanced news stories as classified by the number of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in the 298 news stories

In sum, the classification of WJ/PJ news stories based on 13 WJ/PJ indicators revealed that, out of 298 news articles analysed, 141 (47.31%) were categorised as PJ news, while 105 (35.23%) were categorised as WJ news, and the remaining 52 (17.44%) as balanced stories (see figure 6.2). As explained earlier, the findings were based on the frequency of WJ/PJ indicators in the articles. A news item that had more PJ indicators would be classified as PJ, and a news item that had more WJ

indicators would be categorised as WJ. If the number of WJ and PJ indicators was the same or differed by only 1 indicator, the story would be classified as 'balanced'.

The next section presents findings from the analysis on WJ/PJ indicators in *Bangkok Post*.

6.1.1.1 *Bangkok Post*: Findings

In total, the study found 746 WJ/PJ indicators in the coverage of the three incidents by *Bangkok Post*: 382 WJ indicators and 364 PJ indicators. These results confirmed my preliminary assumption that a high number of WJ features would be found in the coverage of the three major incidents. However, I expected that the number of WJ features would be far higher than this actual figure. In fact, the total number of WJ indicators is only slightly higher than the number of PJ indicators. This suggests that *Bangkok Post* might use the traditional way of war reporting, but at the same time, it also employed a peace journalism approach in its coverage.

The results from the analysis of 13 WJ/PJ indicators can be summed up in the chart below (see figure 6.3).

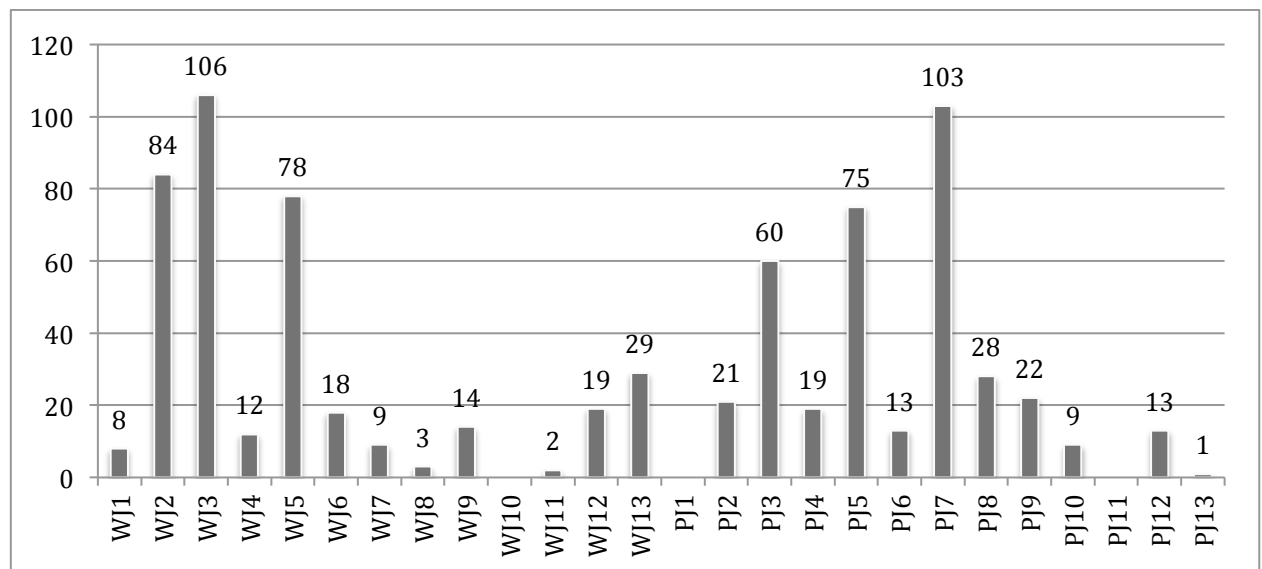


Figure 6.3: The number of each 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in 132 news articles (not separated by incident) in *Bangkok Post*

Figure 6.3 provides the results obtained from the analysis of the frequency of 13 WJ/PJ indicators in 132 news articles published in *Bangkok Post*. From the chart, it can be seen that the highest frequency

of WJ indicators is WJ3 (elite-oriented), with 106 indicators. When compared to its opposing indicator of PJ3 (people-oriented), the frequency of WJ3 is almost two times higher than the occurrence of PJ3 (60 indicators), which indicates that *Bangkok Post* depended highly on high authority as both an actor and sources when writing its news reports.

Surprisingly, the second highest frequency of indicators found is PJ7 (Multiparty orientations), with 103 indicators, which shows that *Bangkok Post* gave a voice to other sides involved in the conflict. The fact that the number of WJ3 and PJ7 occurrences is relatively close suggests that *Bangkok Post* may have largely depended on sources from high authority but at the same time also reported from the perspective of other sides engaged in or affected by the conflict.

The third most commonly-occurring indicator was WJ2 (the visible effects of war), with 84 appearances. This finding confirmed my assumption that a high proportion of WJ2 indicators would be found in the reporting of incidents that caused deaths and damage to the society. Interestingly, the frequency of two opposing indicators, WJ5 (focus on here and now) and PJ5 (report on causes and consequences of the conflict) were relatively close at 78 and 75 occurrences, respectively. This suggests that *Bangkok Post* reported on the conflict with two main approaches: the reporting of violent incidents as breaking news, and the sharing of details on the background and history of the conflict in the news.

From the analysis of language-based criteria (WJ11, WJ12, WJ13 and PJ11, PJ12, PJ13), the study found a high number of language-based war journalism indicators: WJ12 (demonizing language) with 19 indicators and WJ13 (emotive language) with 29 indicators. This suggests that *Bangkok Post* applied a war-approach in the language used in its reporting. In contrast, the number of the language-based peace journalism indicators was relatively low.⁴⁶ The findings suggest that, in terms of the language used in reporting the conflict, *Bangkok Post* used war journalism language with an emphasis on the use of emotive and demonising language.

I categorised each news article as either a war, peace or balanced report according to the number of WJ/PJ indicators found in the coverage. In total, out of 132 articles from *Bangkok Post*, 56 are classified as WJ stories, 55 as PJ stories and 21 as balanced stories.

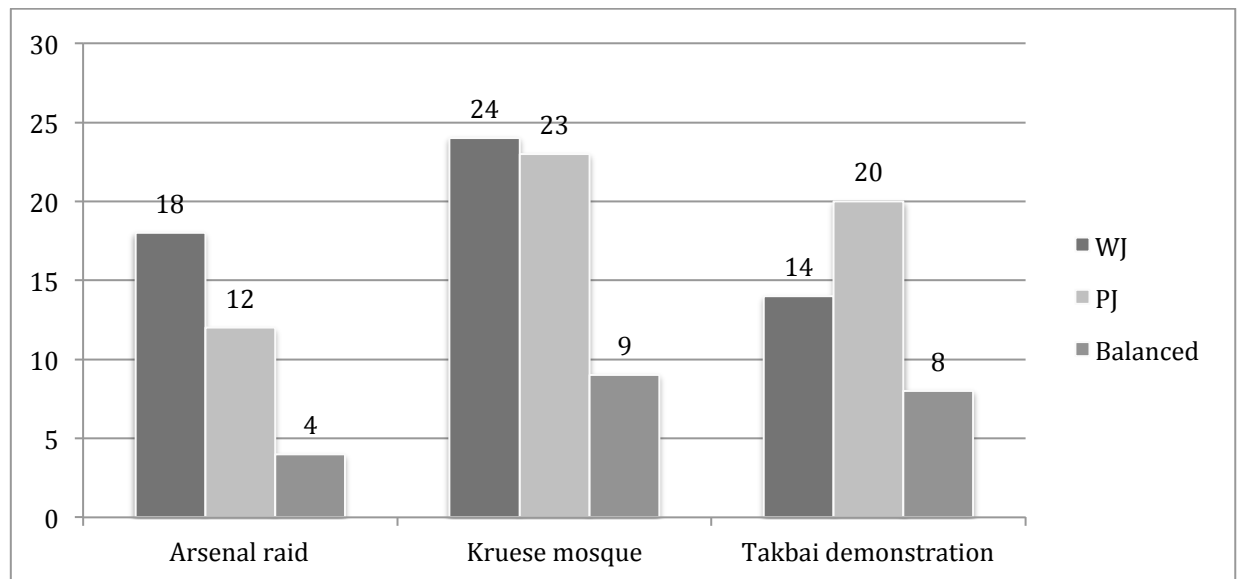


Figure 6.4: The ratio of war journalism, peace journalism and balanced articles from the coverage of the three incidents in *Bangkok Post* as classified by the 13 WJ/PJ indicators

Figure 6.4 illustrates the number of articles classified as war, peace and balanced journalism in the coverage of the three incidents. The findings confirm my preliminary assumption that the proportion of WJ news reports would be higher than PJ reports in the case of the arsenal raid incident because it was the first event of the current wave of the southern conflict and the newspaper had to rely largely on authority for its sources. However, in the second incident, the number of WJ news reports did not decrease as expected. In fact, the number of WJ and PJ news articles was approximately the same.

To explain this point, I believe that the situation of the Kruese Mosque incident influenced the reporting style. That is, the Kruese Mosque incident featured attacks from both sides, first when the Muslim assailants attacked 11 official outposts across the region, and second when the Thai Army killed the attackers who retreated into the mosque. Therefore, in this reporting, *Bangkok Post* had to balance its reporting with accounts from both sides. At the same time, it could not avoid WJ features when reporting incidents that involved a series of attacks and a large amount of deaths, casualties and damage.

In the reporting of the Takbai demonstration, the results confirm my preliminary assumption that there would be less WJ news reporting than PJ news reporting because the incident showed the misuse of power by the authorities against the minority. The findings illustrated that *Bangkok Post* applied more of a peace journalism approach and less of a war journalism approach in the reporting of this incident.

Next is the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators in each of the three incidents.

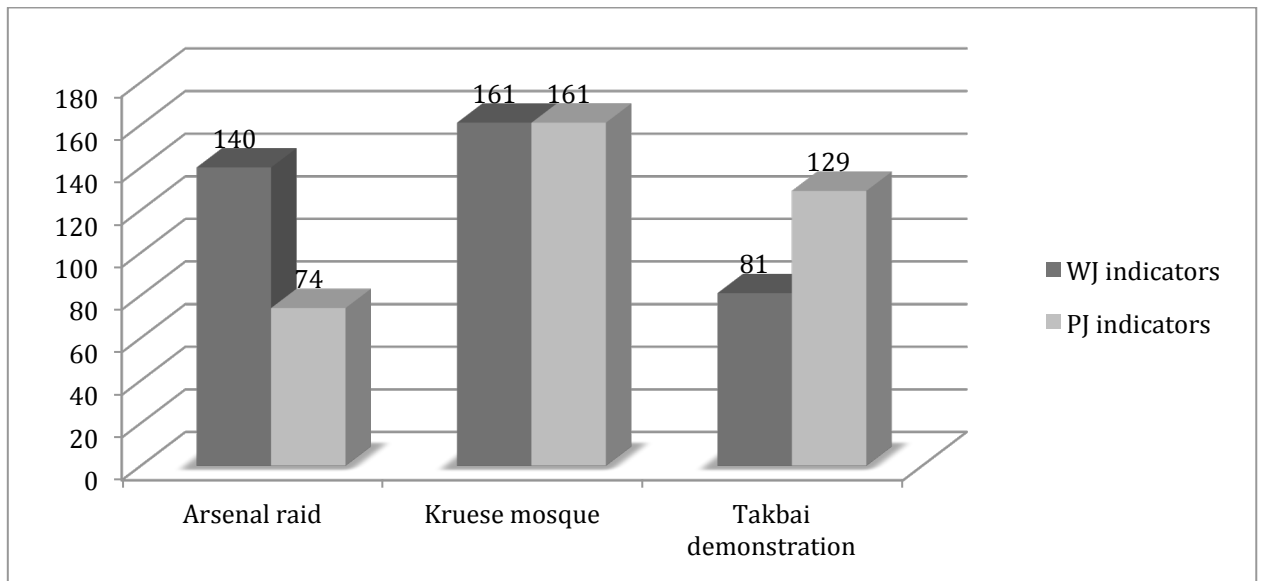


Figure 6.5: The total number of WJ/PJ indicators found in 132 news stories on the coverage of the three incidents in *Bangkok Post*

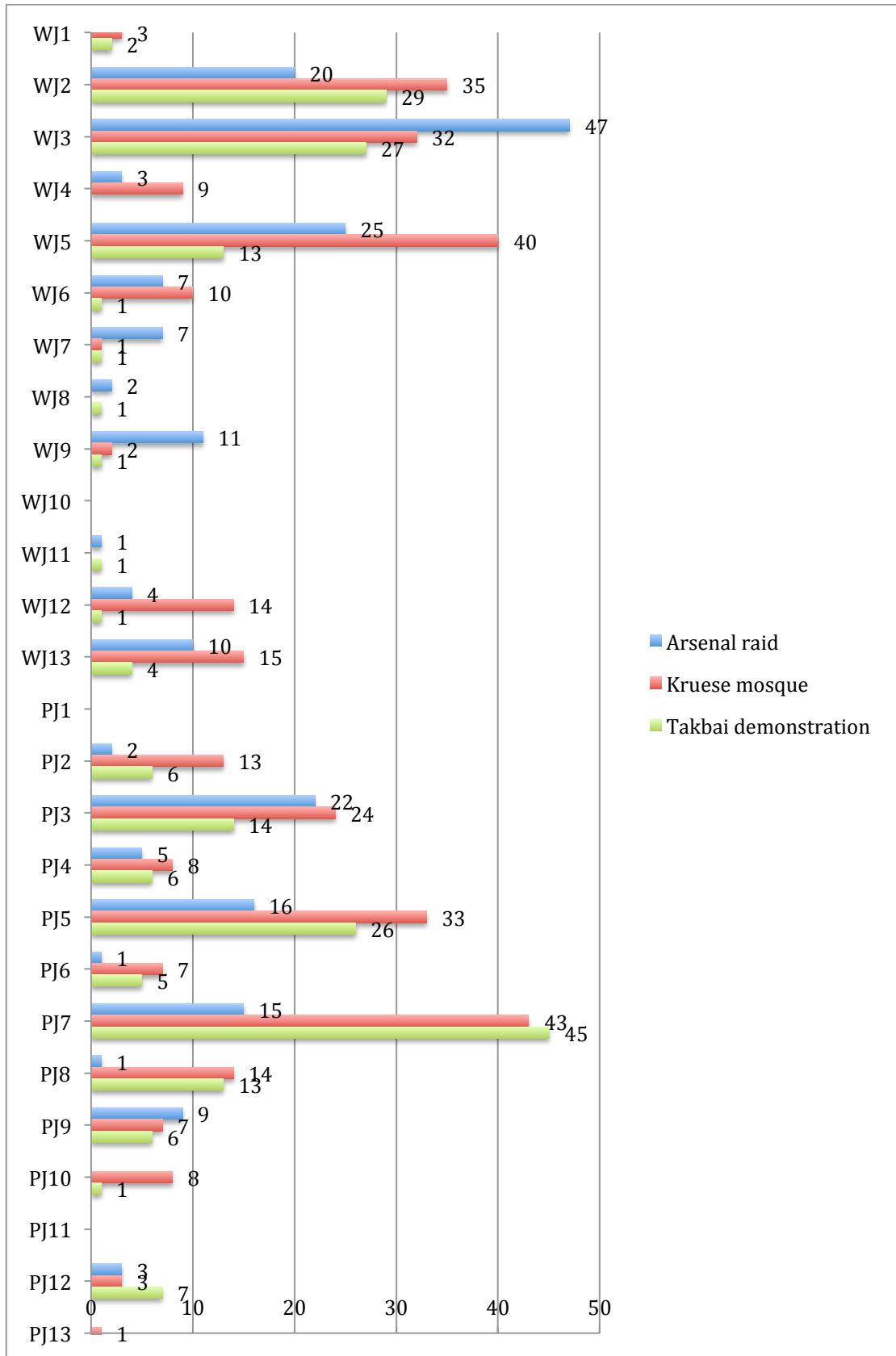


Figure 6.6: The frequency of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in the coverage of each of the three incidents in *Bangkok Post*

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 present a closer analysis of the war and peace journalism indicators found in the coverage of each of the three incidents. The findings reveal an interesting trend on the use of war and peace journalism indicators across the three incidents.

Regarding the arsenal raid incident, a total of 34 news articles were included in the analysis. The number of war journalism indicators identified was twice as high as the number of peace journalism indicators, with 140 WJ indicators in comparison to 74 PJ indicators. This finding confirms my preliminary assumption that more WJ features than PJ features would be found in the reporting of the arsenal raid incident. In addition, the nature of the situation made it more difficult to avoid WJ features when reporting the incident, which signified an attack on the Thai state.

The indicator found in the highest frequency was WJ3 (elite-oriented), with 47 appearances,⁴⁷ followed by WJ5 (focus on here and now) with 25 appearances.⁴⁸ PJ3 (people-oriented) was found to be the third most commonly-occurring indicator with 22 appearances⁴⁹ (see figure 6.6). This finding indicates that *Bangkok Post* may have applied a large ratio of WJ features in its reporting, especially the elite-oriented aspect. However, the use of PJ features, especially the focus on people, can also be seen in its coverage.

Where PJ3 was one of the indicators in the coverage, three main voices were represented: the students and teachers whose schools were set on fire; the families of the soldiers killed at the arsenal depot; and the families and local people on the arrest of the Islamic teachers. In sum, the reporting of *Bangkok Post* on the arsenal raid incident was very much toward a war journalism approach because the number of war journalism indicators found in the coverage was twice as high as the number of peace journalism indicators. Nevertheless, an emphasis on local people can still be seen.

With regard to the Kruese Mosque incident, 56 articles were included in the analysis. Interestingly, the study found the number of WJ and PJ indicators identified from the coverage was the same at 161 indicators (see figure 6.5). Compared to the findings from the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, the number of WJ and PJ indicators found in the Kruese Mosque event coverage reveals a change in how *Bangkok Post* reported on the southern conflict. That is, more peace journalism indicators were found

in the newspaper's coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, which indicates that a more peace-oriented approach to reporting was applied.⁵⁰

The indicator found in the highest frequency was PJ7 (multiparty orientation) with 43 appearances,⁵¹ followed by WJ5 (focus on here and now) with 40 appearances and WJ2 (the visible effects of war) with 35 appearances (see figure 6.6). Compared to the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, more focus and voices were given to other sides involved in the conflict, and a lot of focus was placed on the criticism on the government's mishandling of the situation. The criticism came from different sides: the Muslim community, the senators, the opposition, and international human rights organisations. Also, more attention was given to the local people, especially the families of the killed Muslim attackers, by focusing on how the violence affected their lives (invisible effects of the incident).

The focus on here and now (WJ5) and the focus on the visible effects of war (WJ2) were the indicators found in the second and third highest frequency in this coverage, respectively.⁵² The incident was represented in a 'here and now' perspective, which is with a focus on what was happening in the incident with no background given. The nature of the situation made it harder to present the conflict without mentioning the violence and its visible effects. In addition, more than twice as many PJ5 (the focus on causes and consequences of the conflict) indicators were found than in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident. This point indicated that *Bangkok Post* engaged more of a peace journalism approach by presenting the background information of the incident in its coverage as news space was given to articles on the history of Kruese Mosque and reports on the consequence of the incident on the local people.⁵³

To conclude, compared to the findings from the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, the study of the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident found a higher number of each of the 13 peace journalism indicators. I believe that what happened in the Kruese Mosque incident affected the way *Bangkok Post* represented the incident. *Bangkok Post* could not avoid war journalism reporting when having to report on a violent incident, but at the same time, it gave more voices to those involved in the conflict, and provided more space for criticism of and comments on the incident. The findings indicate that *Bangkok Post* adopted more of a peace journalism approach in its reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident.

From the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident, 42 items of news were analysed. The study found an interesting trend whereby the number of WJ indicators dropped substantially to 81 instances, while the number of PJ indicators rose to 129 appearances (see figure 6.5). This implies that the nature of the situation guided the way *Bangkok Post* reported the incident.⁵⁴

The dominant indicators identified in the coverage of this incident were: PJ7 (multiparty orientation), which was also the indicator found in the highest frequency (45 indicators); WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence), with 29 indicators; and WJ3 (elite-oriented), with 27 indicators. In the same way as in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident and the Kruese Mosque incident, the findings revealed the same dominant WJ indicators in the reporting of *Bangkok Post*: WJ2, WJ5, and WJ3.⁵⁵ Conversely, the dominant PJ indicators were PJ7 (multiparty orientation), which was also the indicator found in the highest frequency at 45 appearances, and PJ5 (focus on causes and consequences of the conflict) with 26 indicators.

Nevertheless, because what happened in the incident signified the mistreatment of the Muslim minority by the Thai state, I assumed that a higher number of PJ3 (people-oriented) indicators and more reports from a people perspective would be found. In actual fact, reports which relied on the accounts of high authority (WJ3) were twice as prevalent as reports from the local perspective. This shows that *Bangkok Post* gave space and time to the voices of the people only to some extent but, at the same time, it still relied largely on high authority as the main news actors and sources. Articles with elite oriented indicators were mostly those on the government's reaction to the criticism it received in the aftermath of the incident. Moreover, articles with multiparty orientation indicators were predominantly those on the reactions and comments from different sides involved in the conflict: people affected by the incident, the Muslim community, academics, neighbouring countries, the opposition and senators, and international organisations.⁵⁶

In sum, a content analysis of the news coverage by *Bangkok Post* revealed an interesting trend in the appearance of WJ and PJ indicators. WJ indicators were most common in the reporting of the arsenal raid incident, and were least common in the Takbai demonstration incident. On the other hand, PJ

indicators were least common in the arsenal raid incident and increased continuously in each of the two subsequent incidents. The dominant war journalism indicators were WJ3, WJ2, and WJ5, while the dominant peace journalism indicators were PJ7, PJ5, and PJ3. This suggests that *Bangkok Post* engaged peace journalism practice in its conflict coverage right from the start of the southern conflict in 2004.

The next section presents the findings from a content analysis of the conflict coverage of *The Nation*.

6.1.1.2 *The Nation*: Findings

The findings of a content analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators in *The Nation*'s coverage of the three major incidents in 2004 are summarised in the chart below (see figure 6.7). In sum, the study identified a total of 935 WJ/PJ indicators in the coverage: 394 WJ indicators and 541 PJ indicators. The number of PJ indicators was considerably higher than the number of WJ indicators, which suggests that *The Nation*'s style of reporting was very much towards a peace journalism approach.

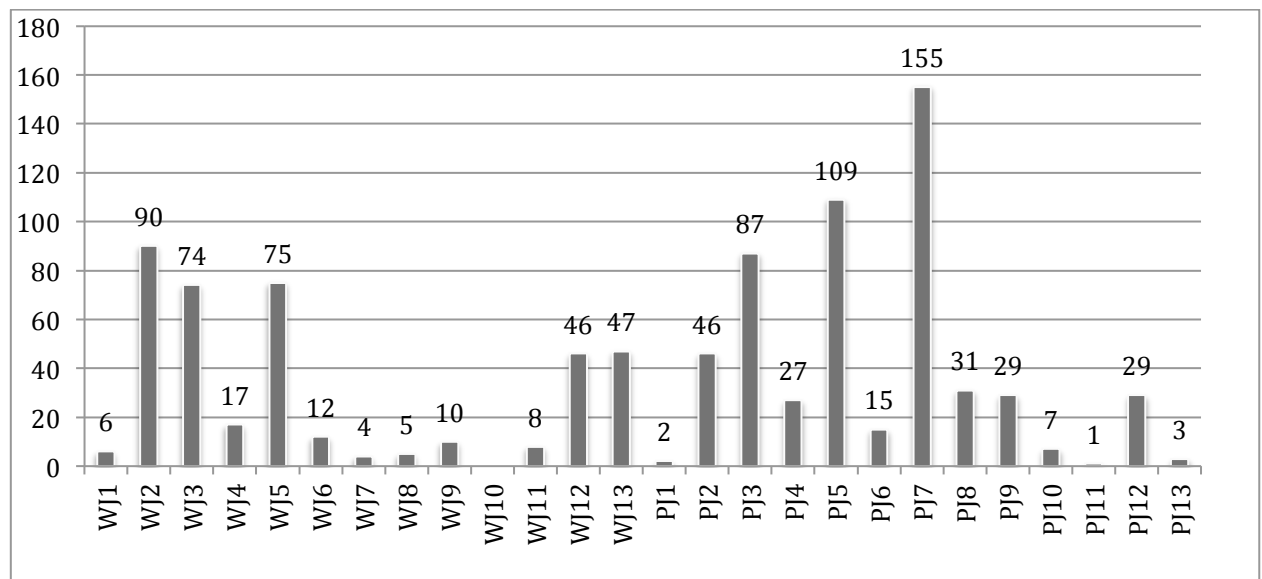


Figure 6.7: The number of 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in 166 news articles (not separated by incident) in *The Nation*

Figure 6.7 presents the results obtained from the analysis of 13 WJ/PJ indicators in 166 news articles on the three major incidents as reported in *The Nation*. From the chart, it can be seen that the highest number of indicators found is PJ7 (Multiparty orientation), with 155 appearances, which shows that

The Nation presented the voices of all sides involved in the conflict. The second highest number of indicators is PJ5 (focuses on causes and consequences of the conflict), with 109 appearances. The high number of PJ5 indicators suggests that *The Nation* presented information on the background of the conflict and the consequences in its reporting. The third highest number of indicators found was WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of war) with 90 instances. This confirmed my assumption that a high proportion of WJ2 indicators would be found in the news coverage because it is hard to avoid reporting on the visible effects of war when reporting on violent incidents.

The study revealed that the three most common PJ indicators were: PJ7 (multiparty orientation), PJ5 (focus on causes and consequences of the conflict), and PJ3 (people-oriented). The three most frequently-occurring WJ indicators were: WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of war), WJ5 (focus on here and now) and WJ3 (elite-oriented). A closer analysis of and discussion on the use of WJ/PJ indicators in the reporting of each incident will be provided in the next part. It is also worth noting that the frequency of the three most prevalent WJ indicators was almost half the frequency of the top three occurring PJ indicators. This indicates that *The Nation* used more of a peace journalism approach in its reporting. Surprisingly, the findings also revealed somewhat similar trends with the findings from the coverage of *Bangkok Post*. That is, both newspapers shared the same dominant WJ and PJ indicators (WJ5, WJ3, WJ2 and PJ7, PJ5, PJ3). A more detailed comparison of the findings on the approaches of the two newspapers will be discussed later in this chapter.

On the language-based criteria (WJ11, WJ12, WJ13 and PJ11, PJ12, and PJ13), surprisingly, the study found a higher number of WJ language-based criteria compared with the PJ language-based criteria. The study found 46 indicators of WJ12 (demonising language), and 47 indicators of WJ13 (emotive language), while 29 indicators were found of PJ12 (avoid demonising language). This finding suggests that even though *The Nation* used a peace journalism approach to a large extent, it still used war journalism language in its reporting. I will discuss this point again in the analysis of language used later in this chapter.

Next is the classification of the conflict coverage into war journalism, peace journalism and balanced reporting as classified by the use of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators.

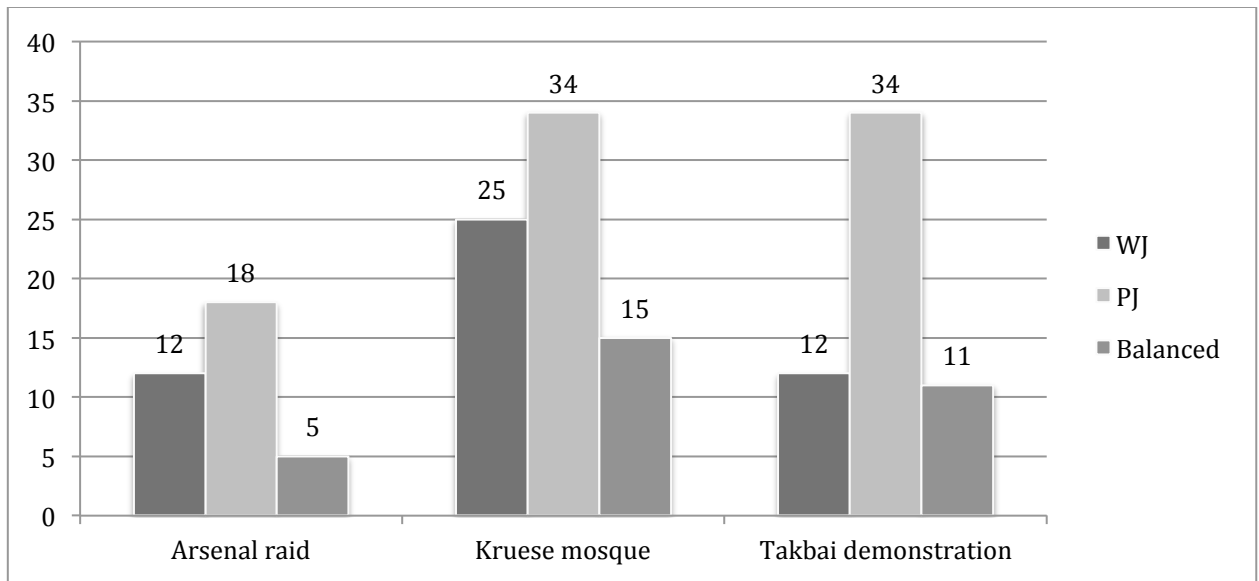


Figure 6.8: The ratio of war journalism, peace journalism and balanced articles from the coverage of the three incidents in *The Nation* as classified by 13 WJ/PJ indicators

Figure 6.8 presents the number of WJ news articles, PJ news articles and balanced reports as classified by the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators. Surprisingly, *The Nation* did not use a war journalism approach in its reporting of the arsenal raid incident as I expected. In fact, the number of PJ articles was higher than the number of WJ reports in the coverage of all three incidents under scrutiny. The gap between WJ news and PJ news grows wider from the arsenal raid incident to the Kruese Mosque incident and to the Takbai incident, suggesting that the longer the conflict continued, the more *The Nation* applied a peace journalism approach in its reporting of the incidents.

In the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, as I mentioned earlier, I see the incident as a two-way attack by the Thai army and the Muslim assailants. Therefore, WJ news reporting is most prevalent in the coverage of this incident. Nevertheless, the number of PJ news articles was also high because the incident directly affected the lives of the locals. The nature of the Takbai incident influenced the reporting style because the incident signified the mistreatment of the Muslim minority and misuse of power by the Thai authorities. Consequently, there were twice as many PJ articles as WJ reports on this incident.

To better understand the reporting style of *The Nation*, I provided a closer analysis on the use of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators in the coverage of each incident by *The Nation* in the next section.

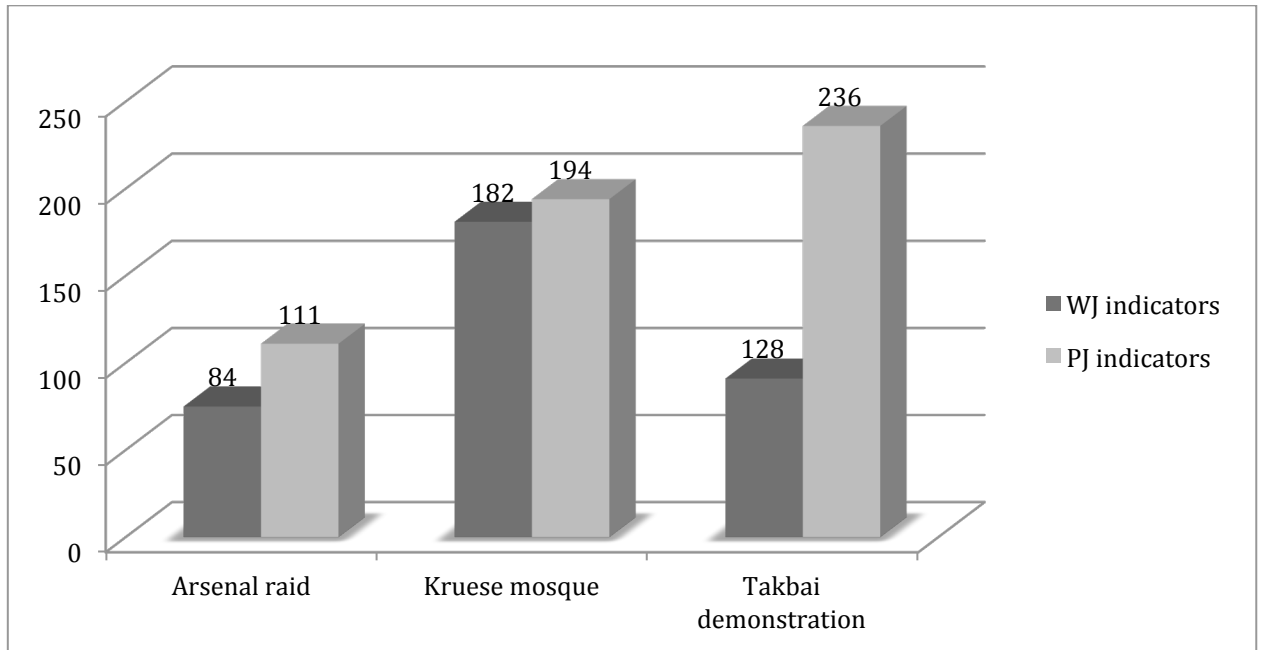


Figure 6.9: The total number of WJ/PJ indicators found in 166 news stories on the coverage of the three incidents by *The Nation*

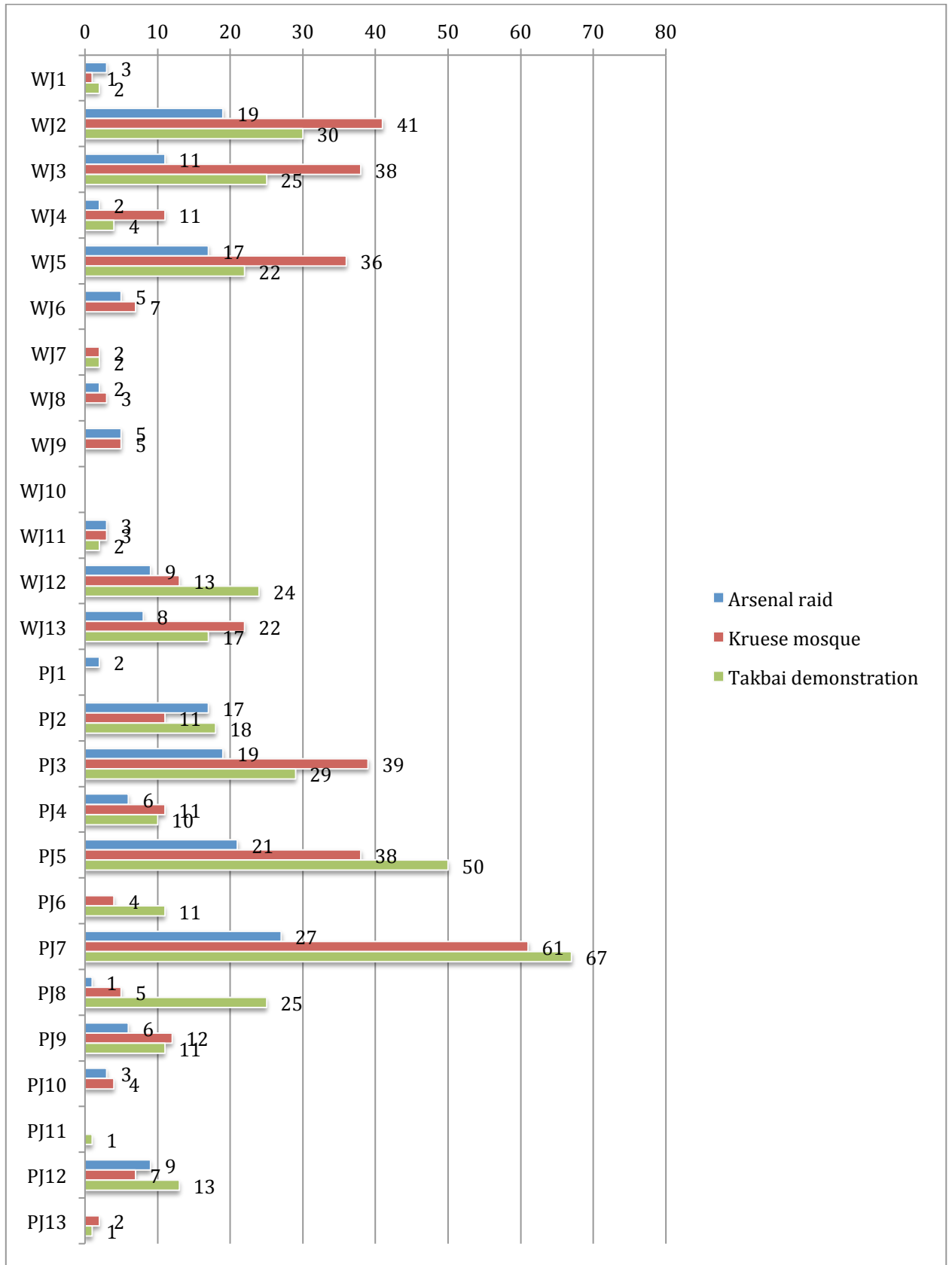


Figure 6.10: The frequency of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in the coverage of each of the three incidents in *The Nation*

Figure 6.9 shows the total number of war and peace journalism indicators identified in the overall reporting on each incident, and figure 6.10 shows the frequency of each of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators found in the coverage of the three incidents. The findings confirm the results from the classification of news articles into war, peace and balanced stories as discussed earlier. That is, the number of PJ indicators found was higher than the number of WJ indicators in all of the three incidents under scrutiny. The findings clearly illustrate the pattern of WJ and PJ indicators used in all three of the incidents.

In the arsenal raid incident, 35 news reports were analysed. From this analysis, the number of peace journalism indicators found was considerably higher than the number of war journalism indicators, at a ratio of 111 PJ indicators to 84 WJ indicators (see figure 6.9). The study revealed that the indicator found in the highest frequency was PJ7 (multiparty orientation) with 27 appearances, followed by PJ5 (focus on causes and consequences of the conflict) with 21 appearances and PJ3 (people-oriented) with 19 appearances. As mentioned earlier, it is surprising to see that the dominant indicators are of peace journalism when I expected to see more use of a war journalism approach in the reporting of the arsenal raid incident.

This point indicates that *The Nation* engaged in a peace journalism approach in its reporting of the first incident of the current southern conflict. The high frequencies of PJ7, PJ5 and PJ3 show that in the representation of the arsenal raid incident, *The Nation* gave space to voices from many sides involved in or affected by the conflict (PJ7)⁵⁷, gave details and information on the background and consequences of the conflict (PJ5)⁵⁸, and gave space for the people involved in or affected by the incident (PJ3).⁵⁹

The reporting of *The Nation* on the arsenal raid incident followed a peace journalism approach because the number of peace journalism indicators found in the coverage is twice as high as the number of war journalism indicators. On the other hand, the dominant war journalism indicator is the focus on the visible effects of the violence (WJ2), followed by the focus on here and now (WJ5), and elite-oriented (WJ3). The fact that the elite-oriented indicator was found in a low rate of occurrence signifies that *The Nation* relied less on sources from high authorities.

From the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, 74 stories were analysed. Interestingly, the number of WJ and PJ indicators was quite close at 194 PJ indicators compared to 182 WJ indicators (see figure 6.9). Compared to the findings from the coverage of the arsenal raid, more than twice as many WJ indicators were found and almost twice as many PJ indicators. The indicator found in the highest frequency was PJ7 (multiparty orientation) with 61 appearances, followed by WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence) with 41 appearances and PJ3 (people-oriented) with 39 appearances (see figure 6.10).

In the same way as the findings of *Bangkok Post*, multiparty orientation (PJ7) was the indicator found in the highest frequency. The voices of a variety of parties involved in the conflict were heard. It was the first time that *The Nation* expressed its own voice (comments and opinions) in the form of news reports on the front page under its southern conflict section. This shows an attempt to perform its social responsibility role by taking part in the resolution of the conflict. *The Nation* also placed stress on the peace initiatives that involve ways of working towards reconciliation and resolution of the conflict, which is the main goal of peace journalism.⁶⁰

Compared to the coverage of the arsenal raid, more space was given to all sides involved in the conflict. For example, more news reports from the perspectives of other countries, human rights organisations, and academics were included.⁶¹ Other countries and human rights organisations expressed their criticism of how the Thai government used excessive forces in the incident. The Muslim community and academics expressed their views on how the conflict could be resolved. Space was also given for the Thai government to share their reactions to the critics, while space was also given to the opposition parties and the senators. This clearly shows that *The Nation* tried to give space to all parties involved in the conflict, especially sides that expressed their criticism against the government.

The second highest indicator found was WJ2, or the focus on the visible effects of the violence.⁶² *The Nation* did not report the details on the death tolls and damage plainly. The language style was emotional and moving as there were 38 language-based war journalism indicators found in the coverage. In my view, *The Nation* engaged in peace journalism to a large degree in its reporting but its

writing style of using emotional and provocative language, as well as the focus on the visible effects of the violence, made it harder to implement a peace journalism approach to its full extent.

The Nation gave space to local people affected by the incident as can be seen from the fact that PJ3 was found to be the third highest indicator from its coverage of the incident.⁶³ The voices of those included were as follows: the locals who witnessed the incident; the locals who were affected by the incident; the suspects, and local people giving their reactions to the incident. The representation of the conflict by focusing on the local people not only shows how *The Nation* saw the importance of voices from the other side of the story, but also shows the effects of the violence on the social and cultural level. The space provided for the suspects and the reaction of the locals on their arrests indicated an attempt to offer balanced accounts from both the Thai authorities and the locals, which provided opportunities for the readers to use their own judgment when reading the news.

To conclude, the reporting style of *The Nation* became more obvious in this coverage. That is, in the same way as for the arsenal raid's coverage, the main WJ indicators were WJ2, WJ3, and WJ5. This point suggests a war journalism approach, especially in terms of the focus on the visible effects of the violence, the focus on elites, and the reporting of the incident as breaking news, all of which were very much unavoidable. However, the fact that the study found more peace journalism indicators, especially PJ7, PJ5 and PJ3, in higher numbers than the WJ indicators suggests that *The Nation's* style of reporting was more towards a peace journalism approach than a war journalism approach.

For the Takbai demonstration incident, 57 news stories were analysed. The study found 128 WJ indicators and 236 PJ indicators. Again, PJ7 (multiparty orientation) was found in the highest frequency with 67 appearances, followed by PJ5 (focus on causes and consequences) with 50 appearances, and WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence) with 30 appearances (see figure 6.10). The number of PJ indicators was more than twice as high as the number of WJ indicators in this coverage. As discussed earlier, I believe that the nature of the Takbai incident, which signified the mistreatment of the Muslim minority by the Thai state, guided the way *The Nation* reported the incident. As a result, a prominent number of PJ indicators is expected.

Multiparty orientation (PJ7) was found in the highest frequency.⁶⁴ Most of the articles that featured the voices of high authority were those giving a reaction to the critics. Because what happened in the incident caused national and international uproar, more voices from the Muslim community, senators and human rights organisation were also heard, most of which were very critical of the government's mishandling of the incident. Space was also given to the witnesses and detainees who had first-hand experience of the demonstration.

In addition, *The Nation* looked into the background of the conflict and asserted its own voice in the coverage. A focus on the causes of the conflict (PJ5) was applied by exploring the thoughts and ideas of experts in various fields, such as academics, religious group or politicians.⁶⁵ Thus the readers were able to see the conflict through the eyes of various people and sides involved.⁶⁶ This shows how *The Nation* explored the cause of the conflict from different perspectives, and also indicates that *The Nation* put itself as one of the actors in the conflict by giving its comments and standing its ground on criticising the government.

These findings indicate that *The Nation* engaged in a peace journalism approach in its representation of the conflict. However, in the same way as in the reporting of the arsenal raid and Kruese Mosque incidents, the number of WJ2 indicators, or the focus on the visible effects of the violence, especially the details on the numbers of deaths and injured, was high.⁶⁷ *The Nation* often used emotive and demonising language in its reporting, as can be supported by the fact that 42 war journalism language based indicators were found.

In total, the number of PJ indicators was higher than the number of WJ indicators in the coverage of all three incidents. The analysis revealed that the dominant WJ indicators were WJ2, WJ5, and WJ3, while the dominant PJ indicators were PJ7, PJ5, PJ3. The study found the lowest number of WJ indicators in the coverage of the arsenal raid. The number increased in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, and again, dropped greatly in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration. On the other hand, PJ indicators were found in their lowest numbers in the reporting of the arsenal raid, but they increased considerably in the reporting of the Kruese Mosque and Takbai demonstration incidents.

The next section provides a comparison between the findings from *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*.

6.1.1.3 Comparison of the findings: *Bangkok Post* vs *The Nation*

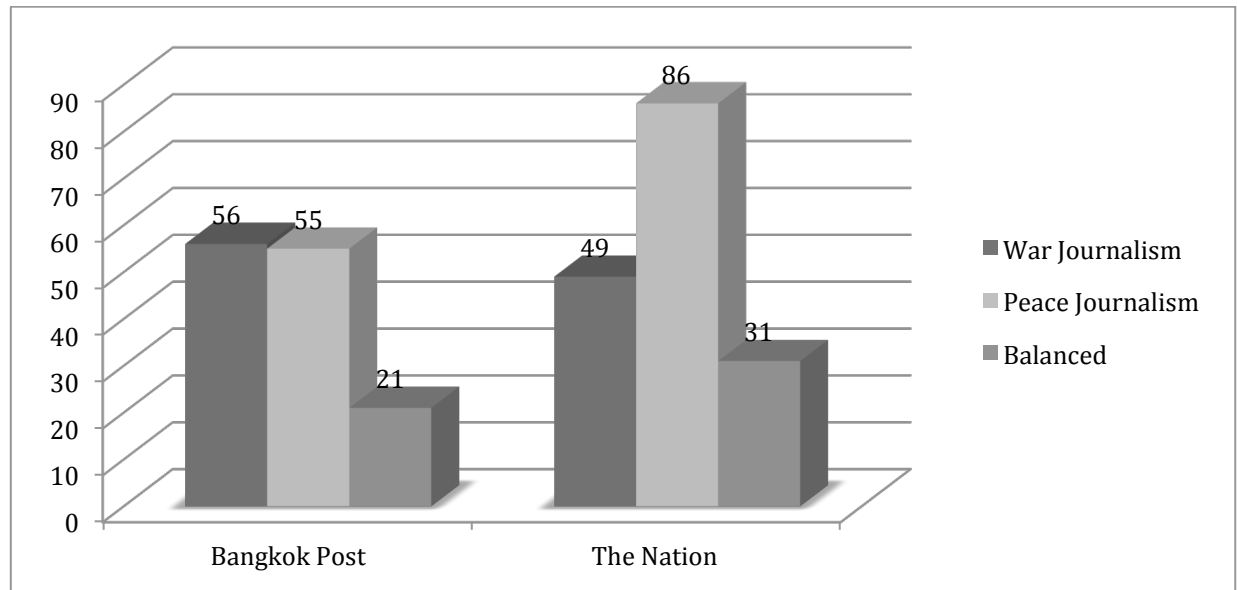


Figure 6.11: A comparison of war, peace and balanced news stories of *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* as classified by the 13 WJ/PJ indicators

Figure 6.11 shows the findings from a content analysis on the conflict coverage by the two newspapers, using the 13 WJ/PJ indicators (Galtung 1986; 1998). In the coverage of *Bangkok Post*, the number of war and peace articles were quite similar, which suggests that *Bangkok Post* engaged both war and peace journalism approaches in its representation of the conflict. The content analysis showed 56 war journalism reports, 55 peace journalism articles and 21 balanced reports (see figure 6.11). The details on the analysis on the coverage of each incident revealed that the stance began with more of a pro-war journalism approach to reporting of the arsenal raid incident, a mixture of both war and peace journalism for the Kruese Mosque incident (the study found the same number of WJ and PJ indicators in the coverage), and a pro-peace journalism approach in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident. In the coverage of *The Nation*, the study found 49 war journalism reports, 86 peace journalism articles, and 31 balanced reports (see figure 6.11). It is very distinguishable that the number of PJ news reports was two times higher than the number of WJ and balanced news articles. The analysis into the coverage of each incident in *The Nation* revealed that the number of PJ news reports was higher than the number of WJ news reports in the coverage of all three incidents.

In the reporting of the arsenal raid incident, both newspapers presented information on the related violent incidents, southern policy, law enforcement and the government's reaction, with the main focus on here and now (WJ5) and the visible effects of the violence (WJ2). The first day of reporting serves to illustrate this point as can be seen in *Bangkok Post's* headlines "Soldiers die, schools burn", and *The Nation's* "20 schools torched, Arsenal raided" (see Appendix IV (a)). In the conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post*, the study found twice as many war journalism indicators as PJ indicators (140 WJ indicators and 74 PJ indicators) (see figure 6.5). On the other hand, in the conflict coverage of *The Nation*, the number of PJ indicators (111) was higher than the number of WJ indicators (84) (see figure 6.9), suggesting that *The Nation* used a peace journalism approach to its reporting of the first southern conflict incident. *The Nation* published not only reports on the violent incidents and security measures but also news on social and cultural issues.⁶⁸ The topics covered by *The Nation* include the impact on social and economic aspects, a possible solution, the aftermath and the history behind the conflict.⁶⁹

In the reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident, the number of PJ indicators found in both newspapers increased substantially (161 PJ indicators in *Bangkok Post* and 194 PJ indicators in *The Nation*), suggesting that a peace journalism approach was applied to the coverage. However, the number of war journalism indicators found in both newspapers was also high (161 WJ indicators in *Bangkok Post* and 182 WJ indicators in *The Nation*). This indicates that it may be unavoidable to report violent incidents without using a war journalism style of reporting, especially with regard to the focus on the visible effects of the violence (WJ2), the focus on here and now (WJ5), and elite-oriented (WJ3), which were the three main WJ indicators used by both newspapers.

Both newspapers published articles on different aspects of the incident and gave voices to different people involved in or affected by the incident. This can be seen in the fact that PJ7 (multiparty-orientation) was the most recurrent indicator found from their coverage. The number of social and cultural reports in *Bangkok Post* increased on the following topics: impact on lives of the locals, impact on socio-economic aspect, history, solution and aftermath. This shows that *Bangkok Post* applied a peace journalism approach in its coverage.⁷⁰ *The Nation* continued reporting news both on the incidents and on the various social and cultural issues.⁷¹ Apart from reporting on the violent incident, security

issues and southern policy, *The Nation* published 18 articles on the impact on the lives of the locals, 6 articles on the history of the conflict, and 4 reports on possible solutions to the conflict. These topics are the main features of peace journalism.

For the Takbai demonstration, the study found more PJ indicators than WJ indicators in the coverage of both newspapers. *Bangkok Post* had 81 WJ indicators and 129 PJ indicators, while *The Nation* had 128 WJ indicators and 236 PJ indicators. This indicates that both newspapers applied a peace journalism approach in their news coverage. The main indicators used by both newspapers in their reporting were PJ7 (multiparty-orientation) and WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence), which shows that although both newspapers reported on the visible effects of the violence, they also gave voices to different parties involved in or affected by the conflict in their coverage.⁷² The number of elite-oriented and people-oriented indicators found from the coverage of *The Nation* was relatively similar (25 elite-oriented reports and 29 people-oriented reports), while elite-oriented (WJ3) was the second highest indicator found in the coverage of *Bangkok Post*. *The Nation* presented both reports on both the violent incident and the related social and cultural issues, while *Bangkok Post* presented more reports on the violent incident and security measures.

To conclude, the study found that both newspapers shared the same main war and peace journalism indicators: WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence), WJ3 (elite-oriented) and WJ5 (focus on here and now); and PJ3 (people-oriented), PJ5 (focus on causes and consequences), and PJ7 (multiparty-orientation). The southern conflict involves violent incidents and damage to lives and society; therefore, WJ2 and WJ5 were found throughout the coverage. Also, the southern conflict is a national concern that involves issues of southern administration and security measures, so the dependence on high authority is unavoidable.

Both newspapers implemented a peace journalism approach in their reporting of the southern conflict right from the first year of the incident, which contradicts my preliminary assumption that more of a war journalism style of reporting would be found. The main characteristics the peace journalism found in the reporting are the presentation of different voices, especially the voices of the local people, and the provision of information on the causes and consequences of the conflict. I found that the situations

of the incidents and the length of the conflict (in this study, a 10-month period) had an influence on the implementation of war and peace journalism in the coverage, as peace journalism reports were found to be at their lowest frequency in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident and at their highest in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration.

In the following section, the findings from the second analysis on war and peace journalism orientations in the coverage are presented.

6.1.1.4 The second analysis on the four broad orientations of WJ/PJ

As stated earlier, I conducted another analysis on the four broad orientations of WJ/PJ (Galtung 1998) in order to cross check and to validate the data. Because I am aware that the 13 WJ/PJ framework may not be sufficient enough to categorise news story into WJ/PJ frames as it only reveals the number of WJ/PJ indicators found in the study and provides categorisation based solely on a count of the frequency of the indicators. The four main orientations of WJ and PJ are two opposing frames, which include: war/peace, conflict; propaganda/truth; elite/people; and victory/solution. In this sense, the second analysis is a subjective form of analysis based on my reading in order to find the 'main' orientation of the news story and determine whether it is pro-peace or pro-war.

I categorised each news report into one of these four broad WJ/PJ orientations in order to identify the war journalism and peace journalism framework used by the newspapers in representing the conflict. In this sense, one news report is categorised into either a war or a peace journalism orientation. However, news articles that could not be classified into any war or peace journalism orientation would be marked as 'neutral' stories. The study indicated that, out of the 298 news items analysed, 150 reports were categorised as PJ, while 114 reports were categorised as WJ, and 34 reports were neutral (see figure 6.12, see also Appendix V for details of the second analysis).

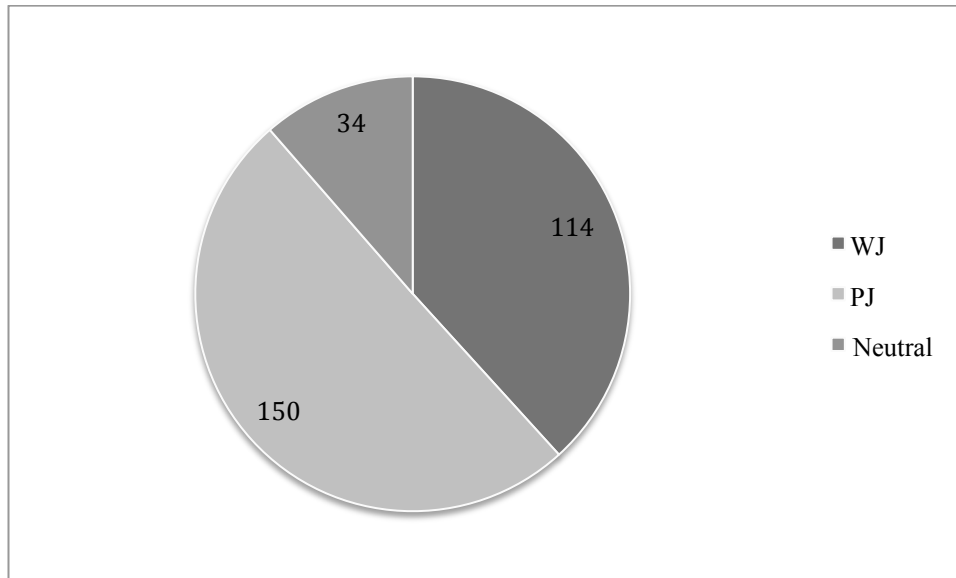


Figure 6.12: The number of peace journalism, war journalism and neutral news reports from the 298 news reports as classified by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations

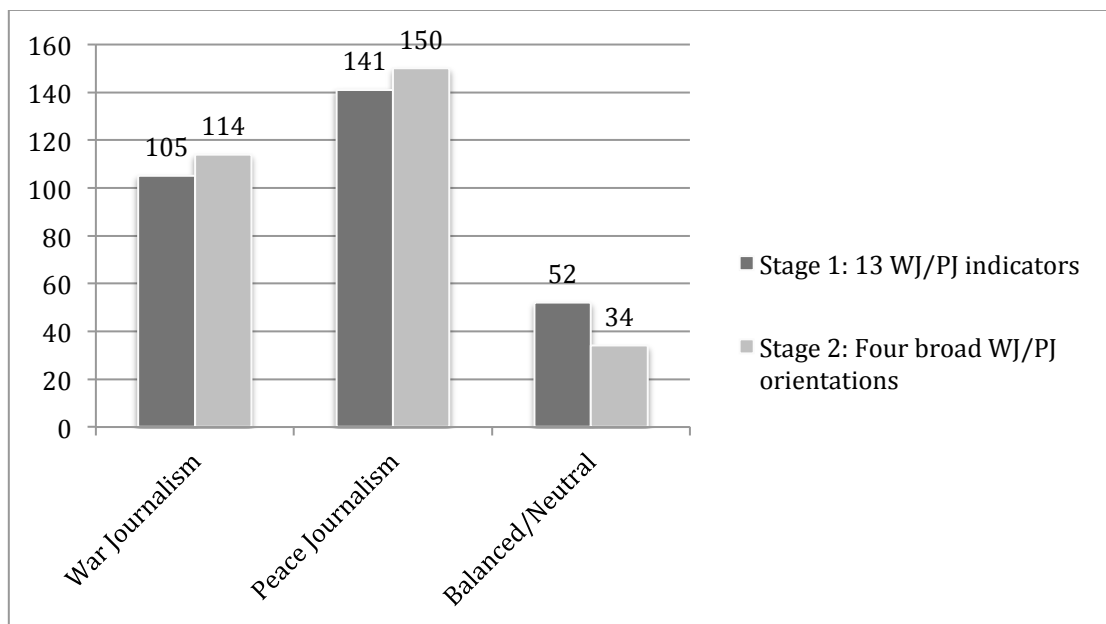


Figure 6.13: Comparison of results between the analyses of the two WJ/PJ frameworks of the 298 news stories

The findings from the two analyses revealed quite similar results (see figure 6.13). However, the two frameworks differed in their emphasis on war and peace journalism. That is, the 13 WJ/PJ indicators focus on the features of war or peace in the news reports, while the four broad orientations focus on the

WJ or PJ frame that the journalists used when writing the news. The use of two frameworks can help in cross-checking and validating the data in this study.

The findings reveal a similar pattern. To explain, in the classification of war and peace journalism reports, the differences between the results of the two analyses were low, which means that the implementation of two the approaches was effective. That is, out of the 298 news reports, the number of PJ articles was the highest, ranging from 141-150 with a mean of 145.5, followed by the number of WJ articles, which ranged from 105-114 with a mean of 109.5, while the number of balanced/neutral articles ranged from 34-52, with a mean of 43.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the representation of the three major incidents from the southern conflict in 2004 featured more peace journalism reports than war journalism articles. This finding represents a surprising contrast to my preliminary assumption that the reporting would mostly involve a war journalism approach since it was covering three violent incidents.

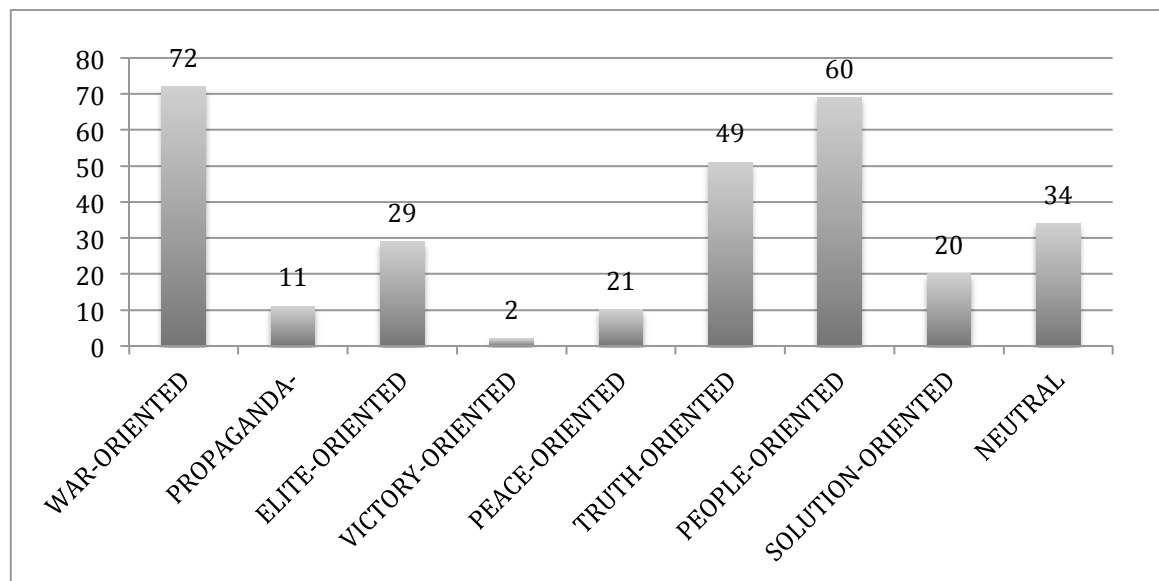


Figure 6.14: The number of war journalism, peace journalism and neutral news stories as classified by the 4 broad orientations of WJ/PJ on 298 news stories

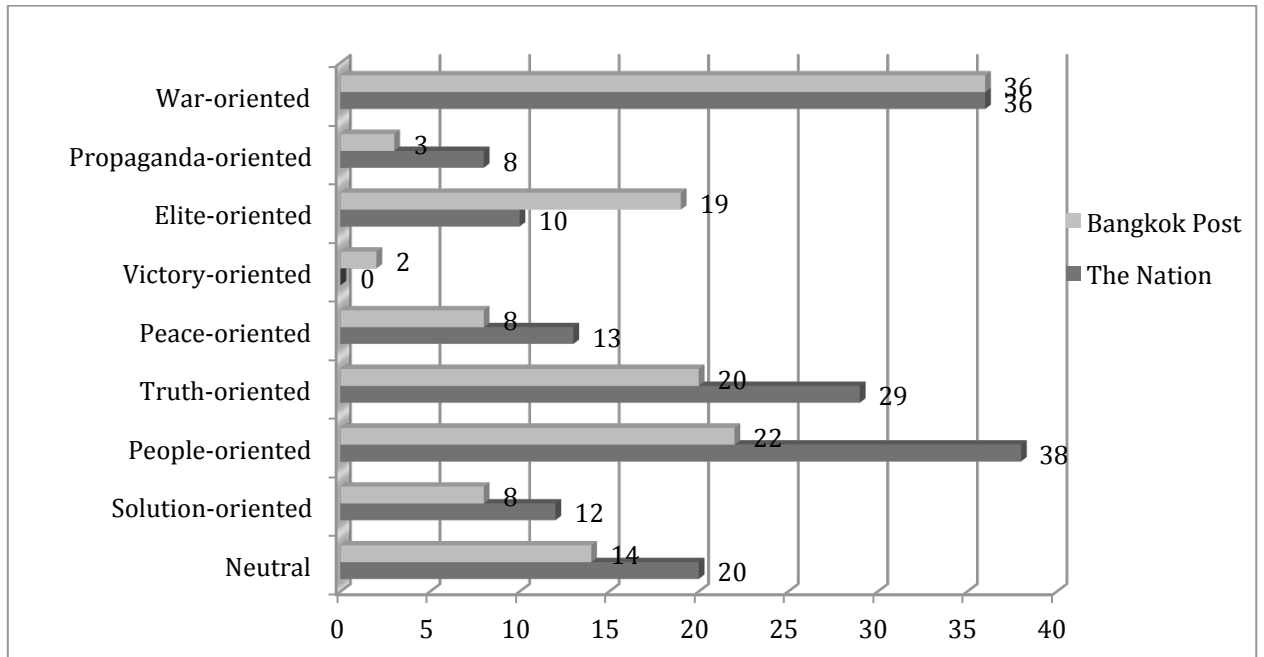


Figure 6.15: A comparison of the findings from the four WJ/PJ orientations found in the conflict coverage in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

Figure 6.14 reveals the most recurrent WJ/PJ frame in the 298 articles analysed: war-oriented (72 articles), followed by people-oriented (60 articles), and truth-oriented (49 articles). A comparison between the findings of the two newspapers was made (see figure 6.15). A 'war-oriented-frame' was used as the main frame in the coverage of both newspapers: 36 articles in *Bangkok Post* and 36 articles in *The Nation*. Surprisingly, the study found the same number of 'war-oriented' reports, which suggests that a focus on war was used extensively by the two newspapers in their coverage of the southern conflict. The opposing 'peace-oriented' frame only contributed 8 articles in *Bangkok Post* and 13 articles in *The Nation*, which indicates that both newspapers were less likely to use peace as the main frame when reporting the conflict.

However, other categories of peace journalism orientations, such as 'truth-oriented', 'people-oriented' and 'solution-oriented', were used more than their opposing frames in the coverage of both newspapers. This suggests that there may be a small amount of focus on 'peace' reports, whereas other aspects of peace journalism, especially 'people-oriented' and 'truth-oriented', were utilised to a much larger degree. The study found 49 'truth-oriented' reports. From my reading, I found that both newspapers used a 'truth-oriented' frame mostly in their coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident.

The study found, 60 'people-oriented' articles, and 29 'elite-oriented' reports. *Bangkok Post* published approximately the same number of 'elite-oriented' and 'people-oriented' articles. In comparison to *The Nation*, 'elite-oriented' was the only frame for which *Bangkok Post* has more reports than *The Nation*. This indicates a high dependency by *Bangkok Post* on the elites as information sources, which can be supported by the findings from the first analysis that the 'elite-oriented' (WJ3) indicator was the most common in the coverage (106 indicators) (see figure 6.3). On the other hand, 'people-oriented' was the main frame applied in the conflict reporting of *The Nation*. The study found 38 'people-oriented' framed reports, and this can be supported by the findings from the first analysis, from which 155 'people-oriented' indicators (PJ3) were found.

Moreover, I consider the 'solution-oriented' frame to be the main feature of peace journalism as it shows how the media can proffer possible solutions to the conflict. The analysis identified 20 'solution-oriented' articles, which means that a peace journalism approach was used in the reporting right from the first year of the southern conflict. Also, the analysis revealed that the 'war-oriented' frame was the most recurrently used by both newspapers, which is largely unavoidable when reporting on a conflict that involves death tolls and damage to society. As Lynch and Galtung (2010, p. 12) stated:

"[W]ill peace journalism also report violence? Of course. But it will report the violence by all sides, and the suffering of all sides, not only their violence and our suffering. It will also go deeper, reporting the invisible causes and effects of violence without falling into the trap of confusing violence and conflict."

This quote explains that violence can be reported but peace journalism treats violence as conflict, which involves reporting violence from all sides, and exploring the causes and consequences of the conflict. The study found a large number of 'war-oriented' reports, and the focus on a 'peace-oriented' approach may still be low. However, other aspects such as the orientations on truth and people indicate that peace journalism was applied to the conflict coverage right from the first year of the southern conflict, even though other 'peace' and 'solution' aspects were implemented to a lesser extent.

The findings of the second analysis on each newspaper can be found in Appendix V. The following section presents the findings from the analysis of the news actors.

6.1.2 Proportions of news actors

The analysis of 'news actors', or as they are referred to in this study, 'the main actor mentioned in news leads', indicates the primary focus of the news article and thus, according to the journalist who wrote the report, the most important, authoritative or legitimate actor. According to Becker's (1967, p. 240) notion of the 'hierarchy of credibility', the right to be heard is "differentially distributed through the ranks of the system". Allan (2010, p. 82) echoed this view by stating "the higher up in this hierarchy the news source is situated, the more authoritative their words will be". Therefore, conducting a study of news actors will show the significance the newspapers ascribed to each category.

This mode of analysis was informed by peace journalism, which encourages journalists to engage all sides of the conflict in their reports. Consequently, a look into the main actors from the various articles can show the extent to which the newspapers gave prominence to each category. Moreover, whether a report is considered WJ or PJ also depends on the main focus of the story. The categorisation of news actors presents all of the sides involved in the conflict. The categories include: 'high authority', 'official source', 'opposition', 'religious group', 'academic', 'local', 'local authority', 'organisation', 'foreign source' and 'other'.

This research used frequency analysis to determine the proportion of news actors. The same unit of analysis was used for all 298 articles: 166 from *The Nation* and 132 from *Bangkok Post*. I looked at the first person mentioned in each story as the main actor (top of the 'hierarchy of credibility'), and recorded the number of times the same category was mentioned in each of the three incidents.

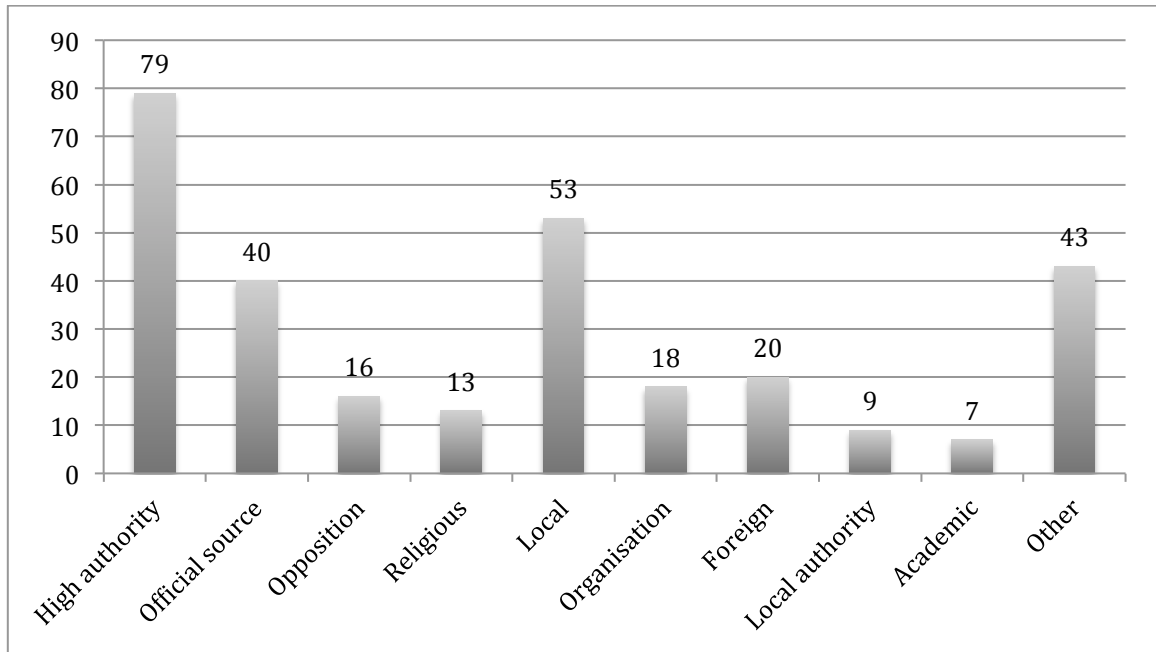


Figure 6.16: An overview of the ‘news actors’ used in the 298 news stories of conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (not differentiated by newspaper)

The findings from the analysis of 298 news reports show that the category of ‘news actor’ used most frequently was ‘high authority’, which accounted for the news lead in 79 articles. The second highest category was ‘local’ (53 articles), while the categories that were the least used were ‘local authority’ (9 articles) and ‘academic’ (7 articles) (see figure 6.16). These results indicate the prominence put on each category of news actor when reporting the news, which reveals that both newspapers placed the most prominence on ‘high authority’ as the main focus of their reports.

This finding can be supported by Becker’s (1967) notion of ‘hierarchy of credibility’, which explains that the people who are at the top of a social or institutional hierarchy are assumed to have greater credibility and better access to correct information than those among the bottom ranks, who are assumed to have less credibility and so be less likely to warrant journalistic attention. Surprisingly, ‘local’ actors were found to be the second most prominent instead of the least, which suggests that both newspapers regard ‘local’ actors as an important category since the violent incidents in the south of Thailand mostly affected the local people. This suggests an attempt by both newspapers to engage all sides of the conflict, as 53 out of 298 articles placed ‘local’ actors as the main focus of their coverage. In sum, the number of times each category of actor was mentioned as a ‘news actor’ varied, with the

analysis revealing the high prominence placed by the newspapers on ‘high authority’, ‘local’ and ‘official source’, while all other categories were used as the main news actors in fewer than 20 articles in total.

Next we turn to consider the results of the analysis of story actors from each newspaper.

6.1.2.1 *Bangkok Post*

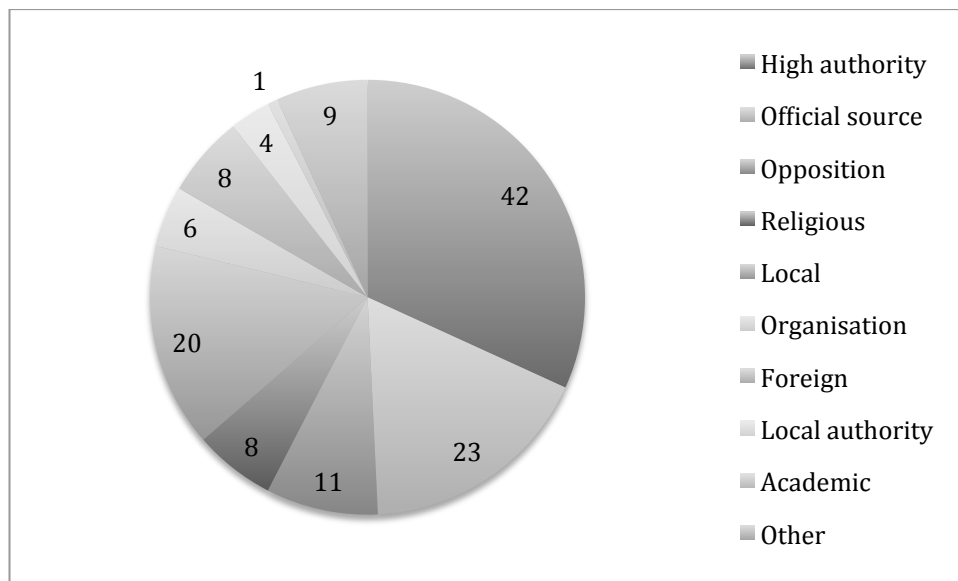


Figure 6.17: The frequency of ‘news actors’ by category found in the coverage of the three incidents in *Bangkok Post*

From the 132 articles analysed from *Bangkok Post*, the most frequently used main news actor was the category of ‘high authority’, accounting for 42 articles, followed by ‘official source’ (23 articles) and ‘local’ (20 articles) (see figure 6.17). These results show that *Bangkok Post* first and foremost put the category of ‘high authority’ as the main actor in its reports on the southern conflict stories, with ‘official source’ as the second most prominent category. This can be supported by the findings from the analysis on WJ/PJ indicators that 106 ‘elite-oriented’ indicators were found from the coverage, suggesting the newspaper’s dependence on leaders and official sources.

However, the category ‘local’, which is considered to be at the bottom of the hierarchy rank, was used as the main news actor more than any other of the remaining categories. This suggests that *Bangkok*

Post also placed prominence on 'local' perspectives in its reporting of the southern conflict incidents and how these incidents had a direct impact on the lives of the locals. All other categories of actors were used as main news actors; however with a different degree of prominence. The remaining categories of actors were featured as follows: 'opposition' 11 articles, 'religious group' 8 articles, 'local authority' 8 articles, 'organisation' 6 articles, and 'academic' 1 article.

6.1.2.2 *The Nation*

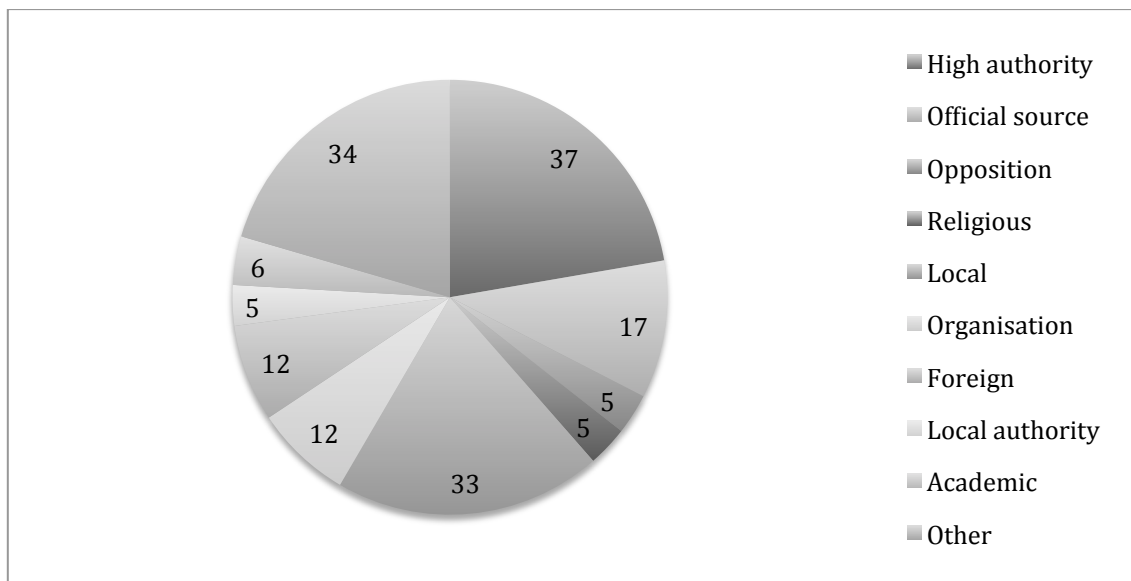


Figure 6.18: The frequency of 'news actors' by category found in the coverage of the three incidents in *The Nation*

From the 166 articles analysed in *The Nation*, the most frequently used news actor was 'high authority', featuring in 37 articles, followed by 'other' in 34 reports, and 'local' in 33 articles (see figure 6.18). The third most used news actor was 'official source' in 17 reports, followed by 'organisation' and 'foreign' in 12 articles each. 'High authority' was chosen as the main news actor in the reporting of all three incidents. However, the analysis found that 'local' was the second most frequently used news actor, which suggests that *The Nation* gave almost the same level of prominence to 'local' people as the focus of its reporting of southern conflict news.

Other categories were all used as news actors with a different level of prominence. In the same way as with *Bangkok Post*, the least used categories were as follows: 'academic' 6 articles and 'local authority'

5 articles. However, it is important to note that the category 'other', which featured as the main news actor in 34 out of 166 articles, refers to when actors in news leads cannot be categorised into any of these groups or when there was no actors identified as the news leads.

6.1.2.3 Comparison of the findings: *Bangkok Post* vs *The Nation*

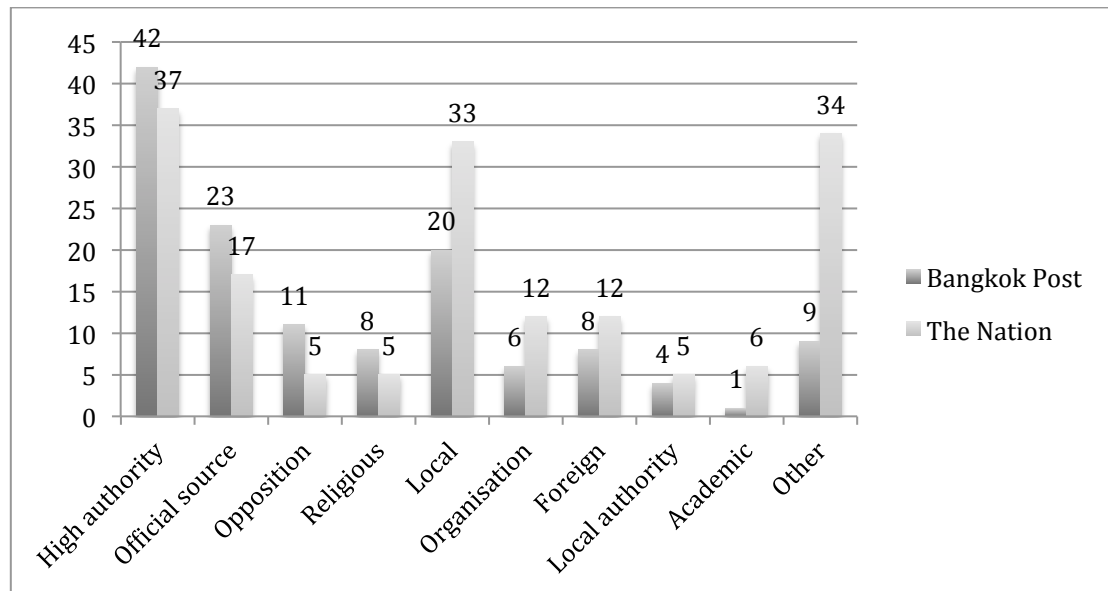


Figure 6.19: A comparison of the findings from the analysis of main ‘news actors’ used in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

To clarify, the findings illustrate that both *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* used ‘high authority’ as the main news actor, which confirms Becker's (1967) notion of hierarchy of credibility, whereby people of a higher rank in the system are seen to be more credible, whereas people with a lower rank tend to be heard less. However, the notion of hierarchy of credibility may not be applied to all of the findings as both newspapers also showed their commitment to giving voices to ‘local people’, considered as the lowest in rank of the hierarchy, by making them the main focus of their reports. This low-ranking group of actors accounted for the third highest number of news leads in *Bangkok Post* and the second highest in *The Nation* (see figure 6.19).

All sides involved in the conflicts were put into focus in the news reports of both newspapers, albeit in differing degrees. However, one key point that both newspapers have in common is the significance they first attributed to 'high authority'. In contrast, the second category of actor was 'local' in *The*

Nation and 'official source' in *Bangkok Post*. This indicates that *Bangkok Post* placed the most prominence on 'high authority' and 'official sources' as its news leads, which can be supported by the findings from the analysis on WJ/PJ indicators whereby WJ3, or elite-oriented, was among the top three most used indicators. In *The Nation*, 'local' was found to be the second most used category of news lead, and this can be supported by the finding that PJ3, or people-oriented, was among the main PJ indicators of *The Nation*.

The findings from the analysis on news actors indicates that all sides involved in the conflict, especially the local people, were given prominence as actors in the reporting, and that both newspapers engaged a multiparty orientation aspect of peace journalism in their conflict coverage to a large extent.

6.1.3 Proportion of 'New sources'

Following the analysis of news actors, this section continues by studying the provider of information for the news reports. The analysis of 'news sources' was conducted by looking at all of the sources mentioned in the reports, either from direct or indirect quotations, by counting the frequency in which each source was used, and then categorising them accordingly. In the next stage, the number of times the same source was used in the reports was counted, which later provided insights into the sources used most or least frequently and, at the same time, explained the extent to which each newspaper engaged each type of source as well as their relative prominence in the coverage.

The preferred source of information will later be drawn into the connection with how the southern conflict is represented in the news. A study of the sources used is important as it presents the relationship between various news sources, as well as the extent to which journalists relied on specific sources of information. The difference between the analysis of 'news actors' and the analysis of 'news sources' is that 'news actors' show the importance the newspaper put on the main focus of the news, while the study of 'news sources' shows which provider of information the newspaper relied on.

Unlike the proportion of news actors in the last section, which showed a 'hierarchy of credibility' focus from both newspapers in writing up their news articles, the study of the relative prominence of different news sources reveals the distribution of sources used in the writing of reports by searching for

and collecting the names of the people who were the source of each article, and grouping the sources into the same categories as in the last section. In this sense, one can interpret whether or not the main actor and the source of the reports are correlated.

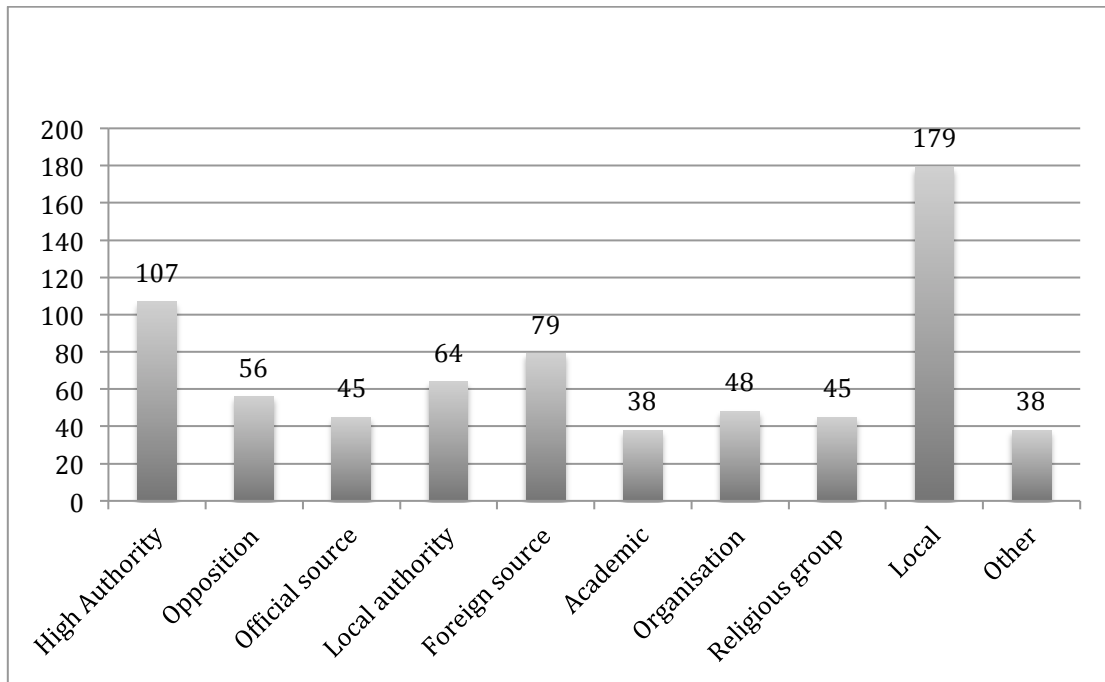


Figure 6.20: The total number of sources (by name) found from the conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (not differentiated by newspaper)

In total, the findings from this analysis indicate that 699 sources (by name) were found from 298 news articles. The sources were mainly from the ‘local’ category (179 sources), followed by ‘high authority’ (107 sources), and ‘foreign source’ (79 sources) (see figure 6.20). In the analysis of news sources, ‘high authority’ and ‘local’ are the top two most used categories, which was quite similar to the findings from the analysis of ‘news actors’.

However, it is surprising to see that the newspapers used a large number of local people as sources, whereas the analysis of news leads shows the importance both newspapers placed on ‘high authority’ as the main news actors. This suggests to me that the newspapers may rely mostly on information from local people; however, when it came to writing the reports, they were more likely to put an emphasis on ‘high authority’ sources as being the most significant or newsworthy.

Next are the findings on the analysis on news sources in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*.

6.1.3.1 *Bangkok Post*

In the reporting of the arsenal raid incident, the total number of sources used in the 34 articles was 68 (see figure 6.21).⁷³ Interestingly, there were 15 sources from the 'high authority' category but they were mentioned 149 times, which suggests that the highest prominence was given to this category. This can be explained by the fact that distinguished authority figures, for example, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister, the army commander and so on, played an important part in the dynamics of the southern conflict. As a result, they were most frequently used as providers of information. These authority figures had access to the information on the incidents, especially in the case of the arsenal raid, which was considered to be the first violent incident of the current southern conflict. Other than 'high authority', the number of times other sources were mentioned was low.⁷⁴ In the reporting of this incident, no sources from 'organisation' and 'academic' categories were used, and the 'religious' sources were mentioned the least.

In the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, sources from all categories were used and the number of sources clearly increased (see figure 6.21).⁷⁵ The use of 'local' sources was twice as high as the use of 'high authority' sources. This includes information from family members of the dead, the local residents, and the witnesses. In total, all sources were cited 447 times, and 'high authority' was cited the most frequently, at 132 times (see figure 6.22). Sources from the 'local' category were cited 100 times, which implies that journalists used more information from the 'local' people in writing the reports of this incident. In my perspective, the Kruese Mosque incident directly affected the lives of the locals. The incident changed the dynamic of news reporting because of the effects on Thai society on many levels. Therefore, a new category of sources was used in the coverage, such as 'academics' and 'organisations', which signifies that the nature of this incident presented new opportunities for new players to be involved in the conflict scene.

In the reporting of Takbai demonstration incident, a total of 110 sources were used (see figure 6.21).⁷⁶ The highest number of sources proved to be 'foreign sources', which implies that the southern conflict had reached a level of international concern by this time. 'Foreign sources' thus played an important role in the conflict scene by criticising and pressuring the Thai government in terms of its handling of the incident. The increase in the number and frequency of citations from 'organisation' and 'academic'

groups also serves to prove this point. The number of 'religious group' sources was doubled from the reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident as well as the number of citations (11 sources contributed 59 citations) (see figure 6.22). This stresses the strong implication of the religious aspect in the southern conflict scene.

One other important point is that the number of sources and frequency of the 'local' and 'local authority' categories was found to be relatively small even though the incident happened locally. This may reflect the seriousness of the southern conflict in that it was not merely a regional problem, but was taken to a national and international scale. *Bangkok Post* had to gain information from other players in the conflict scene. Nevertheless, the frequency analysis revealed that 'high authority' was cited in the highest frequency (14 sources contributed 113 citations), which indicates that *Bangkok Post*, regardless of the situations of each incident, put the most prominence on sources from high authority.

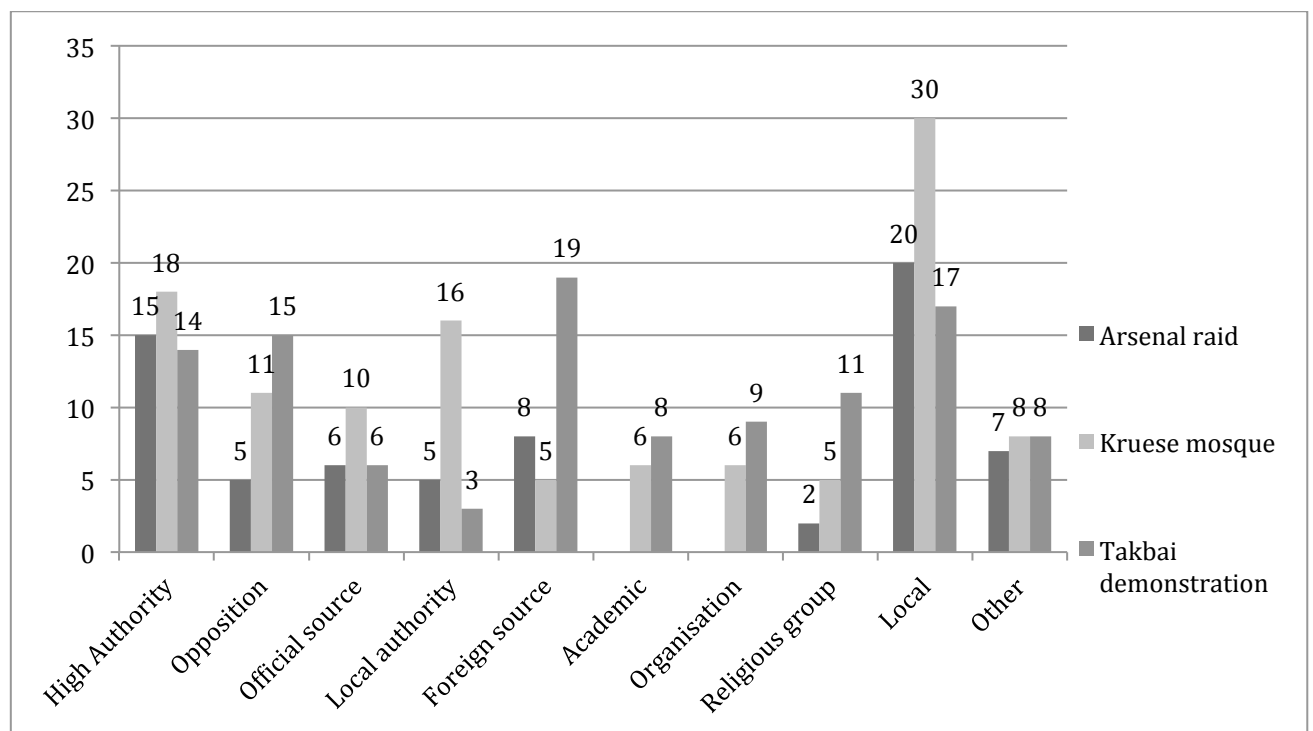


Figure 6.21: The number of sources used in the coverage of all three incidents from *Bangkok Post* (by name)

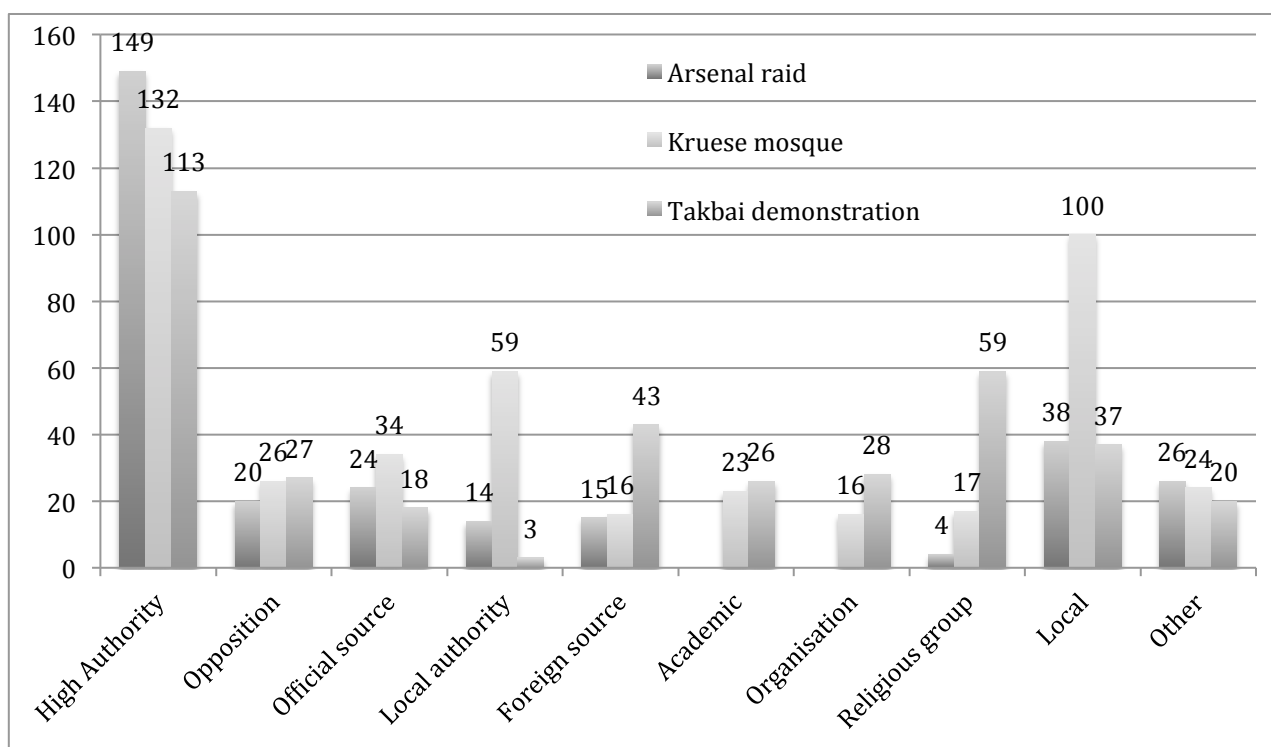


Figure 6.22: Frequency of sources mentioned in the coverage of all three incidents from *Bangkok Post* (times)

In addition, the situations of each incident influenced the selection of sources in *Bangkok Post*. For example, the Kruese Mosque incident directly affected the lives of the local people so the number and the frequency of 'local' sources used increased substantially in reporting this incident. The Takbai demonstration, meanwhile, caused wide criticism of the Thai government, which is reflected in the increasing use of 'foreign', 'religious', 'opposition', 'organisation' and 'academic' sources. Nevertheless, 'high authority' source was consistently mentioned in the highest frequency regardless of the situation of the three incidents, which, in my reading, confirms the belief that no matter how much the newspaper tried to engage other sources, 'high authority' consistently proved to be its most crucial source of information.

6.1.3.2 *The Nation*

In the reporting of the arsenal raid incident, the total number of sources used was 96 (see figure 6.23).⁷⁷ The 'local' source was found in the highest number and 'high authority' came second in the study. These findings are revealing because, in the first incident, I had expected that not all categories would be used as news sources, and that *The Nation* would base its stories and information mostly on information

gathered from 'high authority'. In fact, the 'local' category was the main source of information for this incident, which shows that *The Nation* saw the importance of including the perspective of the people who were directly affected by the incident. Other sources include students, parents, teachers, school directors and local residents. However, the frequency of sources used shows contrasting results depending on the incident, whereas 'high authority' was cited the most frequently (see figure 6.24).⁷⁸

In the coverage of Kruese Mosque incident, there was a rise in the number of sources used in the reporting, with a total of 172 sources used (see figure 6.23).⁷⁹ Again, the number of 'local' sources was found to be the highest with 51 sources, followed by 'high authority' with 25 sources. The number of other sources such as 'academic', 'religious group' and 'opposition', increased only slightly but doubled in frequency in terms of citations, suggesting that these players became more important in the conflict scene (see figure 6.24). Again, 'high authority' was cited the most frequently (25 sources with 211 citations), which was only slightly different to the number of citations of 'local' source (51 sources with 208 citations). This evidence suggests to me that *The Nation* awarded the same eminence to both 'high authority' and 'local' groups as news sources.

In the reporting of the Takbai demonstration incident, the total number of sources used was 138 (see figure 6.23). The highest number of sources was from 'local' people with 28 sources, while the equal second most commonly used sources were 'high authority' and 'foreign source', each with 22 sources. The number and the frequency of citations of 'foreign' and 'religious' sources reached its peak in this coverage,⁸⁰ which suggests that what happened in the Takbai demonstration incident raised concerns among other foreign countries and the Muslim community. On the other hand, the number of 'local' and 'local authority' sources dropped slightly, which may be a result of the Takbai incident having brought the conflict to a national and international level, even though it happened locally.

'High authority' once again came in first place in the frequency analysis (see figure 6.24).⁸¹ The result is noteworthy because it is fairly similar with the findings from the other two incidents. To conclude, in the reporting of all of the incidents, the highest number of sources used in the reporting was from 'local' sources. In terms of frequency, the sources mentioned in the highest frequency in all three incidents was 'high authority'.

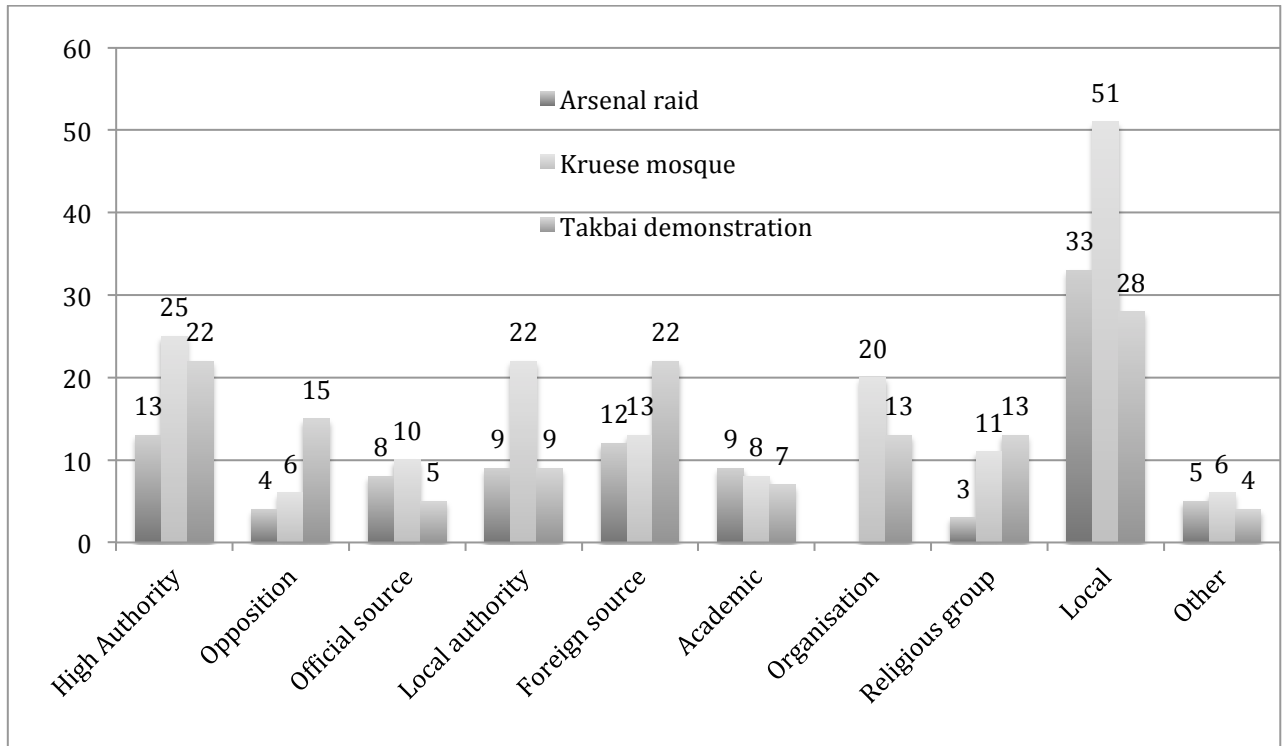


Figure 6.23: The number of sources used in the coverage of all three incidents from *The Nation* (name)

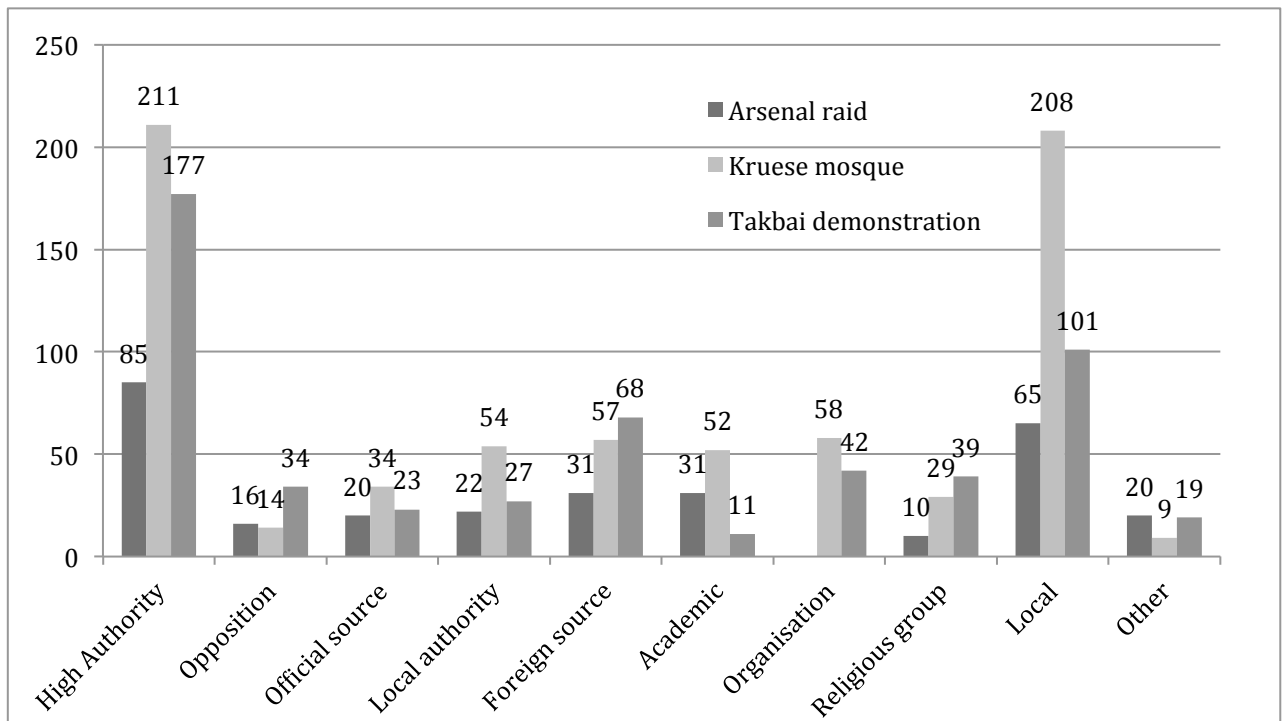


Figure 6.24: Frequency of sources mentioned in the coverage of all three incidents from *The Nation* (times)

To sum up, the total number of sources used in all the three incidents was 406 (see figures 6.23 and 6.24). The highest number of sources in *The Nation* was 'local' (112 sources); the second was 'high authority' (60 sources); and the third was 'foreign source' (47 sources).⁸² In the frequency analysis, 'high authority' sources were used most frequently. However, in my view, I can see an attempt by *The Nation* to give space to sources from the 'local' population as there were 112 sources that contributed to 374 citations from this group. The number of citations was less than 'high authority' but only by a small extent. The distinctive style of the sources used and their relative prominence indicates that *The Nation* saw 'high authority' as a crucial source of information – relying on fewer sources, yet mentioning them more often - while still engaging with local sources to an almost equal level of significance.

6.1.3.3 Comparison of findings: *Bangkok Post* vs *The Nation*

The total number of sources used by *The Nation* was 406 (counted by name), and by *Bangkok Post* was 293. *The Nation* used more sources than *Bangkok Post* in almost all categories except 'opposition' and 'other'.⁸³ In the same way as *The Nation*, *Bangkok Post* drew most of its sources from the 'local' population,⁸⁴ while 'high authority' sources were found to be the second most utilised in both newspapers.⁸⁵ This reveals that both newspapers saw the importance of using information from 'local' sources when writing their reports on the southern conflict.

The frequency of sources used can help to explain the extent to which the newspapers mediated the importance of each of their sources. Interestingly, both newspapers had the highest number of sources from the 'local' category, but the 'local' sources did not come first in this analysis. The sources that were mentioned most frequently in both newspapers were from 'high authority' at 394 times in *Bangkok Post* and 473 in *The Nation*, suggesting that the newspapers gave the highest prominence to sources from 'high authority'.

Following 'high authority' was the category of 'local', which frequently appeared in the articles even if, at times, they were relegated to a much lower point in the source hierarchy. For *Bangkok Post*, the number of times 'high authority' was mentioned was significant because 'high authority' was mentioned almost 5 times more often than the citations of sources from other categories.⁸⁶ For *The*

Nation, the number of 'local' sources was the highest; however, it is significant to observe that these sources was not cited the most frequently - rather, the 'high authority' group was cited the most frequency. *The Nation* gave a higher prominence to 'high authority,' possibly because this category of news sources offered a greater degree of credibility. *The Nation* seemed to exert more effort in engaging all sides of the conflict in its news reports, even if not with the same prominence.

In summary, the analysis of news sources can help to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of the southern conflict by showing the sides involved and their contribution to the coverage. Based on the findings, I can conclude that the coverage of the southern conflict predominantly relied on the information supplied by high authority figures. In my view, one reason for this was because those in positions of 'high authority' have greater access to information and also have high credibility. Another reason was because the southern conflict had by then become a national problem that was linked directly to the government's administration. Moreover, as McCargo (2000) stated, one of the distinct characteristics of the Thai press is that news and comments are considered to be the same, which is a significant obstacle and challenge to the professionalism of Thai journalism, and this could be one of the main reasons why 'high authority' figures were used as the most frequent news sources because their comments were treated as news.

Surprisingly, sources from the 'local' category, even though in a lower position in the source hierarchy, contributed to the coverage of both newspapers to a great extent, especially in the reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident and the Takbai demonstration. Moreover, the fact that 'foreign' sources were found to be the third most popular source indicates that the southern conflict was not a merely a domestic affair as the Thai government claimed, but that it had been raised into a conflict of international concern, especially from neighbouring Islamic countries and international organisations.

Also, source categories that criticised the state's administration, such as 'opposition' and 'organisation', as well as source categories that have expertise in the southern conflict issues, and in cultural and religious affairs, such as 'academics' and 'religious' categories, were all used as providers of information in the coverage by both newspapers, albeit with differing degrees of prominence. From the peace journalism perspective, I can see that both newspapers tried to engage all sides involved in the

conflict in their coverage, especially local people. This is one of the main goals of peace journalism in showing 'the other side of the story'. In my view, both newspapers engaged in peace journalism in their selection of sources of information for their coverage of the incidents under scrutiny.

6.1.4 The analysis on the labels of the southern conflict and the antagonists

This section explores another practice used in reporting the news whereby the journalist's inclination toward certain definitions of the conflict, the specific incidents and the antagonists are analysed. The study of these 'labels' used in reporting the news will lead to an understanding of how the conflict and the antagonists, typically represented within the 'us versus them' dichotomy, are characterised and represented in the conflict coverage.

As mentioned earlier, different situations affect the conflict coverage differently. Therefore, an examination of the findings regarding the labels used in describing the conflict, the specific incidents, and the antagonists could be useful in determining how these labels were used in the reportage of different conflict situations. In this respect, I made the following assumptions: the labels used in the arsenal raid coverage would be the most varied because it was the first incident of the conflict, and the news organisations did not know how best to refer to the event and the attackers; the labels used in the Kruese Mosque coverage would express strong sentiments and the negative denomination of the attackers, possibly containing religious undertones when describing the situation; and the labels used in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration would be more neutral because the Thai state's mistreatment of the Muslim minorities had become widely known by that time and the incident affected the lives of the locals directly.

6.1.4.1 Labels of the southern conflict in the conflict coverage

The study examined the labels that directly referred to the southern conflict phenomenon in the headlines, sub-headlines and the first 25% of the news story. The study found that there was a wide range of labels used to describe the southern conflict (see table 6.3). Interestingly, the labels used by both newspapers to describe the southern conflict phenomenon were quite similar. The most frequent labels used by both newspapers were 'violence in the South' or 'southern violence', which stress the violent nature and the location of the conflict. The label 'southern violence' was found in *Bangkok Post*

37 times in 132 news articles, or 64.91% of its total number of labels as found in the study, and in *The Nation* 26 times in 166 news articles, accounting for 50.98% of its total number of labels used.

The second most frequently used labels were 'unrest' or 'southern unrest', which, again, stress the disruptive nature of the conflict and indicate public disorder. *Bangkok Post* used these labels 10 times, or 17.54% of its total labels used, while *The Nation* used these labels 8 times, or 15.68% of its total number of labels found in this study. The third most frequently used labels were generic terms used to identify the conflict as a problem: 'southern problems' in *Bangkok Post* and 'conflict and problems in southern Thailand' in *The Nation*. The study found these labels 7 times, or 12.28% of the total labels used by *Bangkok Post*, and 5 times in *The Nation*.

However, *The Nation* used a wider variety of labels to describe the conflict, and some of these labels carry a negative meaning. For example, 'southern carnage', which refers to the killing of a large number of people in the South, was found 7 times, accounting for 13.72% of the total number of labels found in the study.

In comparison, the top three main labels used to describe the southern conflict phenomenon in both newspapers used similar groups of words. The most common label referred to the conflict as 'violence'; the second most common label called the conflict 'unrest'; and the third most common label referred to the southern conflict as a 'problem'. Moreover, it should be noted that labels used to stress the political objective behind the violence were used sparingly. These included, for example, 'separatist insurgency' in *Bangkok Post* and 'Muslim insurgency' and 'southern separatism' in *The Nation*. This suggests that both newspapers were more likely to highlight the violent, disruptive and problematic nature of the conflict than the political impetus behind the conflict in their reporting.

Another interesting point is that the metaphorical term 'southern fire', which was the label commonly used by the Thai-language media and newspapers (Kularb 2013), was not seen in any of the 298 news articles under scrutiny in this study of English-language newspapers. The reason for this may be that the international news agencies were likely to use these two newspapers as their sources. Consequently,

the terminology used to address the conflict stressed the problematic features of the conflict instead of using the metaphorical term that was used in the Thai media.

Bangkok Post								
Incidents	Arsenal raid incident		Kruese Mosque incident		Takbai demonstration incident			
Labels of the southern conflict	Violence in the South; southern violence	11	Violence in the South; southern violence	20	Violence in the South; southern violence	6		
	Unrest; southern unrest	3	Unrest; southern unrest	3	Unrest; southern unrest	4		
	Southern problems	2	Southern security problem; southern problem	1	Southern problems	4		
			Separatist Insurgency	1	Mayhem	2		
	The Nation							
	Violence in the South; southern violence	12	Violence in the South; southern violence	6	Violence in the South; southern violence	8		
	Unrest; southern unrest	1	Unrest; southern unrest	6	Unrest; southern unrest	1		
			Conflict; problems in the South	2	Conflict; problems in the South	3		
	Southern Turbulence	2	Southern carnage	7	Muslim insurgency	1		
			Southern crisis	1	Southern separatism	1		

Table 6.3: Labels of the southern conflict phenomenon in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

Labels of the incidents						
Incidents	Arsenal raid incident		Kruese Mosque incident		Takbai demonstration incident	
Bangkok Post	The attacks (southern; Sunday's; coordinated; army camp; arson)	31	Bloodbath; bloodshed (April 28's bloodbath; Wednesday's bloodbath)	9	Bloodbath; bloodshed (Takbai)	4
	The arson; school arson	6	Clashes (Wednesday's; April 28; last week's; Fights/Gun battle)	12	Clashes (police station clashes; bloody clashes; Monday clashes)	7
	Raid (lethal; arms; weapon; Sunday's; on the military camp)	10	Violence (mosque; last week; April 28)	5	Crackdown	6
	Torching of schools	2	Raid Attacks	20	Stand-off	3
	Looting of camp	1	Uprising	10	Riot (bloody riot ; Takbai riot ; Monday riot)	15
	Theft	1	The killing; the massacre	3	The deaths; mass deaths (deaths of the Muslims in custody; deaths of 78 Muslim protesters; mass deaths in Takbai)	10
			The incident (Kruese Mosque; bloody; last week; April 28)	3	The killing; the massacre	2
			The stand-off; the siege	3	The incident (Takbai)	4
					Violence	2
			Tragedy	1	Carnage	1
				Tragedy	7	

Table 6.4: Labels of the incidents in *Bangkok Post's* coverage

Word choices for the incidents								
Incidents	Arsenal raid incident		Kruese Mosque incident		Takbai demonstration incident			
The Nation	The attacks (synchronised; coordinated; suspected separatist; schools; series of deadly; bloody)	33	Attacks (bloody; Kruese Mosque; Wednesday's; coordinated; simultaneous; militants'); Raid	40	Crackdown/Clampdown (heavy-handed; Monday's; bloody; Takbai; deadly; lethal)	19		
	Arson (simultaneous; schools)	8	Clashes/fighting (bloody; violent)	28	Deaths (of 85 Muslim protesters/arrested protesters/Thai Muslims in Takbai/southern Muslims)	15		
	The incident (Sunday's)	4	Bloodshed/bloodbath/tragedy	10	Protest/Demonstration (violent; Takbai; bloody)	10		
	Violence (separatist-inspired; outburst of)	5	Killings (of 108 Muslim/Islamic militants);The shoot-outs (bloody; Kruese)	12	Clashes (bloody; Monday's; brutal)	10		
	The assault (on the south; brutal)	3	Massacre (against Muslims)	4	Bloodbath/Bloodshed	7		
	The burning of schools; blaze	2	Crackdown	3	Incident/Crisis/Violence	7		
	The raid (violent; dramatic; bloody)	4	Uprising (Wednesday's violent; April 28)	3	Massacre/Mass killing	7		
	Well-coordinated terror campaign	1	Violence (Wednesday's; bloody; excessive)	4	Riot	4		
			Deaths	2	Carnage (Monday's; Takbai)	3		
			Stand-off	4	Stand-off	2		
			Turmoil; Massive turbulence; Unrest	5	Siege (of Takbai; of police station)	2		
			Carnage	2	Tragedy	2		
					Unrest	2		

Table 6.5: Labels of the incidents in *The Nation's* coverage

6.1.4.2. Labels of each of the three incidents in the conflict coverage

In this sub-section, I looked at the labels both English-language newspapers used when referring to each of the three incidents. As mentioned earlier, these three incidents differed in their situations and their implications on the southern conflict. Therefore, the word choices of the journalists when mentioning specific incidents changed accordingly.

Type of labels to describe the arsenal raid incident	<i>Bangkok Post</i>		<i>The Nation</i>	
Aggressive actions (arsenal raid)	attacks	31	attacks	33
	raids	10	raids	4
	looting/theft	2	assault	3
Burning of schools	arsons; school arsons	6	arsons	8
	torching of schools	2	the burning of schools	2
Generic term	-	-	incident	4
	-	-	violence	5
Negative term			well-coordinated terror campaign	1
Total (labels) =		51		60

Table 6.6: Type of labels used in the reporting of the arsenal raid incident by *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

In the arsenal raid incident, there were two main events that happened on the day. The first was the raid of an army camp that resulted in the deaths of four soldiers, and the second was the burning of 20 schools across the region. As a consequence, both newspapers chose to name the event on the 4 January 2004 by referring to either the army camp raid or the school arson attacks.

The findings reveal that the label most frequently used by both newspapers for the incident was 'attacks' as it was used 31 times in *Bangkok Post* and 33 times in *The Nation* (see table 6.6). In my view, 'attacks' was used to describe the aggressive action of the perpetrators against the state. *Bangkok Post* used generic terms to modify the main words, for example, 'Sunday's', 'coordinated' and 'arson' to modify 'attacks', or 'lethal', 'arms' or 'weapon' to describe the raid on the military camp (see table 6.4). Also, *Bangkok Post* was more likely to describe the event by stressing the attack on an army camp more than the burning of the schools.

To explain, most of the labels for the incident referred to the 'attacks' or the 'raids' on an army camp, and there were only eight occasions when the school arsons were referred to as an incident. Overall, the labels used by *Bangkok Post* to describe the arsenal raid incident were all action-based terms that stressed the 'action' of the perpetrators, such as attacks, arson, raids, torching, looting and theft.

In comparison to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* used a wider range of labels. Apart from the main 'attacks' label, other labels were also applied to describe the event as an action against the state such as 'attacks', 'raids' or 'assaults', as well as 'arson' and 'burning' when referring to the burning of schools. Other terminology included generic terms that described the event as 'the violence' or 'the incident'. *The Nation* also stressed the attack on an army camp more than on the burning of the schools.

Furthermore, *The Nation* used a wider range of qualifiers that carry negative and emotional meaning, such as 'dramatic', 'bloody', 'brutal', and 'deadly' (see table 6.5). These words were not found in *Bangkok Post's* coverage. Labels that carry a terrorism-oriented connotation, such as 'separatist inspired', 'suspected separatist' or 'the well-co-ordinated terror campaign', were found in *The Nation* but not in *Bangkok Post*. The analysis of labels used to describe the arsenal raid incident shows that both newspapers were likely to use words that stressed the action against the state, and that *Bangkok Post* used more neutral and generic terms to describe the event.

Type of labels to describe the Kruese Mosque incident	<i>Bangkok Post</i>		<i>The Nation</i>	
Aggressive action	attacks; raids	20	attacks	40
Disruptive nature of the incident	-	-	turmoil; turbulence; unrest	5
Generic term	Violence	5	violence	4
	Incidents	3		
The killings and the deaths	Killings	2	killings; shoot-outs	12
	Massacre	1	massacre	4
			carnage	2
			deaths	2
The clashes between the two sides	clashes; gun battle	12	clashes; fighting	28
	Stand-off; siege	3	stand off	4
			crackdown	3
Emotive words	bloodbath	9	bloodbath; bloodshed	9
	tragedy	1	tragedy	1
Rebellious nature of the incident	uprising	10	uprising	3
Total (labels) =		66		116

Table 6.7: Type of labels used in the reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

In the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, a wider range of labels was found due to the complicated nature and the results of the incident. The analysis identified a total of 66 labels for the Kruese Mosque incident in *Bangkok Post*, and 116 labels in *The Nation*. In both *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*, the same most frequently used main word was 'attacks', which stressed the actions of the perpetrators against the Thai state, with 20 instances of this term found in *Bangkok Post* and 40 in *The Nation* (see table 6.7).

The second most commonly used labels by both newspapers stressed the clash between the two sides through the use of words such as 'clashes', 'fights', 'gun-battle', 'standoff', 'siege', and 'crackdown'. These labels were found in the coverage of *Bangkok Post* 15 times, and in the coverage of *The Nation* 35 times. The number of labels that placed emphasis on the 'killing' nature of the incidents in *The Nation's* coverage

was 6 times higher than in *Bangkok Post*. While *Bangkok Post* referred to the incident as 'the killing' and 'the massacre' only 3 times across its coverage, *The Nation* used the labels 'killing', 'massacre', 'carnage', and 'deaths' on 20 separate occasions.

This suggests that *Bangkok Post* was more careful in choosing its words to describe the event, and was less likely place emphasis on the killing and the deadly nature of the event. It is interesting to see that the word 'uprising', which stressed an act of resistance or rebellion from the attackers, was found in a higher frequency in *Bangkok Post* than in *The Nation*, while words that stressed the authority's action of killing the perpetrators, such as 'the killing' and 'the massacre', were used to a larger degree in *The Nation*. This may confirm the findings from the analysis on WJ/PJ indicators that, compared to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* was more open in criticising the government's handling of the situation.

Other difference between the two newspapers was that *The Nation* used more qualifiers to describe the main labels (see table 6.5) such as 'bloody', 'violent', 'simultaneous', 'coordinated', 'Islamic militants' and 'militants', most of which carry negative meanings. On the other hand, the qualifiers used for the labels in *Bangkok Post* placed emphasis on the 'when' or 'where' aspect of the incident, such as 'April 28 attacks', 'Wednesday attacks' or 'mosque attacks' (see table 6.4), which are considered to be more neutral when compared to the qualifiers used in *The Nation*.

Type of labels used to describe the Takbai demonstration incident	<i>Bangkok Post</i>		<i>The Nation</i>	
Action of the attackers	-	-	protest; demonstration	10
	riot	15	riot	4
Disruptive nature of the incident	-	-	unrest	2
Generic term	the incident	4	incident; crisis; violence	7
	violence	2		
The killings and the deaths	-		-	
	the killing; the massacre	2	massacre; mass killing	7
	carnage	1	carnage	3
	deaths; mass deaths	10	deaths	15
The clashes between the two sides	clashes	7	clashes	10
	stand off	3	standoff; siege	4
	crackdown	6	crackdown; clampdown	19
Emotive words	bloodbath; bloodshed	4	bloodbath; bloodshed	7
	tragedy	7	tragedy	2
Rebellious nature of the incident	-		-	-
Total (labels) =		61		90

Table 6.8: Type of labels used in the reporting of the Takbai demonstration incident
in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

In the coverage of the Takbai demonstration, the different choice of labels by both newspapers is clearly seen. As stated earlier, the incident on that day started with a demonstration by local people in front of Takbai police station. Surprisingly, the labels 'demonstration' or 'protest' were used only 10 times in *The Nation*, and not at all in *Bangkok Post* (see table 6.8).

Bangkok Post's main label was 'riot' (15 words), which placed more stress on the violent disorder of the demonstration, while *The Nation's* main labels were 'crackdown' and 'clampdown' (19 words), which stressed the harsh measures used to control the situation. *The Nation's* labels, together with the qualifiers 'heavy-handed', 'bloody' and 'lethal', suggest that *The Nation* emphasised the restrictive and forceful measures used to restrain the disorder that happened on that day (see table 6.5). *Bangkok Post* also used labels that refer to the clashes between the two sides, such as 'clashes', 'standoff', and 'crackdown' on a total of 16 occasions, while these labels were used 33 times in *The Nation*.

Second were labels that placed stress on the 'deaths' and 'killing' aspect of the incident, such as 'the killing', 'the massacre', 'carnage', 'deaths' and 'mass deaths' (see table 6.8). As mentioned earlier, the deaths of the arrested protesters during the transfer was the final result of the Takbai event, and it has led to the criticism on the Thai government on many levels. The use of 'massacre' and 'mass killing' highlighted the mishandling of the situation by the authority that resulted in the deaths of 85 of the detained demonstrators. In total, the study found 12 labels that placed stress on the 'deaths' result of the conflict in *Bangkok Post*, and 20 in *The Nation*.

The study found that both newspapers described the incident differently. That is, *The Nation's* labels mostly stressed the confrontation between the two sides and the authority's forceful power, while *Bangkok Post* first described the event as a violent public disturbance caused by the attackers. However, a focus on the killing nature and the emotional aspect of the incident were found in both newspapers, which suggests that both newspapers maintained their roles as mediators of the truth to the public, even though they employed different terms of reference for the incident.

6.1.4.3 The labels of the actors in the conflict coverage

In recognising the situation in the south as a conflict between the Thai state and the Muslim minority, the representation of 'the other' warrants close and careful attention. A label analysis enables us to identify the framing process that the journalists attached to the Muslim attackers, which was often expressed within an 'us versus them' dichotomy. My research looked at the labels used in reference to the actors of the three incidents in order to observe how they were characterised and represented, and determine whether or not any forms of discrimination emerged in the reporting.

a) Analysis on 'main label'

Table 6.9 shows how both newspapers referred to the various actors in their coverage. My observation shows that *The Nation* mostly described the actors with 'insurgent-related' terms that connote the sense of military action and insurgency. For example, the label 'militants' was used 178 times in 166 news articles; the label 'insurgents' was used 60 times; and the label 'terrorists', which cannot be found in the coverage of *Bangkok Post*, was found in *The Nation's* coverage 15 times. *Bangkok Post*, too, mostly described the actors with 'insurgent-related' terms but less so than *The Nation* by 9.39%.

This indicates that *The Nation* tended to describe the actors and their relation to insurgency more so than *Bangkok Post* did. The second most used type of label was 'action-based terms', which described the antagonists based on their actions, such as 'bandits', 'protesters', or 'armed men'. Labels in the categories of 'legal terms', 'generic terms' and 'age range' are the type of labels that describe the antagonists neutrally but these types of labels were used in a low frequency in the coverage of both newspapers (see table 6.9).

Moreover, the 'religion-based' term 'Muslims' was found in the lowest degree as a main label in both newspapers because the word 'Muslim' was often used as a qualifier that was attached to the main labels. I will come back to explain this point in my analysis on the 'qualifiers' in the next section.

Type of labels used to describe the perpetrators	Frequency (times)	
	Bangkok Post	The Nation
Action-based terms	(35.68%)	(33.98%)
bandits	30	7
raiders	9	6
armed men	10	12
protesters	101	166
demonstrators	7	15
rioters	5	-
arsonists	-	2
Legal terms	(12.55%)	(9.47%)
detainees	51	32
suspects	6	20
culprits	-	6
Generic terms	(4.62%)	(7.18%)
attackers	21	29
perpetrators	-	9
assailants	-	6
Insurgent-related terms	(37.00%)	(46.89%)
insurgents	17	60
militants	116	178
rebels	22	10
separatists	13	24
terrorists	-	15
Religion-based terms	(0.88%)	(0.16%)
Muslims	4	1
Age range	(4.40%)	(1.47%)
youths	20	9
Other terms	22 (4.87%)	5 (0.85%)
Total (labels) =	454	612

Table 6.9: Types of labels used in referring to the perpetrators of the three incidents in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

Furthermore, the findings revealed that both newspapers shared the same trend in their labelling. 'Insurgent-related terms' were used mostly in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident. 'Legal-based terms' and 'action-based terms' (protesters and demonstrators) were used mostly in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident. 'Action-based terms' such as 'bandits', 'raiders', 'armed men' and 'arsonists' were used mostly in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident.

These patterns of labels used indicate that the situation of each incident affected the labelling of actors by both newspapers. To explain, labels with neutral meaning were found most often in the reporting of the Takbai incident, which signified the misuse of power by the authority; while insurgent-related labels that carry negative meaning were used mostly in the Kruese Mosque and arsenal raid incidents, which were the two incidents in which the main actors attacked the Thai state.

b) The analysis of qualifiers used to describe the main words

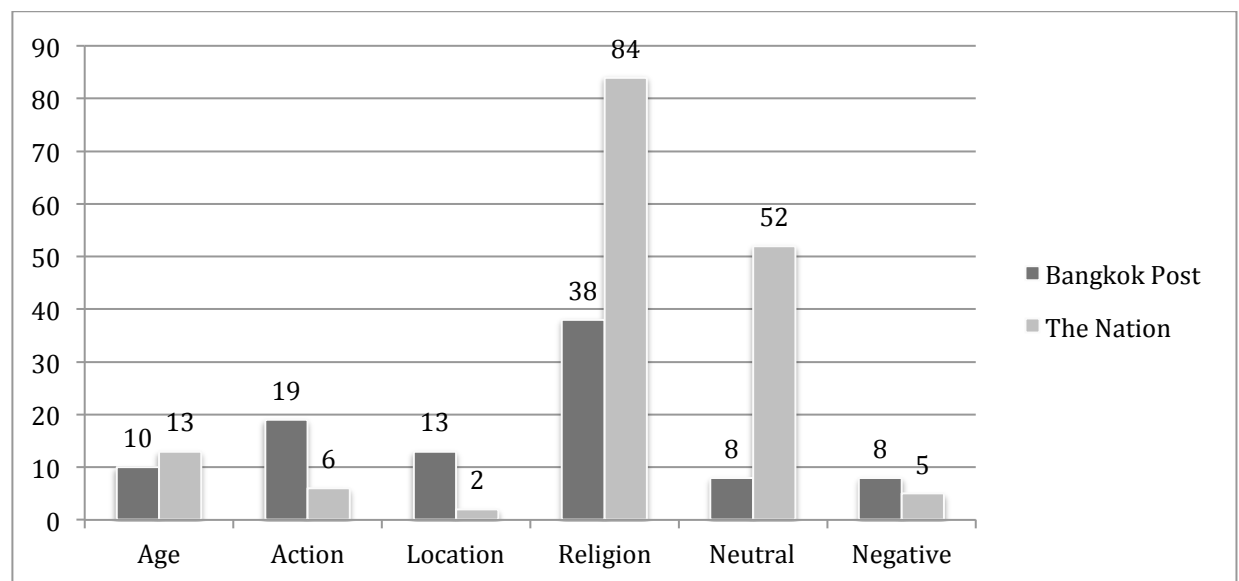


Figure 6.25: The number of qualifiers (by type) used to describe the actors in *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (times)

The previous section explained how the two newspapers described the antagonists of each incident. This section explains the analysis into the qualifiers that were attached to the main labels in order to identify what type of qualifiers both newspapers used. I classified these qualifiers into six categories: 'Age' refers to qualifiers used to describe the age group of the actors; 'Action' refers to qualifiers used to describe the action

of the actors; 'Location' refers to qualifiers used to describe the location of the actors; 'Religion' refers to qualifiers used to describe the religious identity of the actors; 'Neutral' refers to qualifiers that convey neutral meaning to a main word, such as 'suspected', 'unidentified', and 'arrested'; and 'Negative' refers to qualifiers that convey negative meaning to a main word, such as 'separatist' (see figure 6.25).

Overall, the study found 96 qualifiers used in *Bangkok Post*, and 162 qualifiers in *The Nation*. The findings of this analysis illustrate that *Bangkok Post* tended to use fewer labels and qualifiers to describe the antagonists, while *The Nation* used a wide range of both labels and qualifiers in its coverage. My observation focused mostly on 'religious' qualifiers because they stress the difference in the religious identity of the Muslims minority, which can create a sense of 'us and them' among the readers.

The highest number of qualifiers found in the coverage of both newspapers was in the 'religion' group, with 84 cases found in *The Nation* and 38 in *Bangkok Post*, which suggests that both newspapers firstly chose to emphasize the 'religious' aspect of the antagonists. At the same time, 'neutral' qualifiers were the second most used type of qualifier in *The Nation*, which shows that *The Nation's* choice of labels was not consistent.

'Religious' qualifiers refer to words such 'Muslim' or 'Islamic', and I found that both newspapers used religious qualifiers most often in their Kruese Mosque coverage, where the incident had a religious undertone. The stress on religious differences can enhance the feeling of 'us and them' among 'us', the readers of the two English newspapers, who are mainly based in Bangkok, and 'them', who are the Muslims from the southern part of Thailand.

According to the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2007 quoted in Allan 2010, p.87), prejudicial reporting is likely to "produce, provoke and increase feelings of insecurity, suspicion and anxiety amongst non-Muslims, while, at the same time, being likely to provoke feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and alienation amongst Muslims." For that reason, the stress on the religious aspect of the perpetrators can affect negative feelings for both sides, and even more so when these qualifiers are attached to insurgent-related terms such as 'Islamic militants' or 'Muslim separatists'.

The description of religious and racial identity can lead to the creation of an 'us and them' dichotomy. The findings on the analysis of labels indicate that both newspapers used the same types of labels, and they mostly

described the antagonists with 'insurgent-related terms'. However, in comparison to the labels found in *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* used more labels of this type. This, together with the higher number of 'religious' qualifiers found, made the labels used to describe the antagonists in *The Nation* more prejudicial than the labelling of *Bangkok Post*.

6.1.4.4 Comparison of findings: *Bangkok Post* vs *The Nation*

In the analysis of labels used in reference to the southern conflict, both newspapers shared the same group of words. Labels that described the violent nature and the location of the conflict as 'southern violence' or 'violence in the South' were the most frequently used terms when describing the conflict. After these, references to the southern conflict as a disturbance and public disorder were the second most commonly used terms, with references to the southern conflict as a problem being third in the list.

In the analysis of labels used to describe each of the incidents, the study found that the situations of the individual incidents as well as the newspapers' style of reporting influenced the word choices of both newspapers. In the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, both newspapers used labels that described the action of the perpetrators, either raiding the camp or burning the schools. In the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, both newspapers mostly used labels that described the actions of 'attacks' on the Thai state, followed by labels that described the 'clashes' between the two sides. In this incident, emotive words such as 'bloodbath' or 'bloodshed' were found in both newspapers. Labels that placed stress on the 'killing' nature of the incident were used a lot more in *The Nation* than in *Bangkok Post*.

What is particularly interesting, in my view, is that *Bangkok Post* seemed to place more stress on the clashes between the authority and the perpetrators, while *The Nation* seemed to stress the misuse of power by the authority through the use of words such as 'the killings' or 'the massacre'. In the Takbai demonstration's coverage, too, *Bangkok Post* tended to describe the incident with a focus on the violent nature of the demonstration by using the label 'riot', while *The Nation* used the labels 'crackdown' or 'clampdown' so as to describe the authority's forceful reaction to the disorder. These findings somehow illustrated the inclination towards the government by *Bangkok Post*, and towards the people by *The Nation*, which can be supported by the findings from the analysis of WJ/PJ indicators (6.1.1), the analysis of news actors (6.1.2), and the analysis of news sources (6.1.3).

In the analysis of labels used in reference to the antagonists of the incidents, *The Nation* tended first and foremost to use 'insurgent-related' terms, and second, 'action-based' terms. This, together with the newspaper's most-used 'religion' qualifiers, produced a negative feeling and a sense of 'us and them' among the readers since words such as 'Muslim militants' or 'Muslim separatists' could be found frequently in the coverage by *The Nation*. On the other hand, the study also found the same number of 'insurgent-related' labels and 'action-based' labels in *Bangkok Post*. The 'religion' qualifier was found in its highest numbers in *Bangkok Post*, but this was still two times lower than was found in the coverage of *The Nation*. This suggested that *Bangkok Post* was more careful than *The Nation* in choosing its words to describe the perpetrators. The findings from the analysis of labels can be used to support the findings from the analysis of the WJ/PJ language based criteria, which showed that *The Nation* used more war journalism language than *Bangkok Post*.

6.1.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from a content analysis of southern conflict coverage by the two English language newspapers at a specific context and time.

The most frequently used WJ indicators found from the conflict coverage by both newspapers were as follows: WJ3 (elite-oriented), WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence) and WJ5 (focus on here and now). WJ2 was found in a large number, which suggests that the representation of the conflict by both newspapers was with an emphasis on the visible effects of the violence. WJ5 reflects the focus on hard news when reporting violent incidents without giving any detailed background of the conflict. The substantial number of WJ3 indicates that both newspapers placed a high prominence on 'high authority' or 'elite-oriented' as their main news actors and sources. War journalism features are hard to avoid when reporting violent incidents and it is the responsibility of the media to report the reality of the incident to the public because not doing so would be a distortion of the truth. Consequently, because the coverage dealt with the reporting of three major violent incidents, death tolls and damage, which are regarded as features of war journalism, were found throughout the coverage.

Elite-oriented and people-oriented elements were taken into the analysis of 'news actors' and 'news sources' in order to identify the prominence both newspapers placed on each category as actors in and sources of news. The findings indicate that both newspapers relied highly on 'high authority' both as news actors and as news sources. This confirmed Becker's (1967) notion of 'hierarchy of credibility', which explains that the people who are at the top of a social or institutional hierarchy are assumed to have greater credibility and access to correct information than those among the bottom ranks. In the confines of this study, the main people from the 'high authority' group were: the Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Defence Minister and the Army Commander. Findings from both analyses prove a surprising result that the 'local' category, which I considered to be the lowest position in the hierarchy, contributed to the coverage of both newspapers, either as the news leads or as the news sources, to a degree second only to 'high authority'.

The study found that the implementation of war and peace journalism differed according to the intensity of the conflict, and that the situation of each of these three incidents influenced the way both newspapers reported the stories. To explain, the study of both newspaper's stories revealed a very close pattern in their application of peace journalism. That is, when the conflict first started, the study found the lowest number of peace journalism features and articles from both newspapers. The number of peace journalism features and articles increased substantially in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, and it was in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident that the gap between war and peace journalism elements found in both newspapers was at its widest, suggesting that it was for this third incident that both newspapers applied a peace journalism approach in the highest degree.

The peace journalism features found in the highest frequency were as follows: PJ7 (multiparty orientation), PJ5 (focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict) and PJ3 (people-oriented). The high number of PJ7 shows the attempt by both newspapers to engage all sides of the conflict into their coverage. The frequency of PJ5 suggests that both newspapers placed their focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict rather than only focusing on the violent incidents, while the use of PJ3 show that both newspapers included the 'voices' of the local people who were directly affected by the violent incidents in their coverage

In the analysis of labels, as informed by war/peace journalism's language-based criteria, the findings indicate that both newspapers shared the same pattern of labels in referring to the southern conflict, to the three

incidents under scrutiny, and to the actors of these incidents. Nevertheless, when compared with *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* used a wider range of words used in conjunction with emotive and negative qualifiers that stress the 'religious' difference of the perpetrators, while *Bangkok Post* was more likely to use more neutral terms. The use of language in *The Nation* proved to be one of the main limitations to its full implementation of peace journalism.

The conclusion of the study will be provided in Chapter 8, Conclusions, we can now turn to the next chapter, which details the findings from semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 7

The study of the production of southern conflict news

The previous chapter presented the findings from a content analysis of the news coverage by the two English-language newspapers under scrutiny. The study revealed that both newspapers implemented peace journalism to a large degree but also engaged in war-style reporting, especially through a focus on the visible effects of war, a focus on here and now, and a great dependency on the elites as their news sources from. The analysis of news actors and news sources also confirms this point, as authority figures were the most-frequently mentioned in the news leads and were also used as the primary source of information for the news reports on the southern conflict. Surprisingly, the frequency of local people as news leads and news sources was higher than expected, which indicates an attempt by both newspapers to incorporate the voices of the 'voiceless' into their coverage right from the first year of the conflict. Furthermore, the analysis of labels used in the southern conflict phenomenon in general, the three specific incidents, and the various actors involved revealed that different incidents influenced the selection of labels in different ways and that emotive language was widely used in the coverage.

The findings from the previous chapter demonstrated 'how' the southern conflict was represented within the approach of peace journalism. This chapter aims to find the answer of 'why' the conflict was represented in such ways by exploring the news production process of the two newspapers. To this end, semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors from *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post* and one director from a Thai media organisation were conducted. The interviews revealed key insights into the news articles' production process, perceptions of the relative strengths and limitations in making reports of the conflict, and the possibilities for generating alternative approaches to improve the quality of news reporting in the conflict. The interviews contributed to an understanding of the southern conflict by opening up for critical scrutiny on perceptions of the nature of conflict reporting from journalists' and editors' points of view.

This section is divided into four parts. The first part starts with the interviewees' perception of the conflict and their views on the Thai media and the southern conflict. The second part explores the process of news production and journalists' involvement in southern conflict coverage. The third part explores factors

influencing and limiting journalists when reporting the conflict, and the final part presents the conclusion and outlines possible recommendations for future practices.

7.1 Interviewees' perception of the conflict

7.1.1 The causes of the southern conflict

Given that the media are cultural institutions with their own interests and rules in shaping the perception of reality, their supply of news and information may be distorted to some extent according to their own purposes or those of other social institutions (McQuail, 2000). In the case of journalists who portray issues from the southern conflict to the public, their reporting will influence public understanding of the events in question. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the attitude and perception of the journalists with regard to the conflict. The journalists' and editors' perception of the conflict can also influence the production process of the articles, in particular, the selection of the top stories or the selection of labels when referring to the various actors or incidents.

In general terms, it became apparent to me that all of the interviewees held quite similar views on the southern conflict. They see the conflict as a result of many contributing factors, for example, deep-rooted historical grievances, inequality and discrimination against the Muslim minority, Thai nationalism, flaws in the Thai education system, and the mentality of Thai people as a whole (the mentality of 'us and them', as described earlier).

All of the interviewees saw the southern conflict as a result of a long history of conflict between the Thai state and the Malay Muslims. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the Thai nationalist movement, which included enforced cultural and educational assimilation, has built up grievances among the Muslim minority towards the Thai state and led to the emergence of resistance movements dating back decades. One journalist mentioned that the locals do not feel that the Thai state respects their religion, language and culture, and that the national curriculum, which focuses only on Thai-ness, Buddhism and Thai culture while ignoring the culture of the minority, was the reason why schools often became targets of the attacks.

The interviewees shared the view that the current southern conflict has its grounds in this old resentment together with the Thai majority's ignorance of the Muslim minority's culture and the negligence of the Thai

state to develop the economy, education and welfare system of the region in the same way as in other parts of the country. Another journalist pointed out that, in comparison to the north or the north-eastern part of Thailand, the economic development of the southern region is very low and the unemployment rate is very high. Two editors and one journalist expressed their opinions on the causes of the conflict as follows (Please note that all names are pseudonyms⁸⁷) (See Appendix VI):

"The southern conflict is an emotional conflict which arose from the feelings of the people being suppressed by the Thai state."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"We cannot change history. The Muslims from the south do not see themselves as Thai because of the differences in ethnicity and religion, but they never wanted to separate from Thailand until the Thai people mistreated them and stole their natural resources. Now, they want to separate from Thailand."

(Chatri, editor, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 8th April 2013)

"Those young villagers do not really know the history of Patani but they saw the injustice and mistreatment that happened to their family and people from their village. The Thai authority sometimes accused the wrong people and treated them badly. There is a lot of tensions in the area between the authority and the locals."

(Somsak, senior journalist/ editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

These quotes show that the interviewees perceive the causes of the southern conflict as the result of many factors. The conflict started from a long-standing resentment and intensified with the economic, social and cultural suppression inflicted on the Muslim minority by the Thai state. Also, the southern administrations that aimed at using military and police force to suppress the conflict were one of the main factors in worsening the situation and influencing the onset of violent attacks.

As Chatri, an editor from *Bangkok Post*, stated above, the history of the southern conflict cannot be changed. The Muslim minority was resentful but passive until the Thai state mistreated and oppressed them. Somsak, a senior journalist and editor from *The Nation*, supported this view by stating that the injustice and mistreatment the local people faced from the Thai authority was one of the reasons for the local grievances

and violent incidents in the area. Another perception of the conflict shared among the interviewees is the flaw of the Thai social and educational system, which reflects in the Thai 'ignorant' and 'prejudiced' mentality. Three journalists expressed their views on the Thai system and how it results in the wrong perception toward the conflict and the Muslim minority. Their quotes can be seen as follows:

"The most important things are the way of thinking, the prejudice and the education system. This is a national problem. It all ties up to the way we are taught about our nation building, the Thai-ness. Our perception was forged since we were young. The Thai educational system and the values are very important in this matter. The southern conflict stories are the most worrying because the things that forged their southern identity are as powerful and strong as those that forged the Thai mentality."

(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"Thai society is not a reading society. It is a very shallow society. People are ignorant about what happens in the south. People are only interested the southern conflict stories when there is a big attack that caused lots of deaths. The violent situation has been happening for almost 10 years now and Thai people have become used to it, to the level of being ignorant. What worries me most is the fact that the public never know about it from the victims' side. The authorities working in the region use their power in the wrong way... there is lots of injustice and torture happening there that the public do not know about."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"People in Bangkok have never been to the south. They have no idea what it is like. Still they always hold their prejudice against the southerners. Thai people should have more knowledge on the conflict. This is a very big problem, deep-rooted in the history and the media only is a small factor...For example, the soldiers sent to the south already have a bad perception of the local people from the way some journalists from the central area write up news reports on the conflict using emotional words and negative tone, while stories from the local stringers are more positive."

(Suda, field reporter/ journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

From the quotes above, we can see that the interviewees see the flaw of the Thai social and educational system as a big problem, as well as being one of the causes instigating the southern violence and the misunderstanding in Thai society. The Thai education system and the one-sided history curriculum only focuses on Thai-ness, Buddhism, the Thai Monarchy and Thai nation building, and it ignores the fact that the history of Pattani and the country's 5% Muslim population are also a part of Thailand's history. The result of this education system is the creation of an 'us and them' mentality because most Thais know so little about the history of Pattani, the culture of the Thai Muslims and, most importantly, the complicated factors that have contributed to the southern conflict.

Most Thais see the southern Muslims as 'the other' who kill Buddhist monks and burn Buddhist temples with the goal of gaining independence from Thailand. This point can be supported by the findings from the content analysis. The qualifiers that describe the main words in referring to the perpetrators are mostly 'religion' qualifiers, such as the words 'Muslim' and 'Islamic'. According to Suda, who is a field reporter and a journalist from *Bangkok Post*, this mentality is also reflected in the news organisations when sometimes the (Bangkok-based) editors disagree with the southern regional reporters on which news should be the top story of the day.

This 'prejudiced' mentality is a worrying cause because the conflict cannot be solved if the people in power hold prejudice against the Muslim minority. For example, Thai soldiers sent to the conflict area know little about the history and culture of the region, which often leads to the disrespect of the local culture and causes more disunity between the two societies, the most obvious case of which was the shooting incident at Kruese Mosque. Little is known about the southern conflict because the Thai education system does not give enough of its background and history, and the Thai people become ignorant and uninterested in learning about it, which results in the fact that, as a main national security issue, the southern conflict does not attract as much interest from the public as it should.

Kowit, a journalist from *The Nation* who has covered the southern conflict news since 2004, expressed the view that this 'prejudice' is the foundation of everything. He maintained that the public's perception of the conflict and of the Muslims is the result of the whole system. The Thai media are a product of this system, and once people have a prejudice, they do not open up to other explanations. From this, we can see that Thai media, too, are a product of the flawed education system, the one-sided history, and the ignorant mentality

that sometimes affects the way the Thai media report the conflict. The next section summarises the views of the interviewees on the Thai media and the reporting of the southern conflict.

7.1.2 Southern conflict and the Thai media

As discussed in Chapter 3 (3.4), we can see that the Thai media are criticised as being one of the factors instigating the violence. The complicated nature of the southern conflict, which is caused by many factors that include, for example, the long-history of conflict between the Thai state and the Muslim minority, the minority's grievances, and authority's misuse of power, has provided a challenge for the Thai media in reporting on the conflict. The southern conflict deals with many sensitive issues and it is necessary for journalists to understand the dynamics of the conflict before reporting the news. However, the fact that the Thai media have been widely criticised reflects that there is a problem with the Thai media and their reporting. In my opinion, many journalists lack a true understanding of the conflict, and at the same time, disregard the impact of their reporting. The southern conflict is a conflict 'within one nation' that involves sensitive religious and cultural issues, so journalists need to be more careful that their reporting does not add more complications to the conflict.

Because this study focuses on how the media represent the conflict, it is necessary to know the perception of the interviewees, who are journalists and editors of the two English-language newspapers under scrutiny and one expert from a media organisation, in order to understand their views on this issue. The interviewees' opinions varied when it came to the topic of 'Thai media and the reporting on the southern conflict'. For example, some interviewees believed that the Thai media could help in reducing the conflict, while others believed that the Thai media are not able to provide a possible solution to the problem. Nevertheless, the interviewees shared one common belief, which is that the failure of the Thai media and their reporting of the southern issues are the results of a flaw in the Thai social and education system as discussed in an earlier section. One editor and one journalist shared their views on the issue as follows.

a) Views on the flaws in the Thai social and education system that affect the Thai media culture:

"The perception of Thai society is partly reflected in the main media. Thai people have prejudices, all arising from the education system and the one-sided version of history they are taught. The media

try to show the other side of the story, but this also depends on the receiver too. All of this is because of a problem in the education system of Thai people."

(Somsak, senior journalist/editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"The reporting of the southern conflict did not fuel the violence but added more fuel to the misunderstanding of the public. Most of the time, there are no reports on the context or giving an accurate picture of the incidents. The public see the southern region as a 'besieged' region, while in fact if you go and see, you'll see that life goes on as normal. It is just that the media did not choose to report that point. The media assign no space for reporting the background and context of the south."

(Damrong, field reporter/journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013)

The quotes above suggest that the performance of the Thai media is partly a result of the flaw in the Thai social and education system, which focuses only on developing Thai-ness and ignores other ethnic and religious minorities. The southern conflict is a national problem that involves national security issues; however, the interviewees feel that Thai people know so little about it. The conflict has lasted for over 10 years, and violent incidents have become so repetitive that the Thai public has become used to the news on violent incidents. The interviewees believed that because of the Thai education system, the Thai public has no real knowledge and understanding on the historical, religious and cultural aspects of the southern region. This, together with the continuous violent incidents that have been happening since 2004 have forged the mind of the Thai public to see the southern region as a 'troubled region' and the southern Muslims as 'the other'.

In addition, the Thai media are a product of this system, which means the media people can also become 'prejudiced and ignorant'. Damrong mentioned that the Thai media did not instigate the violent incidents, but they created misunderstanding among the public by not giving enough information on the conflict. To address this, it is more important that the media people understand the history, background and dynamics of the conflict, and know how to report the issue carefully. The Thai media have to perform a socially responsible role by providing enough information to the public, and also being aware that their reporting can influence the public. Nevertheless, as stated by Somsak, a senior journalist and editor from *The Nation*, the Thai media may be able to provide information and show incidents from 'the other side' of the conflict, but this also depends on the Thai public, or 'the receiver', as to whether or not they will receive the information.

The interviewees believed that the Thai media had taken part in instigating the conflict in the early years because the media had no experience of reporting conflict in a balanced manner, especially a conflict that happened within one nation. When the southern conflict first started in 2004, the Thai media reported violent incidents in the same way as they reported crime. They were not aware that the southern conflict deals with sensitive religious and cultural issues, and often reported within the 'good and bad' dichotomy of the 'Thai state vs the Muslim minority'. As a result, the 'us and them' mentality was unavoidably created and the Thai people often see the southern Muslims as 'the other' who are not Thais and want to gain independence by killing Thai people and instigating violence (Patra, journalist from *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013). Two journalists, one editor and one expert from a media organisation expressed their opinions on the media and their reporting of the conflict as follows.

b) Views on the Thai media and how it is seen as one of the factors worsening the conflict:

"It is true that the media are one of the factors worsening the situation...especially in the early years of the conflict. Some villages banned the Thai media and did not allow Thai journalists in their area saying that we called them 'southern bandits', which was disrespectful. Also, those journalists who are new to the southern conflict sometimes are not careful and often use generalised terms in their news reports. The way the Thai media report the conflict has developed in recent years but it is still not been a huge development."

(Somsak, senior journalist/ editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"At first, the media did not have any concern that their reporting could fuel the violence. They just reported the conflict the same way as when reporting crime. They did not have any knowledge in how to report the southern conflict, which is different from stories from other conflict situations as it contains historical, cultural and religious dimensions. At the breaking of the first incident, the media were shocked. They did not know how to cope with reporting the situation because a situation like this had never happened before. They did not know, for example, what words they should use, what is going to happen next and so on. Then, the media began reporting in a 'generalised' way, using

words according to the PM and the authorities, without any concern for the sensitivity of the words they used."

(Pokin, director, TJA, interviewed, 3rd April 2013)

"It is disappointing that the media take part in stimulating the conflict. People are interested in the southern conflict when there is a big attack that causes great loss of lives, which in a way, creates more cleavage, misunderstanding, and hostility in the society."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"The southern conflict reports are treated as prime news when the death tolls are high — always make a good headline. This is the nature of the whole industry – treating stories on the southern conflict mostly in a way that is favourable to the state because the main source of information is the state, and not the rebels... Southern conflict incidents differ from those in other conflicts because the media have to think of the consequence of the way they report the conflict. However, the reports on the southern conflict do not have fairness because the southern conflict implies a challenge to the notion of the Thai state and Thai-ness. The Thai media and Thai people have no sympathy for the Thai Malays; therefore, the sensitivity while reporting is low... Sometimes the journalists are the ones that stimulate the situation because it can make big stories and headlines. It's just basic accurate information, but they don't care. They have to look and think of the consequences, not just what the authorities said."

(Damrong, field reporter/ journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013)

From the quotes given, we can see that the Thai media and their problems in reporting the conflict arise from three factors. First is the incompetency of the Thai media to report violent incidents that deal with sensitive issues, especially when the conflict first started in 2004. However, the Thai media did not totally ignore the southern conflict because some of the media people were already reporting on the southern conflict long before the beginning of the major incidents as a few journalists had been sent to the conflict area to report on small violent incidents during 2001-2003.

The second factor is the Thai media industry and the goal to 'sell' the news. As mentioned earlier, the southern conflict has been going on for over 10 years, and the Thai public is now used to receiving news on violent incidents to the point that they become 'ignorant'. Consequently, news on the southern conflict can

only make headlines and catch the interest of the public when the attacks are big and the number of the deaths is high (Kowit, journalist from *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013). Lastly, because the southern conflict deals with issues of 'the Thai majority vs the Muslim minority' and because the main source of information is from the authority figures, it is possible that journalists become less sensitive to the local and prone to rely more on information from the authorities.

To sum up, the interviewees agreed that the Thai media play a part in increasing the conflict when they mainly report on violent incidents that cause heavy loss of life and damage. They see the media as seemingly unaware of the wider social implications of their reporting. However, as will be further discussed, attempts by the Thai media institutions to give more news space to articles on the conflict and in trying to find justice for the people caught-up in the violence can also be seen.

The question I asked was whether or not the interviewees believe that the Thai media can help to find a resolution to the conflict. The views on the topic are varied. Some interviewees maintained that news reporting of the southern conflict had improved in the past few years, and they consequently had an optimistic view that the Thai media can help in lessening the conflict, while some disagreed with this viewpoint. The views on Thai media and whether they can contribute to finding a resolution to the conflict can be summed up as follows.

c) Views on the Thai media and whether or not they can help in finding a resolution to the southern conflict:

"This is a very big problem deep-rooted in the history, and the media is only a small factor. The media cannot help much. It can only help in playing its socially responsible part. We can only provide updates on the situation but we try to give reports on other stories too. The Army once told me...if the media stop reporting on the southern conflict, the conflict will stop too...for me, I don't see it that way. I think the media are only responsible for 20% of the situation."

(Suda, field reporter/journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"The media still lack the learning process. Their understanding of the situation is still not enough; nothing has changed much. There is nothing we can do. It is the system ... Thai media could do more in helping the situation in the south and become the voice of the victims. There is not so much

investigative reporting in the Thai media. They just make the articles out of the information from the authorities because they are too lazy to get to the other side of the story."

(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"Nothing has changed. The Issara project was not successful. There might be training but it is all up to each of the journalists whether they will use that knowledge to improve their reporting or not."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

The quotes above show the different viewpoints of the journalists, some of who believe that the media does not play a part in creating more violence and is only a small factor in the conflict scene. These journalists view the situation as the reporters only doing their duty in reporting. Patra, a journalist from the international desk of *Bangkok Post*, mentioned that she did not see many changes in the past 10 years. The Thai media still lack a learning process. Their understanding of the situation remains limited and their sources of information always come from the authorities. Kowit, a journalist from *The Nation*, expressed the same view by concluding that he did not see much change in the Thai media and he pointed out that awareness of the responsibility of journalists has to be created at the individual level.

It is possible to see that the interviewees have various opinions with regard to whether or not the Thai media can help to find a resolution to the conflict. One interesting point I found from the interviews was that some of the journalists do not believe that the Thai media can influence the conflict, but that the violent events have changed the way the Thai media report the issue, especially the Kruese and Takbai incidents. They saw that the seriousness and the implications of both events have changed the whole dimension of the conflict and have stressed the role of the Thai media in the conflict scene.

Both incidents show the misuse of power by the Thai authority. As a result, the Thai media have become more aware of their socially responsible role to report issues from all sides involved. The journalists maintained that after the Kruese and Takbai incidents, the number of news stories and feature articles on the lives of the southern Muslims has increased. In this sense, they believe that the media can help to bring greater understanding to Thai society and to open up spaces for public debate regarding the issues. Opinions on how the violent situations led the change in the representation of the conflict can be seen as follows:

"The injustice the Thai public saw from the Kruese and Takbai incidents has changed the way the Thai media reported the conflict. We, the media, want to play a socially responsible role by not only giving truthful information, but also all-round information. The Thai public needs to know how these situations affect the lives of the people in the deep south."

(Chatri, editor, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 8th April 2013)

"The Kruese and Takbai incidents created a great public reaction. People felt sympathy, and there was huge criticism of the government. Both incidents have their own dimensions that can influence the media in covering the southern conflict. This is how the situation shapes the media... Takbai was a big change. It showed the Thai state's incompetency and injustice with regard to the southern conflict. After Takbai, the media opened up more space, focusing on bringing justice and human rights for the people in the south. The situation showed that there is something wrong there. The media had to show this to the public."

(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

Overall, the interviewees had various views on the southern conflict and the role of the Thai media. It was interesting to see that the 'experienced' journalists – or those who been reporting on the conflict since the first year, such as Kowit, a journalist from *The Nation*, and Suda, a field reporter and a journalist from *Bangkok Post* – held quite a pessimistic view on whether the Thai media could help with finding a solution to the southern conflict. Kowit saw that the southern conflict is a big problem in Thai society, and that the media is only a small part that could not make a positive contribution to resolving the conflict. The opinions of the participants varied in terms of whether the Thai media could or could not help with the situation. Most participants saw that the Thai media had not changed much, and there was still a lot to do in terms of improving the reporting.

In addition, some of the interviewees viewed that the problems in reporting the southern conflict were at the individual level because some journalists have concerns over reporting principles and understanding of the situation, while others do not. Having understanding of the background of the southern conflict and experience in reporting the conflict are still not enough. It depends solely on the individual as to whether or not he or she wants to engage in investigative reporting. Howard (2003) stated that "Few journalists have any training in the theory of conflict. Having the skills to analyse conflict will enable a reporter to be a more

effective professional journalist (p.23)." From this, I believe that the understanding of conflict dynamics is one of the important factors needed to improve the conflict coverage.

One area of common ground on this topic is that certain situations of the southern conflict, especially the Kruese and Takbai incidents, changed the way the Thai media report on sensitive issues. Improvements to the coverage can be seen either in the labels used or the selection of stories on the conflict. This can be supported by the finding from the content analysis that peace journalism elements increased in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident and Takbai demonstration incidents in both newspapers. Awareness was created and the reporting became more sensitive after these two incidents, but the possibility of the Thai media to create a resolution to the conflict is still limited.

7.2 Process of stories production in this context

This section looks into the process of the article production of each newspaper and their organisations' policies. It then moves on to discuss the journalistic practices of the members of the newspapers under scrutiny in their reporting of the southern conflict.

7.2.1 Southern news production process

Bangkok Post

When the conflict first started (January 2004), *Bangkok Post* had no policy with regard to the reporting of the conflict because it did not realise that the arsenal raid incident was the sign of the rebirth of the current southern conflict (Patra, interviewed, 4th April 2013). After the raid on an army camp, a team of reporters (Suda) and a photographer were sent to the area to stay attached to the army. Three weeks later, another team (Chatri, currently a Bangkok-based editor) was sent to help in reporting the situation. Suda and Chatri had previously been sent to the conflict area during 2001-2003 to report on minor incidents. Both teams took turns in reporting from the conflict area, returning to Bangkok once every 2-3 months.

The journalists had no training in safety and in reporting in a conflict situation, so their skills in conflict reporting all came from their first-hand experiences. *Bangkok Post* directly hired local stringers, most of who are Muslims who can speak the local dialect and know the area well, but these stringers may also have worked for other newspapers.

"Those mainly involved in reporting the southern conflict are 1. the journalists with a strong tie with the army and 2. the stringers in the area. Our advantage is that we have a tie with the army, so we have access to official sources."

(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

As Patra put it, *Bangkok Post* receives news on the southern conflict in two ways. One is from official sources from the Thai army because journalists who cover southern news incidents have a close tie with the army. The tie with the army is beneficial to *Bangkok Post* because reporters can gain access to official information quickly and directly. This point can be supported by the finding from the content analysis that 'elite-oriented' (WJ3) was the most-commonly found WJ indicator in the conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post*, which underlines *Bangkok Post's* great dependency on authority as a source of information.

Second is news pieces taken from local stringers who may also work with other news organisations. Since local people sometimes do not trust journalists from Bangkok, it is necessary to hire stringers who are based in the area in order to gain inside information. However, these two sources of information sometimes prove to be unreliable because the news from official sources is based only on the information from the authorities, while the news from the stringers may not be true and may have some hidden agendas. I will discuss this point later in the limitations in reporting on the southern conflict news section.

Generally, *Bangkok Post* has a centralised system, the so-called 'collective decision system'. The news stories from stringers or journalists are sent to the central office. The journalists will point out the main issue in the stories. The assignment editors will then decide what the main issues of the day are and will manage the information from many sources before sending it to the rewriters. The rewriters then revise and translate a story from Thai to English before sending it to the sub-editors to approve. The sub-editors, mostly foreign staff, will look at the draft articles and the issues again, and then make a decision on which are the most important issues of the day before writing the headlines.

Bangkok Post had editorial meetings to discuss the main headlines and other issues including the format of the newspaper twice a day. In each meeting, editors from each news section will be involved, but after the

final meeting, if any big stories came up, the daily editor will have to make the final decision. At the final stage, the format of the newspaper will be approved then sent to be printed for the paper version, and later to be posted on the website.

The Nation

In the same way as *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* had no policy in reporting on conflict during the first year of violence. The southern conflict incidents were mostly covered as 'crime' stories at first, so people who were responsible for writing the articles were people from the 'crime' and 'regional' desks, and the rewriters. *The Nation* sent journalists to the south with no prior training for the journalists so everything they learned came from their first-hand experiences.

In the early years of the conflict, Somsak (currently a senior journalist and editor) and Damrong (journalist) were the main journalists covering the southern conflict. At present, the main journalists responsible for reporting on the southern conflict are those with experience in covering the conflict and those from the international stories table, because the southern conflict is a complicated issue and has many angles, which also relate to security matters, NGOs, OIC or neighbouring countries. *The Nation* has a photographer and correspondents based in all three southern border provinces. They also hire local stringers, who send their reports to the regional news desk every day.

"The quality (of the news) is not as good as there are too many editing processes. The central pool system may be good for sharing information within the organisation but sometimes it leads to the complication of where the news originally came from (which media outlet) and whether it is accurate."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

Compared to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* is a bigger organisation that owns different media outlets. It uses the system of a 'central pool system' where all stories from every media under the same organisation would be sent to a central pool database where they can share news and information. In this way, a journalist can pool information from several sources when writing up a news story and one story can be edited, produced and reproduced by a different agency many times. In my reading, I observe that *The Nation* often names the author(s) of its news articles as 'The Nation' and the names of the individual reporters are rarely mentioned.

When I asked about this during the interview, Kowit said that this is a result of the central pool system whereby news and information have to go through several editing processes so it is hard to give credit to the author of the article. He was also of the opinion that the quality of the news is not as good because of the complicated system of the editing process.

In reporting on the southern conflict, *The Nation* has a 'Southern news desk', which is responsible for news from the 14 southern provinces, including news on the southern conflict. In the same way as with news from other regional news desks, news from the 'Southern news desk' is sent to the 'central pool database' in Bangkok. Normally, stories from stringers are sent to the regional desk, and then to the central desk, but sometimes stringers can send the news pieces directly to Bangkok-based journalists who they have a close contact with. The rewriter will screen, translate and manage the copy and send it to the editors, who will make articles out of the material once they choose the important stories of the day. However, *The Nation* also faces the same problem with the reliability of news from stringers, which again, I will come back to discuss in the limitations in covering the southern conflict. The lines of production of both newspapers are shown in figure 7.1.

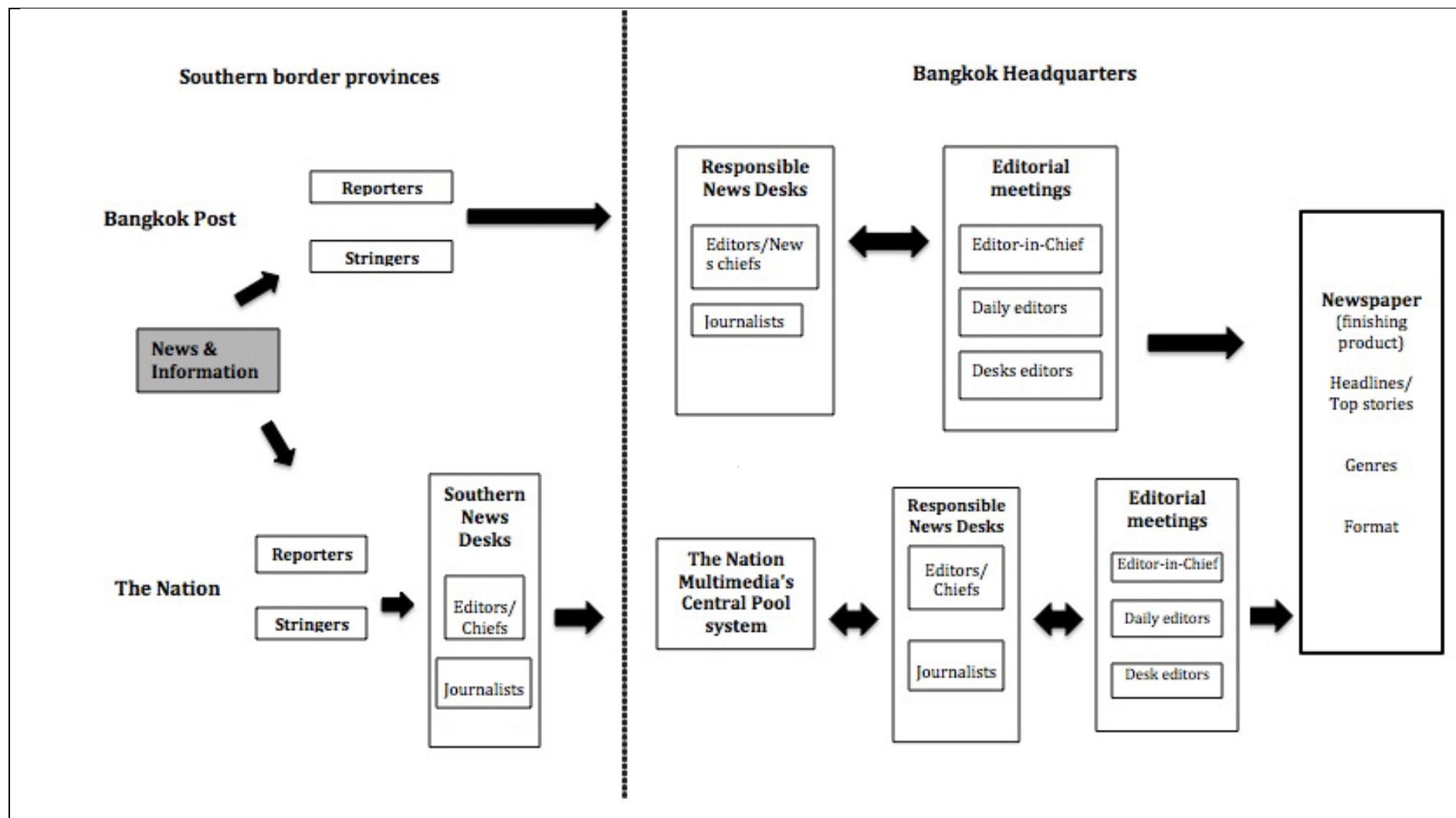


Figure 7.1: The line of production of the southern conflict news of *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

In concluding this section, both newspapers are different in terms of their line of production as shown in figure 7.1. Because *Bangkok Post* is a smaller organisation, it does not have a 'regional news centre' like *The Nation*. News from the stringers or correspondents will be sent directly to the headquarters for the rewriter to translate, and then passed to the sub-editor to choose the stories to highlight.

The Nation has a 'regional news centre' based in Songkhla for news from the 14 southern provinces including news on the southern conflict. News from stringers and correspondents will be passed to the regional news desk first, and later to the headquarters in Bangkok. The regional editor can ask the correspondents to investigate the information gained from the stringers. Because of the central pool system, news stories of *The Nation* can be edited and presented many times by other media under the same organisation.

However, figure 7.1 displays the production of news from the southern conflict area, and not the southern conflict articles that are generated in Bangkok. It is worth noting that not all news on the southern conflict came from the southern area. From my reading, the news involves comments and reaction from the authorities (e.g. the PM, the Deputy PM, the Army Commander, the Ministers), religious leaders, scholars or even foreign sources. Many of these sources are based in Bangkok, which means that journalists from other news sections, such as politics, home affairs and international affairs, are also involved in the production of southern conflict news.

From this, we can see that there are two groups of people who are involved in the production of the southern conflict news: first are the stringers, correspondents, reporters and journalists based in the southern area; and second are the rewriters, journalists from other news desks, editors, and sub-editors based in the Bangkok headquarters. The production processes of the southern conflict news of the two English-language newspapers may be different but they share one thing in common: the editorial process normally takes place at their Bangkok headquarters. It is the responsibility of the daily editors to make a decision about the stories of the day, the headlines, and the format of the newspapers, and to finalise the newspaper before sending the copy to the printing house to publish the final product.

This process of news selection is very much based on the news values that the journalists attach to certain events (Allan 2010). In this context, the selection of news is largely determined by the editors' perceptions and evaluations of the conflict. Journalists and stringers may help in contributing to a news story but it all comes down to the decision of the Bangkok based editors as to whether or not they see the importance of that story. Editors will allocate news space and position to each news item according to their own judgment. The process of selecting, editing and highlighting happens at this stage, so the representation of the southern conflict depends largely on this editorial procedure.

7.2.2 Policy in reporting the southern conflict

Bangkok Post

According to the interviewees who work for *Bangkok Post*, the newspaper had no official policy in reporting on the southern conflict; rather, every change they made depended on the situation, such as giving more space for social-cultural stories from the conflict area, or being more careful with the choice of descriptive vocabulary. *Bangkok Post* focuses more on hard topics that include violent incidents, the government's reaction, the southern administration and law enforcement. There is less news and articles on the social and cultural side of the conflict in comparison to the findings on *The Nation*. As Patra, a journalist from the international desk, mentioned (see quote on the next page), the journalists working for *Bangkok Post* are used to writing news in a hard news format, so it is hard to change their style of writing. The southern conflict news is often about violent incidents, which is often reported in a hard news format that involve details of deaths and damages.

In addition, *Bangkok Post* encourages its journalists to produce more stories 'from the other side of the story' but the writing of the articles on cultural and social issues in the south depends on each journalist's style and knowledge of the events. According to Chatri, an editor who used to be a field reporter when the conflict first started (see quote on the next page), *Bangkok Post* sees importance in presenting news on the social and cultural aspects of the southern regions. For instance, there were attempts in the past to make feature stories on specific issues. However, the production of news stories really depends on each journalist and if they have news space for the stories.

The attempt to present the social and cultural side of the southern conflict can be seen from the findings that 'people-oriented' (PJ3) and 'focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict' (PJ5) features are regularly found in the articles produced, with 60 indicators of PJ3 and 75 indicators of PJ5 in the coverage of the three incidents. One journalist and one editor from *Bangkok Post* explained that the attempt to provide this angle of the conflict totally depends on each journalist and his or her style of reporting as explained in the following quotes:

"We all have worked in this format. We are used to it. Nobody wants to change the way we work in writing the news articles. But it is quite open. Anybody can suggest anything they want to write, but in reality the situation will lead us."

(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"Writing social and cultural articles totally depends on the style of that journalist, but we do encourage them to write more stories on the other side. We used to do a series-scoop on the life of monks and teachers in the conflict area. We have tried process-based reporting, but everything is up to the space they give us too...The media have played a large role in showing Thai society what actually happens in the south. If we based our articles too much on the authority, the readers will believe one side of the story. So we try to give space to the locals, and try to write more balanced, not strict to one tone articles."

(Chattri, editor, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 8th April 2013)

Bangkok Post has a policy of avoiding dramatic headlines when reporting deaths. Suda, a field reporter and journalist, mentioned that when reporting violent incidents that involve deaths, *Bangkok Post* tried to avoid making a dramatic or unduly sensational headline in order to respect the rights of the dead. Sometimes they chose not to give all of the details of a victim's death, and in all cases, not to publish pictures of dead bodies. At the same time, however, they only provide a small amount of space for articles about the incidents where the death toll was low (Patra, journalist/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013).

For labels, there was no agreement on the preferred words to be used. It totally depended on the rewriters because the journalists would submit the news reports in Thai and the rewriters would

translate them. *Bangkok Post* usually followed official descriptive vocabulary used by the government, which can be supported from the findings from the content analysis that, in comparison to *The Nation*, *Bangkok Post* used more neutral words with less emotive and victimising language (Chapter 6, 6.1.4).

Later, when the conflict had reached the international level, *Bangkok Post* chose to follow the vocabulary used by international organisations. For example, *Bangkok Post* agreed on calling the actors 'insurgents', thereby ceasing to use words such as 'terrorists' or 'militants'. The findings from the content analysis also reveal that the term 'terrorists' was not used in any of the 132 news articles under scrutiny. However, the word 'separatists' was still used because the reporters believed that this was the agenda underlying the objectives of the attackers (Chatri, editor/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 8th April 2013).

Between 2004 and 2006, *Bangkok Post* did not send any new journalists to the conflict area. The newspaper only used experienced journalists because the reporting of the conflict needed journalists with a firm background and experience in reporting from the conflict zone (Suda, field reporter and journalist/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013). After the 2006 coup, *Bangkok Post* asked all journalists based in the area to return to Bangkok to help with the political crisis, which meant they only used stringers as sources thereafter. *Bangkok Post* stopped sending journalists to the area unless there was a big incident, and even then only for a few days. Suda mentioned that safety concerns may have been one of the factors but the real problem was the budget because *Bangkok Post* had to cover the cost of living for the journalists they send to the South, when in fact everyone can write up news reports without having to go to the conflict area.

To conclude, *Bangkok Post* had no official policy with regard to the representation of the southern conflict but it had 'discussions' between editors and journalists on some issues, such as the labels they should use when referring to the actors, or the extent of the details and information they should give when it comes to reporting about deaths. From the interviews, I can see that *Bangkok Post* was concerned about the situation of the media and the southern conflict and saw the importance of reporting on social and cultural issues. However, most of the times, it depends on the individual journalists as to whether or not they want to write about certain angles. Also, another limitation in

reporting the conflict was Thailand's political crisis, which first started in 2006. The coup that ousted PM Thaksin and the political situation that ensued gained national interest, and made the southern conflict less newsworthy resulting in less news spaces being given to reporting on it.

The Nation

Recognising that the southern conflict had different angles that require careful reporting, the editors held discussions on their policy on reporting the conflict. Four to five months after the first incident, they had a call-out for those working on the southern stories. The guiding strategy adopted in most of the news reports, it seems, mostly focused on national security while expressing concern about the sensitivity of religious and cultural issues (Somsak, senior journalist/editor, interviewed, 2013). In the same way as *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* did not use 'new' journalists to cover southern conflict news because new reporters may not have had enough experience to write reports on sensitive issues.

The reporting of the daily incidents still continued because *The Nation* could not avoid event-based reporting. Nevertheless, *The Nation* tried to provide more process-based articles by giving context and background on the conflict, and showing a wider perspective informed by analytical thinking on the southern issues. This point can be supported by the findings from the content analysis that 74 indicators of 'focus on here and now' (WJ5) were found in the coverage. Also, peace journalism indicators, especially 87 instances of 'people oriented' (PJ3) and 109 instances of 'focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict', were found from the coverage of the three incidents, which suggests that *The Nation* included both event-based and process-based reporting in its representation of the southern conflict.

However, Somsak maintained that this also depends on sufficient space being made available for in-depth reporting. *The Nation's* reporting principles on the southern conflict events can be summed up as follows:

"We had a discussion that we cannot treat news from the southern conflict in the same way as other crime stories. We had a concern that it was necessary to publish articles on history,

culture and people and that the journalists should go to the conflict area and talk to the local people in order to find the explanation for the incidents."

(Somsak, senior journalist/editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

From the quote above, we can see that *The Nation* understood that the southern conflict deals with sensitive religious and cultural issues, so they cannot treat its violent incidents in the same way as other crime stories. They see the importance of reporting about the history, culture and people of the southern region in order to provide the readers with knowledge and understanding of the region. Also, the newspaper engages in investigative reporting when an incident happens and journalists will be sent to the area to talk to the local people and gain information from the other side of the story so as not to base their reporting only on information from the authorities.

However, the use of various sources and the process-based style of reporting are partly influenced by the fact that *The Nation* has no close relationship to the army for gaining an official inside source in the same way as *Bangkok Post* does. This point can be supported by the findings from the content analysis that the 'multiparty orientation' (PJ7) indicator is found in the highest frequency, with 155 instances found from the coverage of the three incidents. From Somsak's interview (see quote below), we can see that *The Nation's* solution is to engage different sides of the conflict, such as academics, religious leaders and especially local people, in order to provide different aspects of the conflict to the readers.

"The policy is to interview as many people as possible (because we do not have a close tie with the authorities like *Bangkok Post*), so we encourage our journalists to talk to the locals, academics, and religious leaders and then try to interpret the situation using the information they have gained. We encourage them to use more process-based reporting."

(Somsak, senior journalist/editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

In my opinion, *The Nation's* weakness (in not having a close tie with the army as a source) has opened up the opportunity to report news from other angles by including voices from all sides involved in the conflict, and not using information from the authorities only, which helps open up opportunities to explore the truth from all sides. This point can be supported by the findings from the content analysis that 29 'truth oriented' articles were identified from the second study on the four broad WJ/PJ

orientations (Galtung 1998) (see Appendix V). The investigative reporting; the reporting on historical, social and cultural issues; and the use of sources from all sides, in my view, shows that *The Nation* engaged a peace journalism approach in its reporting. This is confirmed by the findings from the previous chapter, which indicated that *The Nation* included a large variety of sources in its coverage. In comparison to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* used more sources of information, especially from 'local', 'academic', 'religious' and 'organisation' categories.⁸⁸

In terms of the labels used, in the early stages of the conflict, journalists experienced difficulty in choosing the right labels to describe the actors because they did not understand the situation and they did not know the identities of those behind the attacks. Kowit mentioned that because the perpetrators did not announce who they were and what their goal was, *The Nation* did not know the appropriate words to use when writing about them in the news.

"We didn't have a guideline on the words to be used in the early years. Normally it was me and Damrong (pseudonym) who looked into the word choices, but because we are a big organisation and sometimes we cannot check every article before it is published, we know that our labels became a problem when we got complaints from our people based in the south as well as from the local people."

(Somsak, senior journalist/editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

Because of the 'central pool system' that allows journalists and editors in the same organisation to edit a news story, different journalists will use different words in their report. Therefore, a wide range of labels was used, and with little consistency, as shown in the findings from the previous chapter. For example, in the coverage of the Kruese mosque incident, 193 labels were used in describing the actors, with words such as 'Muslims', 'detainees', 'suspects', 'youths', 'armed men', 'attackers', 'raiders', 'bandits', 'rebels', 'insurgents', 'militants' and 'separatists'.

The analysis of labels shows that *The Nation* used 'religion' qualifiers, for example, 'Muslim' or 'Islamic', in the highest degree. A total of 84 such words were found from the 166 news articles. In due course, *The Nation* tried to avoid using 'terrorists' when doing so proved controversial, electing to use 'insurgents' instead. Later, *The Nation* have further developed its policy by trying to avoid using labels

that contained religious connotations, such as ‘Muslims’. On those occasions, when it was necessary to identify religious belief, *The Nation* advised its journalists to be very careful to place such qualifiers in an appropriate context.

This interview provides insights into how the southern conflict was being reported in relation to the policy of each organisation, and how such policy affected the news production process. The responses of the interviewees revealed that each newspaper had its own preferred procedures for making relevant journalistic and editorial judgements about what to cover, how to cover it and why it should be covered. *Bangkok Post*, a smaller news organisation in comparison to *The Nation*, had a centralised system where reports from the stringers and reporters were sent to a central desk, and the central editors then made a decision on which issues to highlight. *The Nation*, an umbrella organisation, used a more complicated news production process, where news pieces were sent to a central pool, and other media in the organisation were able to use the reports and edit the news piece again for their own purposes. Articles from *The Nation* have to pass many editing procedures before being published for the public.

To recap, for each newspaper, the responsibilities for writing headlines and assigning space to the articles lay with the editors who do not have first-hand experience in reporting the conflict situation, which sometimes led to misunderstanding of the main issue. When the conflict first started, neither newspaper had an official policy about how to cover it, which meant that every change they made depended on the situation.

Of the journalists sent to the conflict area by both newspapers, none of them possessed any prior, first-hand knowledge of the conflict situation. *Bangkok Post* had more advantages because of its close ties with the army, while *The Nation* covered a greater variety of stories, in which the voices of the locals were heard to a greater extent. Both newspapers followed a policy of not using dramatic headlines, and being careful with publishing graphic pictures as well as with their use of labels.

7.3 Limitations in reporting conflict in this context

This section looks into the responses from the interviewees with regard to what they perceive, on the basis of their experience, to be the main limitations in reporting the southern conflict. Figure 7.2

summarises the limitations in the production of the southern conflict news in the conflict zone and in the Bangkok headquarters.

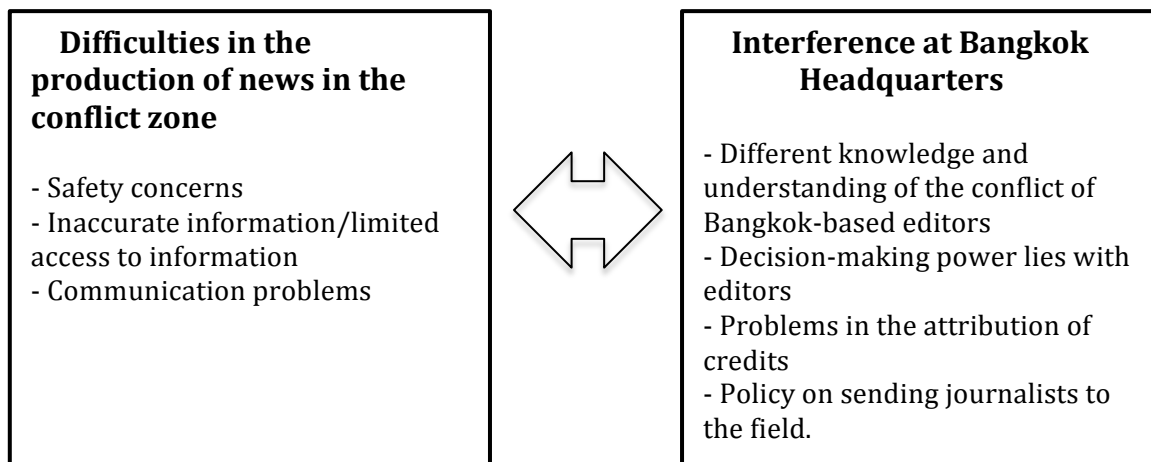


Figure 7.2: The limitations in the production of the southern conflict coverage

7.3.1 Safety concerns

As mentioned earlier, journalists who are responsible for reporting on the southern conflict include those who are based in Bangkok, where they cover issues from of the conflict that involve politics, home affairs, the justice system and foreign affairs, and those who are based in the conflict area, which includes reporters and stringers. This section only focuses on the safety concern issues of those who report from the conflict area.

In the early years of the current southern conflict (2004-2006), both newspapers sent a group of journalists to report from the field, and some joined the Issara News project in 2005. However, the 2006 coup and the political situation in Bangkok led both newspapers to withdraw their reporters from the conflict area. At present, they have stringers and correspondents based in the three southern provinces who send news piece on a daily basis, and the newspapers only send field reporters from Bangkok to the conflict area when there is a big incident.

Normally, the reporters' responsibility is to cover the incidents when they happen, but in a normal situation, they are required to cover other issues of the conflict: economic, social, religious, cultural and local. However, reporting from the field is not an easy task, especially for the group of journalists

who were sent to the area in the first year of the incident, when they have little knowledge about the conflict and on reporting from a conflict zone, where they occasionally had to face threats and intimidation.

Reporters from both newspapers (Suda and Chatri from *Bangkok Post* and Kowit and Damrong from *The Nation*) faced the same difficulties when they were sent to the conflict area in 2004. As discussed earlier, these reporters had no experience or training and they had to acquire a new set of skills in reporting the conflict and in living in the conflict zone. Suda mentioned that normally the attackers do not target journalists because they rely on the media to advance their public relations (PR) for their attack, but sometimes members of the press become victims too, especially in a second-bombing incident.⁸⁹ Therefore, the usual newsgathering process of rushing rush out to the scene or travelling along the same route cannot be applied to this context.

Because violent incidents happened repeatedly, sometimes a pattern of attacks emerged (in the same way as a second-bombing incident), and reporters can learn how to stay safe and avoid going to the scene.⁹⁰ Sometimes, reporters avoid going to the scene to 'report the news,' preferring to wait at the police station or at some safe place out of fear for their lives. Typically the reporters do not write the reports from the scene but wait for their information to be reaffirmed by the authorities (Damrong, field reporter and journalist/ *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013).

Because of safety concerns, newspapers did not want to send their journalists to the area, preferring to rely on official sources where possible. This point shows that safety concerns lead to an inaccessibility of information because journalists cannot access the scene, so they cannot observe and investigate the site. As a result, they have to write their reports based on information from authorities and stringers, which may not be reliable.

According to Blaesi (2004), armed conflict situations lead to limited access to places and sources and even if there are sources, journalists have to face the question of whether their sources are credible and if they can cross-check with other sources. For that reason, conflict coverage is sometimes based on

'uncertain and dubious' information without direct observation or investigation, the so-call 'second-hand journalism'.

From the interviews, the safety advice can be summed up as follow:

- Reporters need to be careful about how they dress. They should dress in a neutral colour (not to stand out too much) but not in the colours of the authorities (army/khaki) to avoid misunderstanding.
- Reporters should learn basic *Yawi* to communicate with the locals. They have to learn Muslim culture in order to avoid being disrespectful to the locals.
- Reporters should not rush to the crime/attack scene but should always double check if it is safe before visiting the scene.
- Reporters have to always be cautious when travelling around. They should always check their vehicles for possible sabotage and always change their travel route to avoid planned attacks.
- Reporters should avoid travelling alone, especially at night. But most of all, they should avoid travelling with authorities because sometimes authorities are the target.

The safety advice mentioned above comes from the first-hand experience of the reporters based in the field. Most of the time, they have to use their own sense and their basic-instinct in order to survive. However, one piece of safety advice that proved to be problematic to the reporters, especially reporters from *Bangkok Post*, is that they should not be attached to the authorities. Suda, a field reporter and a journalist from *Bangkok Post*, mentioned that the good thing of being close to the authorities is that they are always the first to know when there was an incident and there is a warning of possible attacks. However, the bad side is that they can also easily become the target. From this, we can see that reporters in the field often face dilemmas that challenge their journalistic practices and change the whole way of reporting and living in such a threatening situation.

According to Blaesi (2004), another necessary competency for journalists covering the conflict is general conflict competence. This means having a theoretical knowledge of conflict that encompasses conflict dynamics and methods of conflict resolution, as well as practical knowledge of how to behave

in the conflict area, including knowledge of necessary security precautions, the ability to weigh up risks, and knowing how to investigate under difficult situations. Hence, reporting from the conflict area requires specific skills and experience in order to stay safe, which proves a limitation in the production of the southern news.

For both newspapers, safety is the most important issue in reporting the southern conflict, so they are reluctant to send their reporters to the conflict area. Therefore, they prefer to rely on information from the authorities or the stringers they hire, which also leads to difficulty on issues of accuracy and reliability. I will discuss this point in the next part.

7.3.2 News sources and accuracy

From the previous section, we can see that the safety concerns of field reporters can obstruct the newsgathering process and lead to the dependence on the authorities and stringers as primary news sources. The reliance on the authorities as the only source can lead to one-sided reporting, while the information from stringers cannot always be considered reliable.

As mentioned earlier, the southern conflict has created mistrust and misunderstanding between the Thais and the Muslims in the area. Local people do not trust the Thai authorities, and often blame the authorities for causing the violent incidents. This growing mistrust between the two communities affects the work of the field reporters because the reporters are mostly Thais, and sometimes they work with the authorities. Local people who provided information for the journalists often placed themselves in danger by doing so. Most of the time, the interviewees maintained that the locals were not willing to co-operate by providing helpful information. Occasionally, local people neither welcomed the reporters to their village nor cooperated with them in giving information on the attacks.⁹¹ The reasons for this are that they mistrust the reporters and they conceal the truth to protect the people behind the attacks (Kowit, journalist/ *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013).

For that reason, the writing of news articles based on first-hand information can often be difficult. Nevertheless, the supply of false information not only comes from the local side. There were times when the authorities did not tell the whole truth to the media, too. The most obvious case was the Tak

Bai incident. Before the news of the 78 deaths from suffocation during the transfer had spread, the reporters were kept in the dark, where the authorities, at first, tried to avoid giving details on the deaths to the media (Damrong, field reporter and journalist/ *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013).

"However, we have to double-check the reports the stringers send because there is a high competition between the stringers that sometimes may result in giving false stories."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

Another difficulty is the communication problem. The reporters working in the area have a language barrier with the locals who speak the *Yawi* dialect. This is the reason why field reporters had to depend on local stringers for translations. The local stringers had more advantages in getting around and talking to the people; it was also safer if journalists are accompanied by local stringers when travelling in the area. However, as Kowit stated above, stringers often worked for more than one newspaper. They had to feed the market and 'the market wants conflict', so most of their stories were of daily violent incidents, whereas news 'from the other side of the story' was seldom seen. Mostly, it would be 'the outsider' who went to the area and wrote up those stories (Patra, journalist/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013). The stringers, striving to earn enough income, send their news pieces to 4 or 5 agencies but sometimes the stakes are so high that the information they have could be dangerous so they have to maintain a good relationship with every side by not telling everything they know. There is strong competition between the stringers, especially where breaking developments in the conflict are concerned, which frequently leads to inaccurate information falling into reports.

In addition, stringers can sometimes report the normal crime news as southern conflict news because they can sell the stories (Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013). We can see that, because they are not affiliated directly to any news organisation, the motivation of the stringers is only to 'sell' the news so they do not concern themselves about the accuracy of their information. Nonetheless, at times, the relationship between the sources of the stories and journalists and stringers was defined by mutual advantage, which meant that sometimes the information published was aligned with particular interests (Damrong, field reporter/ journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013).

In summary, news sources and accuracy is one of the limitations in the reporting of the southern conflict. Journalists often face difficulties in processing news from first-hand information so they have to rely on information from other sides, which occasionally cannot be trusted. The incidents happen every day and journalists find difficulty in following up to investigate each incident since they do not have enough time and people.

7.3.3 Interference at the Bangkok headquarters

Both newspapers faced similar problems in their production of southern conflict reports, especially in the final stage of the news production process at the Bangkok headquarters. The main factor is the newspapers' policy in reporting news, which involves editorial meetings at the last stage of the news production process, the attribution of credits to the authors, and the policy of sending reporters to the conflict zone.

As discussed earlier in 7.2, we can see that the final stage of the process is the editorial meeting where the daily editors make a decision on the stories of the day and the format of the newspapers before sending the final version to the printing house. Normally, stringers and reporters from both newspapers suggest the stories to highlight. However, their ideas were sometimes ignored at the editorial meetings and only small spaces were given to their articles, which shows that some editors do not see the importance of the southern conflict and, at the same time, have a limited understanding about the conflict (Patra, journalist/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013). In my opinion, this is due to the 'biased' mentality, which is a result of the flaw in the Thai social and education system as discussed earlier in 7.1.

Some Bangkok-based editors lack understanding of the situation in the south so they do not see the importance of presenting and prioritising the southern news accurately. McCargo (2000) confirmed this point by stating that the news production process was centralised to Bangkok, which led to the marginalisation of 90% of Thais, and so help exclude them from the political participation. Patra commented that sometimes editors only highlight the stories when the death toll is high, and on many occasions, they only give space to the stories when the locals did something wrong and not the authorities, which shows how the dependence on the authorities as a news source affects the way in which the news is reported.

For *Bangkok Post*, headline writing is the work of the subeditors who are foreign staff working in the head office. The foreign subeditors do not know the real issue to focus on and often change the main issue being highlighted by the journalists. According to Sabpaiboon (2001, p. 37), the Thai staff working at *Bangkok Post* had no decision-making power regarding policy or the objectives of the newspaper. Patra confirmed this point by stating that:

"These reporters and stringers have followed the conflict for a long time so they know which stories or issues to highlight. Sometimes they complained that they wrote a good piece but it was not chosen and sometimes Bangkok editors changed their whole point of the story."
(Patra, journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

The quote above shows that the selection of stories, the writing of headlines, and the allocation of news space all depend on the decisions of the editors and subeditors of the day, who do not have a true understanding of the southern conflict and may ignore or fail to understand the importance of the southern news. For *The Nation*, as discussed earlier in 7.2.1, all information is sent to the 'central pool system'. It is the responsibility of the news desks to choose which stories to highlight. These decisions are based on the judgment of the responsible journalists and editors, which are then presented in the editorial meetings every day.

For that reason, stories provided by reporters can either be highlighted or ignored at the last stage of news production, and it is at this editorial meeting that the process of choosing, screening, highlighting and finishing occurs. The news format and the representation of the southern conflict news, therefore, depends largely on the decision of the daily editors.

In addition, the interviewees revealed another flaw in the policy of their organisations in the production of news: the problem of attributing credit to the writers. *Bangkok Post* journalists mentioned that they are often frustrated about how the newspaper gives credit to its writers. Normally, if more than three journalists help in contributing to a news story, it will be credited to 'Post reporters', instead of giving names. On some occasions, this leads to misunderstanding because the daily editors forgot the names, or added names that had not been involved in the writing. Suda (field reporter and journalist/*Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013) mentioned that sometimes she worked hard in writing a report but

when the newspaper came out on the next day, her name was not mentioned, which was a bit of a 'discouragement'.

On the other hand, *The Nation* faced more difficulties on the issue of credibility because of the 'central pool system' whereby any writers from any outlets under the same organisation can edit the same news piece. Because of this complicated system, *The Nation* often used the by-line 'The Nation' as the accredited author of its articles to avoid complications. In the same way as *Bangkok Post*, journalists also found that it was hard for them to get credit as an author of their news pieces because of the system. Journalists from both newspapers expressed their disappointment because their organisations apparently do not see the importance in giving credit to them for their work.

The policy of sending reporters to the field also prove a weakness in the southern news production process. For *Bangkok Post*, there was a controversy between editors as some of them wanted to send journalists to work alongside the army (a form of 'embedding') in order to get inside information, while others wanted them to stick with the locals to build good relationships, and to get news from the other side. However, there are no more journalists from *Bangkok Post* based in the conflict area due to safety reasons, which resulted in a lack of continuity in their reporting. According to Suda (interviewed, 4th April 2013), editors used safety as an excuse for not sending journalists back to the area, while the real reason was actually due to budget concerns. She said, "Now anyone can go but only for a short period and writing articles from Bangkok is not enough. We need at least one journalist to be based there". *The Nation* faced the problem of a lack of staff and people to write the southern conflict articles. As stated by Kowit (journalist/ *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013), most journalists do not want to be responsible for the southern conflict articles because of the complex nature of the events as well as the fears about their personal safety.

Newsworthy incidents happened every day, which meant journalists found it difficult to follow-up and investigate on or to return to stories from days earlier because they do not have enough time and people. *The Nation* does not have enough people to train, nor the budget to support sending more people to the area. As a result, the journalists who cover the stories on the conflict are often those who have worked on the conflict for years, and those who are willing to go to the field.

According to McCargo (2000), the freedom of the journalists is limited and controlled by the organisations, their relations to power and politics, and in particular by the Thai culture of respecting elders. The system in the Thai media organisations is based on hierarchism or seniority relationships. In this system, the juniors are irrelevant and voiceless and have to respect and obey the seniors, and they do not have the right to criticise (Ibid.).

To conclude, the editorial meeting at the last stage of the news production process is a factor that largely affects the production of the news because it guides and influences the 'output' of the newspapers. It is true that stringers, reporters and journalists help in contributing reports on the conflict but what matters most is the final decision made by the daily editors. The representation of the southern conflict news is very much based on this final stage where editors choose, edit and highlight the news articles.

The next part will discuss the recommendations for reporting on the southern conflict as proposed by the interviewees.

7.4 Recommendations

The interviewees held quite similar views on their recommendations for Thai media with regard to reporting on the southern conflict. First of all, they all believe that it is important for people who work in the media to understand the background and dynamics of the conflict so that they can provide accurate information and understanding to the Thai public on the issue. According to Blaesi (2004), one of the necessary competencies for journalists in covering conflict is specific conflict competence, which means journalists should have knowledge on the concrete conflict, which includes the history, culture, language, society, actors and their interests. Kowit confirmed this point in the following comment:

"Writing news on the southern conflict requires specific knowledge of the historical background including the cultural and religious differences in the area, all of which are sensitive issues. Thai media organisations should encourage their journalists to have

continuity in working on the issue and to have an understanding of the conflict before writing the news. The journalists who specialise in the southern conflict will be able to show Thai society a deeper understanding of the conflict, and to show the life and culture of the people from the South."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

The interviewees also recommended that the Thai media should raise the awareness of the reporters, journalists and editors based in Bangkok with regard to the important implications that the southern conflict has on Thai society as well as to their responsibility in representing the conflict to the Thai public in a way that can help bring about understanding, and not exacerbate the problem by creating an 'us and them' attitude. The reporting would be more accurate if the journalists paid more attention to the conflict and its effects (Lynch 2007). On the responsibility of the media in reporting the southern conflict to the Thai public, Somsak made the following observation:

"Thai people should know more about the southern conflict. They should know the history. They do not know the truth, and that is the biggest problem in our country. The southern conflict is a sensitive issue and so careful reporting is needed. The media can help the society by giving the people better understanding of the conflict and the stories of the people from the south, their culture, their way of life. There is so much to know, so many beautiful stories. The media can help by telling all these stories."

(Somsak, senior journalist/ editor, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

Secondly, all interviewees suggested that the Thai media should report the conflict from every side involved, especially the voices of those who are still unheard or the voices of the victims. In this way, the Thai media can help by providing more space for social and cultural news, and by giving more context and background to the southern conflict so that members of the Thai public would better understand its nature and possible solutions. Stories from all sides of the conflict need to be heard. As Patra and Suda put it:

"The media should not base their reporting on information from the authorities only. They should report from the other side of the story, too. Many voices are still unheard. It will be a good start if the media people have this awareness."

(Patra, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"The media can be a speaker for the victims in asking for justice. This will gradually create trust between the media and the local people."

(Suda, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

From the quotes above, we can see that the focus was not only on the making of social and cultural news, but also on representing the 'voices' that are still unheard. The interviewees believed that there is not enough news from the 'local' side, especially when they became victims of the violent incidents. According to Suda, a field reporter from *Bangkok Post* who covered the southern conflict news since 2004, the victims have not received the 'justice' they deserved because of the slow process of the Thai legal system, and because the Thai public do not see this as important.

For that reason, they believe that it is the responsibility of the media to be the 'voice' of the victims so that justice will be served, and at the same time, it is a way of creating trust between the Thai media and the local people. In this sense, from the peace journalism perspective, the media can act as a 'third party' to mediate between the sides in the conflict and facilitate their understanding of each other, which can further lead to a possible solution to the conflict (Peleg 2006).

Lastly, the interviewees believed that each organisation should devote greater attention to the conflict and encourage their journalists to ensure that they are taking sufficient care to provide accurate information, and not to report in a way that can escalate the conflict. The organisations can support their journalists by providing more funds for skill training as well as sending their journalists to the area to get first-hand experience. In this way, the organisations would reduce their reliance on official sources of information. The conventions of reporting conflict also require attention, namely to widen the range of perspectives on offer to the reader, and to provide space for articles that provide different angles and contextual information to help explain the significance of events.

To achieve these outcomes, news organisations need to do more to support their journalists. For example, they should fund further training for the journalists and encourage continuity in their reporting of the southern conflict so as to deepen their expertise. Patra (journalist/ *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013) proposed that a basic understanding of peace journalism could be helpful in this regard. At the very least, the reporters should be provided with enough knowledge to have a better sense of what should and should not be reported. Three interviewees expressed their views on how media organisations can contribute to better reporting of the southern conflict as follows:

"The organisations have to see the importance of reporting in this conflict. They should fund and support the training of their own journalists, like BBC or CNN, in order to develop the potential of their human resources."

(Suda, field reporter/journalist, *Bangkok Post*, interviewed, 4th April 2013)

"The organisations should invest more in sending their journalists to work in the south. This will give them the first-hand experience which will lead to a better understanding, and a better way of reporting."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

"The media organisations should encourage the journalists to be critical. This will create the investigative reporting, which will bring more dimensions of the conflict to the public's attention. This is a problem of Thai society. We have no culture of critical thinking. Because the southern conflict involves questions of Thai nationalism, nobody wants to be critical because they have a strong sense of nationalism."

(Damrong, field reporter/ journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 23rd May 2013)

The quotes above represent the recommendations at the organisation level. The interviewees believed that news organisations should create awareness among their journalists and editors that the southern conflict is an important national security concern which requires a special way of reporting. For that reason, Thai news organisations should provide more funding and support for their journalists in the form of training on conflict reporting so that the journalists will have good journalistic practices and

skills in reporting the conflict. This will also be beneficial for the organisations because they will develop the potential of their own human resources.

The interviewees proposed that it is important for journalists who cover the southern conflict to have an opportunity to work from the field instead of working from Bangkok. This will give them first-hand experience of reporting from the conflict zone, and will provide them with a better understanding of the effects of the conflict on the lives of the local people. Journalists who have experience in the conflict area seem to have more sensitivity to the conflict and to the local people.

In my opinion, the three recommendations mentioned above are part of peace journalism practices. Peace journalism encourage journalists to fulfill their socially responsible role with the objective of promoting the resolution of the conflict (Galtung 1998, 2000; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). When asked about peace journalism in the interviews, all of the interviewees agreed that it is good practice for journalists when covering conflicts. It may not be possible to achieve the goal of peace in the south yet, but good reporting can help to create a certain degree of understanding among society and ultimately change people's opinions by better informing them.

Studies of peace journalism in a different context setting, as mentioned in Chapter 4 (4.2.2.1), can support this point because different conflict settings have different degrees of peace journalism implementation. Thailand's southern conflict, too, deals with a long history of conflict; sensitivity of issues; and unequal development of social, economic, media and political institutions. Therefore, it is possible that peace journalism is not fully applied into Thai media practices. However, one good sign is that the Thai media have attempted to incorporate peace journalism into their media practices since the early years of the conflict. The interviewees maintained that peace journalism is seen as an alternative solution to the problem of reporting on the southern conflict. Pokin's recommendation is worth quoting at length:

"The Thai media can play an important role in providing space, which will lead to the solution of the problem. We have to communicate for a better understanding. Peace Journalism is a good start. Peace Journalism is a good practice. We launched a pilot project (Issara News

Center) two years after the first attack on the arsenal of the army camp, and it was a success. The TJA will have a project and training for the journalists who are interested in the near future. The Thai media should send more journalists to the conflict area in order to portray different sides of the story to Thai society. They should have fairer reporting and should be more careful in giving comments on issues that have not yet been concluded. All Thai media should provide space for all actors in the conflict, which will create the process of reporting with reason, and acting as a mediator."

(Pokin, director, TJA, interviewed, 3rd April 2013)

According to Pokin, peace journalism is good reporting practice for improving the southern conflict coverage. The Issara News Centre was a good example of how the TJA saw the importance of peace journalism and the problem of the Thai media in reporting the southern conflict. Books and articles on peace journalism and Thailand's southern conflict during the past 10 years show that the Thai media and scholars saw the value of peace journalism. There was a consensus that peace journalism can help to improve journalistic practices in conflict reporting and to bring understanding to the Thai public on the conflict, which could possibly lead to the ultimate goal of conflict resolution in the future.

Pokin recommended that the improvements must come from two sides: firstly, journalists should be trained and educated on peace journalism in order to improve their skills of conflict reporting; and secondly, the Thai media should become more engaged in the southern conflict by sending more reporters to the conflict area so that they can report on other aspects of the southern community and not just the violence.

"The Thai media should introduce peace journalism into their practices as a reporting principle. I joined TJA's Issara News Center project in 2005 and I saw its potential in bringing about good, balanced and fair reporting. The idea of peace journalism should be introduced to media students because now Thailand is facing many national conflicts, and not just the southern insurgency. The teaching of peace journalism will be a good preparation for the young generation of journalists in reporting conflict."

(Kowit, journalist, *The Nation*, interviewed, 1st April 2013)

In addition, Kowit saw that it is better to promote peace journalism to media students at an early stage. He recommended that peace journalism should be taken as one of the media courses at university level in order to prepare the future journalists with good reporting practices. Kowit mentioned that he and his journalist friends only learned about peace journalism after the criticism of the Thai media's reporting of the southern conflict. The southern conflict and the political situation in Thailand over the past 10 years have divided Thai society, and completely changed the way the media report on national conflicts. For that reason, Kowit proposed that it is necessary for future journalists to be well-prepared and well-trained in reporting on conflict and other controversial issues.⁹²

In conclusion, all of the interviewees suggested that the media should continue to develop their role of social responsibility by presenting a greater diversity of information and background details on the conflict to the reader. In this way, the media can create a better understanding of the Thai crisis and lessen public prejudice against minority groups. The media must make a greater effort, they believed, to provide space for all sides involved in the conflict to have their voices heard in order to improve the reporting standards and create a stronger basis for balanced reporting. Peace journalism was mentioned as a good starting point for creating better understanding of how to report a conflict without escalating it, and how to explore the factors of the crisis with a view to improving the prospects of conflict resolution. It was agreed that newspapers should not take sides in the conflict, but rather commit themselves to creating the conditions for all voices to be given a fair hearing.

The interviewees suggested that the news organisations should implement peace journalism into their journalistic practices in order to encourage their journalists to engage in investigative reporting; to raise the awareness of the socially responsible role of the media; to motivate the journalists to understand the history and various aspects the conflict; and to help promote a better understanding in society.

We can now turn to Chapter 8, the conclusions of this study.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

This research originated from my interest in the reporting of news from Thailand's southern conflict, especially with respect to the potential to make recommendations that would help improve the prospect of conflict resolution. For that reason, I believe that the notion of peace journalism, with its stress on the socially responsible role of journalists, can provide the basis for alternative approaches to reporting conflict that will be fairer, more balanced, and sensitive to conflicts. From this point of departure, the research was designed with the intentions to explore how the two English-language newspapers in Thailand – *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* – represented the southern conflict; to investigate their journalistic practices in reporting the conflict; to identify strengths and weaknesses in the news production processes with regard to the significant features of what might be termed 'war journalism' (WJ) in relation to 'peace journalism' (PJ); and to find a way to promote appropriate media practices in order to help enhance journalistic contributions to conflict resolution. To meet these aims and objectives, the research examined the representation of Thailand's southern conflict in the news coverage of these two English-language newspapers over a specific time period and explored the news production process in this setting by conducting interviews with several journalists and editors involved in reporting the southern conflict since it first started.

Comprised of three parts, this final chapter starts by revisiting the research questions and providing answers to them together with discussions on the key findings. The second part acknowledges the limitations of the study, while also highlighting the significance of the study and its implications for future research. The last part offers several recommendations concerning Thai journalism in order to make the most of what I consider to be the value of peace journalism as an alternative to war journalism.

8.1 Research questions revisited

RQ1: How has the coverage in the two English language newspapers in Thailand (Bangkok Post and The Nation) presented the southern conflict?

Based on the findings from the content analysis, both of the newspapers used both war and peace journalism elements in their reporting, albeit with differing degrees of implementation. There are five main points for discussion which I can summarise from my findings.

A) Peace journalism was applied in the conflict coverage of the two English-language newspapers from the first year of the southern conflict.

The study found a surprising number of peace journalism elements in the coverage of both newspapers. This result was unexpected given that the context was on the first year of the southern conflict, and that, at the time, peace journalism had not yet been introduced to the Thai media. Both newspapers shared the same main peace journalism indicators, namely: multiparty orientation (PJ7), focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict (PJ5), and people-oriented (PJ3). This point shows that both newspapers not only looked into the background and information of the conflict, but also included the 'voices' from different sides and the 'voices of the locals' in their coverage right from the beginning of the conflict. While 'high authority' was the category most often referred to as news actors and news sources, the findings reveal that the 'local' category was the second most frequently used in the conflict coverage, which indicates that the 'local' perspective was not neglected in the conflict coverage of both newspapers.

The findings from the second analysis of the four broad WJ and PJ orientations (Galtung 1998) revealed that the truth-oriented frame and people-oriented frame were the main peace journalism frames applied in the coverage of both newspapers. This suggests that the newspapers not only included different voices into their conflict coverage, but also practiced investigative journalism on the incidents. However, even though the peace journalism features and frames found from the study were presented as characteristics of peace journalism, they do not stress the interventionist role of the journalists in seeking peace as the solution to the conflict, which is the ultimate goal of peace journalism. In the second analysis, the study revealed a small number of solution-oriented articles (20 articles from a total of 298). Some of the news headlines can confirm this point, for example, 'Comment: Will our country be the same again?' (*The Nation*, 29 April 2004), and 'Muslims: Revive Chaturon's peace plan' (*Bangkok Post*, 29 April 2004). For that reason, I can conclude that aspects of peace journalism, especially with regard to the involvement of different parties and the focus on causes

and effects, were applied to the writing of the articles by the two newspapers, but the goal of finding a solution to the conflict was still inadequately addressed. This finding is, in fact, a good sign that, within the first year of the southern conflict in 2004, a solution-oriented frame had already been applied in the reporting.

The findings of this research seem to contradict the criticism that the Thai media reported the conflict with a war journalism approach. Based on my findings, the criticism cannot be fully applied to the two English-language newspapers because a high number of peace journalism elements were found in the conflict coverage during the first year of the conflict. This point can be supported by Changkamol's doctoral thesis (2013, p. 5), which argued that English-language newspapers exhibited more signs of 'peace journalism' than the popular and quality Thai-language newspapers, and that the conflict coverage of the English-language newspapers engaged two indicators, reporting the causes and the visible effects, which are not being presented in the Thai newspapers. On this point, it can also be stated that, because *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* are seen as quality newspapers with a high journalistic standard and good journalism practices that adhere to the values of fair, objective and balanced reporting, which is also a basis of peace journalism. As a consequence, the main peace journalism features found in the study also represent the qualities of objectivity in good journalism.

The findings of this study contrast those of previous researches on peace journalism, including the research of Lee and Maslog (2005) and Lee (2010), whose methods I applied by operationalising Galtung's 13 WJ/PJ indicators (1986; 1998) on the conflict coverage. Lee and Maslog concluded that the coverage of the four Asian conflicts is dominated by war journalism. The explanatory factors for the differences in the findings could be: 1) Lee and Maslog used a quantitative approach in the analysis by counting war and peace indicators only, while the analysis of this research also applied the four-broad orientations of war and peace journalism (Galtung 1998) as the second approach, and this second analysis requires a subjective form of analysis by looking into war and peace frames in writing news articles; 2) Lee and Maslog explored the conflict coverage of the four Asian conflicts (India-Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines) and these conflicts had been going on for decades at the time of the study, while this study only explored conflict coverage of Thailand's southern insurgency during its first year of occurrence and only the coverage of the English-language newspapers. For that reason, the length and the intensity of the four Asian conflicts, especially the Kashmir conflict which involved

the two countries (India and Pakistan), are different from the context of this study, which could be a reason why more war journalism features were found from the coverage of these conflicts.

B) 'War journalism' elements were found throughout the conflict coverage of the three violent incidents.

Based on the findings, the reporting of the conflict incidents that caused a high number of deaths and significant damage to the society on many levels included features of war journalism to a large extent. The analysis showed that *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* shared the same three main war journalism indicators in their coverage: focus on the visible effects of the violence (WJ2), elite-oriented (WJ3), and focus on here and now (WJ5). The findings from the analysis of news actors and news sources also revealed that both newspapers gave prominence to 'high authority' as both a news lead and a source of information, which indicated the use of the 'elite-oriented' features of war journalism in the coverage. The second analysis on the four broad war and peace journalism frames confirmed this because the war-oriented frame was the most used frame in *Bangkok Post*, and the second most used frame in *The Nation*.

Both newspapers categorised the southern conflict incidents into the following topics: 'violent incident'; 'law enforcement & follow-up investigation'; 'southern policy & security measures'; 'government's reaction'; 'criticism'; 'international'; 'impact on lives'; 'socio-economic impact'; 'history'; 'religion'; 'aftermath'; 'human rights'; and 'solution'. The news topics identified from the coverage indicate that both newspapers used an event-based style of reporting, which focuses only on the incident at hand, as well as process-based reporting, which requires a look into the background and wider aspects of the conflict when writing the news. Moreover, the southern conflict is a national concern that deals with issues of governance, southern policy, and security measures; thus the reliance on 'elite' or 'high authority' as news actors and news sources is clearly seen from the analysis. It is important to acknowledge that this study covers a period of seven days of coverage for each of the three incidents. As a result, it is possible that the reason for the high number of war journalism features found in this study can be attributed to the newspapers adopting a clearer focus on event-based reporting during the first days of reporting these violent incidents than applying a process-based style of reporting.

In addition, the analysis of the war journalism language-based criteria indicates that features such as demonising language (WJ12) and emotive language (WJ13) were present in the conflict coverage. The study found these features more in the conflict coverage of *The Nation* than in that of *Bangkok Post*. The demonising language identified in the coverage portrayed one group as wicked and threatening through the use of words such as 'brutal' or 'terrorists', while emotive language was used to report the violent incidents in a more dramatic way that can affect the readers' emotional response through the use of words such as 'bloodbath', 'massacre', and tragedy. Due to the violent nature of the three incidents, these features, together with details on death tolls, damage, and official announcements, which are regarded as attributes of war journalism, were found throughout the conflict coverage. This reflects the 'mediation' concept of the media (McQuail 2010) and refers to how the media portray social reality to the public where they cannot directly observe it by themselves. It is the responsibility of the media to report 'what' happened in the conflict because not doing so would be a distortion of the truth.

C) The length and the intensity of the conflict affected the implementation of peace journalism in the conflict coverage.

Continuing on from the previous sub-section, the findings revealed that the specific situation of each of these conflict incidents is one of the factors influencing the way *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* reported the events. To explain, these three incidents differed in their situations and implications to Thai society. As a result, the representation of the incidents and the engagement of peace journalism in the reporting changed accordingly.

Both newspapers shared the same pattern of peace journalism implementation. The findings revealed that the number of peace journalism indicators found was the lowest in the coverage of arsenal raid incident. This was also the incident in which war journalism elements exceeded peace journalism elements in the conflict coverage. The arsenal raid incident was considered the first incident that marked the start of the current southern insurgency, when the Thai state was under attack on a scale that had never happened before. This goes some way to explaining why war journalism features, such as the visible effects of war (WJ2) and elite-oriented (WJ3), were found throughout the coverage of this incident by both newspapers. At the time when the incident took place, the Thai government and the media struggled to find out what was happening and who the attackers behind the incident were.

The interviews suggested that, because the Thai media did not know the full implication of the arsenal raid incident and the Thai government was reluctant to admit that the incident was a part of the southern conflict, most of the media covered the incident as a 'crime' story. The findings show that the coverage relied heavily on the authorities as the main news sources, and the labels used to describe the actors were mostly action-based terms.

The Kruese Mosque incident and the Takbai demonstration were considered to be the most shocking incidents of the southern insurgency. They were also the incidents that involved the most excessive use of force by the Thai government, which resulted in heavy damage to lives and society, and wide criticism of the government on human rights issues. Information gained from the journalists and editors interviewed in this study suggested that these two incidents changed the way both newspapers reported the southern conflict; both newspapers started to question the government's administration and to seek truth and sources from somewhere else. For that reason, the study found that the number of peace journalism indicators increased substantially in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, while the gap between war and peace journalism elements found in both newspapers was at its widest in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident, suggesting that it was during the reporting of this incident that both newspapers applied a peace journalism approach in the highest degree.

The religious implication of the Kruese Mosque incident was also reflected in the labels used to describe the actors. It was also during the reporting of this incident when 'religious' qualifiers such as 'Muslims' or 'Islamic' were used to the highest degree, while the actors were referred to mostly with 'insurgent-related' terms. It was also in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident that the two English-language newspapers started to include all sides involved in the conflict, especially the sides that criticised the southern administration of the Thai government such as the 'opposition', 'organisation' and 'foreign source' categories, as well as the sides considered as having expertise on the southern conflict including cultural and religious issues, such as the 'religious group' and 'academics' categories. The violent situations of the Kruese Mosque and Takbai demonstration incidents opened up opportunities for all of the sides involved in the conflict to assert their voices on the conflict scene.

Based on these findings, I can conclude that the intensity and length of the conflict affected the implementation of peace journalism practices by the two newspapers, including the use of news sources, news actors and labels. The situation of these incidents, especially the Kruese Mosque and Takbai demonstration incidents, brought about a change in the reporting styles of both newspapers because they not only confirmed to the Thai public that the southern violence had returned, but they also showed the flaws in the government's southern administration. Because of this, both newspapers began to implement an investigative style of reporting. The findings of this study confirm this point as the peace features found in the conflict coverage increased gradually. Nevertheless, it is necessary for me to acknowledge here that this study only explored the coverage of the southern conflict over a specific period of time, and the findings can, therefore, only be applied under this context.

D) 'High authority' was the main news actor and news source but the 'voices' of the voiceless were included in the conflict coverage to a large degree.

The results from the analysis of news actors and news sources help to understand the dynamics of the southern conflict by showing the degree of prominence given to the sides involved in the conflict, and their contribution of information to the conflict coverage. Apart from the 'high authority' and 'local' categories, which were found to be the first and second most frequently used news actors and sources respectively, other categories identified in the reporting include 'opposition', 'official source', 'local authority', 'foreign source', 'academic', 'organisation' and 'religious group'.

In the analysis, I looked at the sources of the news (by name), and the number of times (frequency) that the sources in the same category were mentioned. The study revealed that the 'high authority' category was presented as the most credible news source and news actor in the coverage of the three incidents by both newspapers. This also confirms the notion of 'news value' of Galtung and Ruge (1965), which stated that one of the contributing factors to newsworthiness is when the elite and the powerful are mentioned. Also, because no sides claimed to be responsible for the violent incidents when it first started, the media had to rely on 'high authority' as a source of information. However, it is surprising to see that the 'local' category was given the second highest prominence, which suggests that at least some degree of peace journalism, with its focus on people, was put into practice by both newspapers right from the first year of their reporting on the southern conflict. The study found that both newspapers

used the 'local' category accounted for the highest number of sources, but 'high authority' was the source that was mentioned most frequently in the news. This can be related to Becker's (1967) notion of 'hierarchy of credibility', which explains that the people who are at the top of a social or institutional hierarchy are assumed to have greater credibility and access to correct information than those among the bottom ranks. The main people from the 'high authority' group were the Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Defence Minister and the Army Commander. The 'local' category refers to the people who were directly affected by the violent incidents and the people who live in the area where the violent incidents took place.

Nevertheless, the study on the conflict coverage of the Thai-language newspapers by Changkamol (2013) revealed different results, concluding that the voices of the voiceless were not considered as news source in the Thai newspapers. This important point cannot be applied to the English-language newspapers. On the contrary, both newspapers under this study applied peace journalism's people-oriented element in their conflict coverage. The use of the 'local' category as news actors and sources gradually increased in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident and the later Takbai demonstration incident, which were the two incidents that most directly affected people's lives. Moreover, the study found that all of the categories that criticised the Thai government, such as 'opposition', 'foreign source' and 'organisation', in addition to sources that have expertise on the southern conflict, such as 'academics', were engaged in the conflict coverage by both newspapers, which shows how both newspapers attributed news space to other sides involved in or affected by the conflict. The analysis of the distribution of news sources and news actors confirmed the findings from the content analysis that 'multiparty-orientation' (PJ7) and 'people-oriented' (PJ3) features were the main peace journalism features applied by both newspapers.

E) The labels used in *Bangkok Post* are more neutral than labels used in *The Nation*.

Based on the findings, the study found that both newspapers mostly focused on the violent nature of the conflict when describing the southern conflict phenomenon, using labels such as 'violence in the South' and 'southern violence'. In the analysis of the labels of the three incidents, the study found that both newspapers described the incidents as 'attacks' on the Thai state, and 'clashes' between two sides. Both newspapers shared the same main labels in describing the three incidents, but *The Nation* used a wider

range of labels and qualifiers than *Bangkok Post*, while *Bangkok Post* was more consistent in its choice of labels. It was also observed that the labels used by *The Nation* emphasised the misuse of power by the authorities and the seriousness of the situation through the use of labels such as 'the killings' or 'the massacre', which signified the attempt of *The Nation* to challenge the authorities and call for justice for the victims. On the other hand, *Bangkok Post* tended to use words with more neutral meaning; emotive labels were found in the *Bangkok Post* too, but at a lower rate of occurrence.

The findings from the analysis of labels used to describe the actors indicate that both newspapers mainly described the actors with two types of labels: action-based and insurgent-related terms. Action-based terms describe the actors through their actions such as 'attackers', 'raider' and 'protesters'. Insurgent-related terms describe the actors with a sense of military action and insurgency, such as 'militants', 'insurgents' and 'separatists'. Compared to other types of labels, *The Nation* used insurgent-related terms in the highest degree, while *Bangkok Post* described the actors with both terms. The study found six types of qualifiers attached to the main labels: 'age', 'action', 'location', 'religion', 'neutral' and 'negative'. The most used qualifiers were 'religion' qualifiers, such as 'Muslims' and 'Islamic', which were found in *The Nation* twice as often as in the coverage of *Bangkok Post*. These qualifiers can create the sense of 'us and them' between the readers and the southern locals because the stress on the difference, especially the religious aspect of the actors, can affect the negative feeling from both sides.

The answers from the semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors can explain the choice of labels by both newspapers. *Bangkok Post* depended highly on official sources, and thus the labels used to describe the incidents and actors were the same as the labels used in the official documents. On the other hand, *The Nation* is an umbrella organisation operated with a central-pool system, meaning that one news piece can be edited by different media under the same organisation before sending it back to the pool system. Because of this editing system, various types of labels and qualifiers were found from the conflict coverage. In my observation, the language used in *The Nation* was less consistent and more emotive than the language in *Bangkok Post*. This point leads us back to the findings from the analysis of WJ/PJ indicators whereby, compared to the coverage of *Bangkok Post*, more war journalism language-based indicators were found in *The Nation*. The findings from the analysis of labels proved

that despite the higher number of peace journalism news stories in *The Nation*, one of the factors that limited the application of peace journalism to its full extent was its use of language items.

RQ2: To what extent do the two newspapers follow war oriented and/or peace oriented approaches in covering the southern conflict?

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that both newspapers engaged both war and peace journalism approaches in their reporting of the southern conflict but the extent of their engagement is varied. In comparison to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* engaged more peace journalism approaches in its conflict coverage.

In *The Nation's* coverage of all three incidents, the number of PJ indicators found was higher than the number of WJ indicators, and in the second analysis, the number of peace-oriented articles was also higher than the number of war-oriented reports. The main PJ features are multiparty orientation (PJ7), focus on the causes and consequences of the conflict (PJ5), and people-oriented (PJ3). The frames most frequently applied in *The Nation's* coverage were people-oriented, war-oriented and truth-oriented. Moreover, the findings from the analysis of news actors and news sources can be used to reaffirm this point. The highest number of 'local' news actors and news source was found in *The Nation's* coverage, even though the newspaper gave the most prominence (frequency of occurrence) to 'high authority'. The prominence of the 'local' category as news actors and news sources came second to 'high authority', which suggests that apart from people in positions of authority, *The Nation* gave a high degree of prominence to people in the 'local' category. However, *The Nation* fell short in the analysis of labels used in describing the southern conflict incidents and actors. Compared to *Bangkok Post*, it used more emotive and sensational language. This study found a high number of 'insurgent-related' terms and 'religion' qualifiers, which stress the difference between 'us' and 'them'.

As for *Bangkok Post*, the findings suggest that it engaged both war and peace approaches in its reporting. However, when compared to *The Nation*, *Bangkok Post* engaged fewer peace journalism elements in its conflict coverage. The main peace journalism indicators found in *Bangkok Post* were multiple orientation (PJ7) and people-oriented (PJ3). Other than this, the representation of the conflict was engaged very much within a war journalism approach because the highest number of indicators

found were elite-oriented (WJ3) and the focus on the visible effects of war (WJ2), which demonstrated the high dependence on people in positions of authority as main actors and sources as well as the focus on the visible damage to lives and property aspect of the conflict. In the second analysis, articles written under a war-oriented frame were found in the highest numbers, followed by those with people-oriented and truth-oriented frames. However, this does not mean that *Bangkok Post's* representation of the conflict was largely governed by a WJ frame. The study demonstrated an increase in the implementation of peace journalism elements during the coverage of the three incidents. Unlike *The Nation*, the use of WJ indicators and frames was clearly seen in *Bangkok Post*. The findings from the analysis of news actors and sources can be used to support this point since 'high authority' was found in the highest number in the coverage, followed by 'official', which indicates that the most prominence was given to people in positions of authority. Lastly, in the analysis of labels, *Bangkok Post's* labels were more in neutral compared to those of *The Nation*. The reason could be that *Bangkok Post* depended on official sources, so the journalists were more likely to follow the labels used by the authorities.

Both newspapers applied both war and peace journalism features into their representation of the conflict but, overall, *The Nation* applied peace journalism to a larger extent than *Bangkok Post*. More features of peace journalism can be seen from *The Nation's* coverage, while *Bangkok Post's* implementation of peace journalism was clearly seen in its attempt to engage different voices, including the voices from the 'local' category in the conflict coverage. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that the solution-oriented element, which is the desired result of peace journalism, was not seen in any degree of significance (in my readings, *The Nation* had more solution-oriented articles than *Bangkok Post*). This result can be used to answer RQ2 that peace journalism was implemented in both newspapers to the extent that 'the voices of the voiceless' and 'investigative reporting' were included, but the sacred goal of the resolution of the conflict, at this stage, was not clearly seen.

Additionally, the findings prove that my prior assumption was wrong. Before conducting the study, I assumed that the conflict coverage would be highly war-oriented and more war journalism elements would be found. This assumption was influenced by two main factors: firstly, the study was conducted on the southern conflict coverage of the three major violent incidents; and secondly, peace journalism

practices had not yet been introduced to the Thai media organisations at the time. It is true that the study found a high number of war journalism elements in both newspapers, but the number of peace journalism elements identified in the study was surprisingly high, especially the multiparty orientation element (PJ7) and the focus on the causes and consequences element (PJ5). This was particularly surprising given that the study was based on conflict coverage from the first year of the insurgency. Taking these two main elements into consideration leads to the finding that both English-language newspapers represented the southern conflict during its first year in a 'fair' manner; that is, all voices were included and the causes and consequences were investigated.

However, these elements can also be said to be a part of 'good journalism', which promotes truth, fairness, independence and social responsibility to the public. However, the solution-oriented element, which is the ultimate goal of peace journalism, was found in only a small degree in the coverage. Therefore, it is my argument that despite their different style and format of reporting, the coverage in the two English-language newspapers analysed in this study exhibit elements of 'good and quality' journalism, which are also components of peace journalism practices. In order to fully implement peace journalism, the coverage needs to be developed further to include more solution-orientation elements in their reporting.

RQ3: What are the journalists' and editors' perceptions of the factors influencing the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict coverage?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to answer RQ3. The findings suggest that different factors influenced the strengths and weakness of the southern conflict coverage. Factors contributing to weak coverage include safety concerns, inaccurate information and interference from the Bangkok Headquarters, while the reporting was strengthened by factors such as support from the organisation and the reporters' level of expertise and experience in covering the southern conflict.

For the weaknesses in the production of news articles in this context, safety concerns are considered an important concern of journalists who report violent incidents from the field. The interviews also suggested that another problem in covering the southern conflict was that the journalists had insufficient continuity in their reporting to develop necessary expertise or specialisms. Only a few

journalists have reported on the conflict since it began because many of the journalists were assigned to cover other events and news on certain occasions, which means that the responsibility for covering the conflict fell on other journalists who sometimes had no background in reporting the conflict. Most journalists do not want to go to the conflict area because their lives could be placed at risk. Therefore, most of the time, they rely on information from local stringers and official sources.

This leads to the second factor that contributes to the weakness in the coverage: inaccurate information. Information from local stringers cannot always be trusted, and journalists have to waste time double-checking information before writing the articles. Sometimes journalists also have to check whether a violent incident is just a normal crime story or a part of the southern conflict. However, journalists cannot rely only on information from 'official' or 'high authority' because this will be one-sided and biased, and because authorities sometimes conceal information about the incidents. For that reason, information gained from either stringers or official sources can prove to be inaccurate, and this is one of the weaknesses in the production of southern conflict news.

The third factor is the interference from the Bangkok Headquarters. As discussed earlier in Chapter 7, the final stage of news production happens in daily editorial meetings when daily editors make a final decision by selecting which issues to highlight and performing the final edit before sending the copy to the printing house. The final framing process occurs at this stage; news articles are presented according to how the editors responsible for making these decisions perceive them. Consequently, Bangkok editors' perception of the southern conflict and the degree of significance they attach to individual events influence the daily production of the conflict coverage. It is also worth mentioning that journalists and editors sometimes represent violent incidents from the southern conflict as normal 'crime' stories'.

On the other hand, major factors influencing the strengths of the conflict coverage were the support received from the news organisations and the level of expertise and experience of the journalists who cover the conflict. News organisations and their policies have a great influence on the work of their journalists. Firstly, the organisations will prioritise whether their journalists have a firm knowledge and background of the conflict. These findings suggest that a firm knowledge is crucial because the

journalists with knowledge of the conflict will know what to report and what not to report. They are able to give the readers the necessary information and background on the conflict. Secondly, the organisations can support or fund the training of journalists in covering the southern conflict in order to reduce the risk of exacerbating matters, and help journalists improve their conflict reporting skills. Since the southern conflict concerns sensitive religious and cultural issues, careful reporting is required. It is, therefore, important for news organisations to educate their journalists on peace-oriented reporting and investigative journalism.

Another factor influencing the strength of the reporting is the level of expertise and experience of the journalists covering the southern conflict. Because of the complicated nature of the conflict and the sensitivity of its issues, journalists who cover the conflict are required to have a firm knowledge of the background of the conflict. This includes skill in reporting subtle complexities in a responsible manner. Most of the 'experienced' journalists are those who stayed on to report on the conflict since the first year of the insurgency, which has enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the conflict and continuously improve their skills of conflict reporting over time. These journalists have first-hand experience of living in the conflict zone, so they are more sensitive to the conflict and the local people, and they have experienced more than just the main issues of the conflict, such as religious, cultural, economic and social problems. It is these journalists who can portray the stories from the South to the Thai public in a responsible manner. In my view, the conflict coverage can be improved and strengthened if journalists report on other issues from the area so that more aspects of the wider picture will also be publicised. Therefore, the level of expertise and experience of the journalists is important and can benefit and improve the conflict coverage.

RQ4: What can be an alternative way of covering the conflict in this specific context?

The interview data confirmed that peace journalism is not a new idea for the Thai media (from the establishment of the Issara News Center in 2005). It became apparent in the interviews that the journalists and editors saw the positive aspects of peace journalism and were thus willing to consider how best to incorporate relevant aspects of the peace journalism approach into Thai journalistic practices. Most of the recommendations from the interviews are different aspects and features of peace journalism. In this sense, the suggestions to improve the quality of the reporting of the southern conflict

involve the implementation of peace journalism into the conflict coverage, together with support from media people and media organisations at different levels. The findings reveal that the interviewees saw the flaws of the Thai media in reporting the conflict, and they accordingly suggested alternative ways to improve the conflict coverage.

First of all, at the individual level, journalists who cover the southern conflict news should have a firm knowledge of the southern conflict and of conflict reporting, especially on how to report a conflict fairly without escalating the violence. Efforts need to be made to continue developing journalism's social responsibility role, including providing the public with correct information and the background of the conflict in order to create a better understanding, and to lessen prejudice in Thai society regarding the issues at stake. Journalists need to be aware that they should not cover the southern conflict news in the same way as when reporting other 'crime' news because of the sensitivity of the religious and cultural issues. It is also worth mentioning that the findings from the content analysis suggest that 'multiparty-orientation' (PJ7) and 'people-oriented' (PJ3) were two of the main features of peace journalism found in this study, which indicates that some aspects of PJ were successfully applied in the conflict coverage. Therefore, journalists should be encouraged to include some other aspects of PJ into their conflict coverage in order to improve its quality. Journalists should be aware that they can be a part of this peace process by performing a pro-active role in seeking solutions to the conflict, which is regarded as the ultimate goal of peace journalism.

Secondly, Thai news editors need to be aware of the seriousness of the southern conflict and the sensitivity of the issues involved. The interviewees suggested that one of the limitations in reporting on the southern conflict is the interference from the Bangkok Headquarters. In the news production process, for example, the selection of stories, the writing of headlines, and the allocation of news space all happen during the editorial meetings in Bangkok. As a result, the draft reports provided by the journalists could be highlighted or ignored at this stage. In order to improve the conflict coverage, the Bangkok-based editors' and sub-editors' awareness of the conflict should be improved. It is important that they have a clear understanding of the southern conflict's significance to Thai society so as to lessen their negative perceptions. The news managers can do their part by encouraging the journalists

to write articles on social and cultural issues, and by allocating more news space to the southern conflict news.

Furthermore, media organisations should provide more funding for skills training, and for sending journalists to the conflict zone. According to the journalists and editors interviewed in this study, the conflict reporting skills and level of experience of the journalists who cover the southern conflict is important, as is their knowledge of the background of the southern conflict. Reporters need to be trained not only in how to report violence in a sensitive manner — the do's and don'ts of peace journalism — but also in how to conduct themselves in conflict zones so as to reduce the risks to their own personal safety. Reporting from the field will help them understand the conflict better, and they would be able to provide insights into the lives of the local Muslim community, religious and cultural aspects, economic aspects and other social problems. In this sense, journalists who have first-hand experience of conflict zones will become more sensitive and thus better able to portray these issues to the Thai public.

8.2 Significance of the study

8.2.1 Limitations of the study

As mentioned in Chapter 5 (5.4), this study has several limitations in its methodology and empirical analysis. Although I believe the findings have demonstrated that the chosen methods were sufficient to address the research questions in meaningful ways, it is, nevertheless, necessary to discuss the limitations of the research.

With regard to the limitations in the methodology, while the with qualitative and quantitative approaches employed in the content analysis may have delivered result that were rich and diverse, there is no guarantee that other researchers would achieve the same results due to the subjective form of analysis. For the limitations in the scope and data, this research is a micro study that explored the southern conflict coverage of the two English-language newspapers in Thailand over a specific period. Consequently, the results can only be applied under the specific context of this study, and not to the larger context of the Thai media. The findings reveal evidence of peace journalism elements in both of the English-language newspapers under scrutiny; however, the findings could have been different if,

for example, more newspapers had been studied, the timeline had been extended, or other types of data (e.g., photos, charts) had been included in the analysis.

Lastly, semi-structured interviews also have certain limitations. As I mentioned in Chapter 5 (5.4), the flexibility of the method can lessen the reliability of the data; the information I gained depends on the honesty of the interviewees; and the analysis depends on the experience and skills of me as a researcher. It is important to acknowledge that my background as a researcher from Bangkok did not affect the results of the study, and it is my best intention to remain as neutral as possible during the research process. The limited number of journalists interviewed must also be acknowledged. This study involved seven interviewed subjects with the aim of seeking an explanation for how and why the two English-language newspapers reported on the three major incidents in 2004 as part of their conflict coverage. The subjects interviewed in this study are experienced journalists and editors who had been reporting on the conflict since it first started in 2004; therefore, it is my stance that the information I gained from the interviews is sufficient to answer the research questions and to explain the results from the content analysis.

8.2.2 Implications of the study for future research

It is my hope that my research can serve as a foundation for future studies in the areas of reporting on Thailand's southern conflict and of peace journalism. Future studies may consider the use of different methods, such as Fairclough (1995)'s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to explore individual news texts in greater linguistic detail. A more traditional content analysis could also be used, particularly for a longitudinal study involving a larger number of news stories. Future studies may also consider applying the two methods used in this research with different types of data or in different conflict settings.

The limitations discussed earlier can be taken as a basis for developing an alternative approach to open up new lines of enquiry. For instance, the scope and timeline of my research study can be extended by either looking at different events and times, or at different types of data, such as photos or editorial pieces. In order to examine different journalistic practices, for example, new studies might consider Thai-language newspapers, vernacular-language newspapers, or reports from foreign news agencies.

Particular attention may be directed towards considering, amongst other issues, whether such news organisations afford more opportunities to develop new, alternative types of reporting with the potential to contribute more effectively to conflict reconciliation than the two newspapers examined in this study. These are only some of the possible areas for future studies in peace journalism and conflict reporting.

8.2.3 Contribution of the study

This study endeavoured to contribute to the existing knowledge in media research on two levels. Firstly, it aimed to provide insights into the application of peace journalism in the Thai context. Peace journalism is an approach developed in the Western world and this research has considered its application in the context of the news reporting of Thailand's southern conflict. The data were drawn from the Thai media, which allowed the investigation of peace journalism and its application from a non-Western perspective. The social, cultural and media institutions in Thailand are distinct from those in other parts of the world. Thus, it can be said that this study provides new knowledge and a wider understanding of peace journalism in a part of the world where the nature of the conflict is different and the media institutions operate differently. The findings indicate the limitations of peace journalism practices in this context, which will lead to my proposal of specific recommendations in the next section.

In addition, unlike other studies on peace journalism that applied Galtung's (1986; 1998) 13 WJ/PJ indicators as a quantitative mode of analysis, such as in the research of Lee and Maslog (2005) and (Lee 2010), this study also applied Galtung's four broad orientations of war and peace journalism (1998) as a second mode of analysis for looking into the war and peace frames used in news reports, and also included an analysis of the news actors, news sources, and labels on the incidents and actors. The categorisation of the news articles into war, peace and balanced news stories based only on the frequency of war and peace features may not be sufficient. As framing theory forms the foundation of peace journalism (Lee and Maslog 2005; McMahon and Chow-White 2011; Fong 2009; Ross 2007), I see the importance of looking into the frames when writing news articles and so this study applied the four broad war and peace frames to add qualitative elements to it, which can also help with cross-

checking and validating the data. It can be stated that I applied both quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis into the study of peace journalism in the context of this study.

Secondly, this study contributes an insight into an often-overlooked aspect of the Thai media – that is, English-language newspapers. As previously mentioned, most studies on the Thai media and the reporting of the southern conflict have focused on the Thai-language media; therefore, this study can fill this gap. The emphasis here was to examine how the two main English-language newspapers in Thailand have reported Thailand's southern conflict, and to understand the reasons behind their editorial choices and the news production processes. Despite the amount of war journalism elements found in the two newspapers under scrutiny in the study, the number of peace journalism elements was surprisingly higher than expected. This finding is in contrast to the previous researches on Thai-language newspapers (Changkamol 2013; Kularb 2013), which found a high number of war journalism features in the conflict reporting.

The findings indicate that both English-language newspapers employed certain aspects of peace journalism and have represented the southern conflict in a more balanced manner than is outwardly apparent. The study's findings add to the academic knowledge on the problems associated with the reporting on this specific conflict; that is, despite the criticism of the Thai media and the reporting of the southern conflict, the English-language newspapers – as part of the Thai media – were proven to have an inclination towards peace journalism approaches to reporting. The reasons for this are that both English-language newspapers practice 'objective' journalism to international standards (McCargo 2000), that they both encourage the engagement of all sides in the coverage, and that they are committed to producing quality news that includes investigate journalism. It is also hoped that other media practitioners and policy-makers use the journalistic practices of the two newspapers under scrutiny as a starting point to find ways of incorporating more peace journalism practices into the wider Thai media.

8.3 Recommendations

With the aim of bringing an end to Thailand's southern conflict, peace talks have been taking place since 2013. Even though the process was disrupted by the change of government in 2014, the efforts

from all sides to end the 10-year-long conflict have given hope to all Thais that one day the southern region could return to peace. The peace process requires support from various groups in Thai society, namely the Thai government, official local agencies, local authorities, academics, religious groups, government and non-government organisations, the media agencies, and especially the Thai public. At the media level, peace journalism is seen as one of the main factors that can help promote this peace process, or at least, foster the idea of educating the public on the conflict and other social and cultural issues. In this way, the Thai media could help in creating better understanding in Thai society, which can further lead to public support for peace. The findings of the research highlight a range of possibilities and problems in reporting the southern conflict and the implementation of peace journalism into Thai media practices. Recommendations can be made from these findings, which will be presented at four levels: the Thai government, media organisations, journalists and the public.

The Thai government can help support media institutions in promoting the notion of 'peace' journalism, and in encouraging the media to improve their conflict coverage in a way that can help to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict, rather than exacerbating the situation. The Thai media play an important role, not only in providing the Thai public with information on the southern conflict, but also in influencing public opinion to either support or oppose the government's southern policy. For that reason, in this peace process, the government needs the media, as well as other agencies in society, to help contribute to bringing about a resolution to the conflict. The interviews undertaken for this study suggested that non-governmental organisations, such as the *Issara News Center* (INC) or the Thai Journalists Association (TJA), do not have sufficient funding or support from the government and so are unable to implement peace journalism practices to their full extent. Therefore, it is important that the government see the importance of these media agencies and support them in promoting peace journalism so that the quality of the Thai media in general and the conflict coverage in particular can be improved.

At the media level, the findings suggest the need for media organisations to enhance the sense of social responsibility in their journalistic practices, for example, by encouraging their journalists to provide facts from all sides of the conflict, and not just from those in positions of authority; or by providing background on the conflict so that the public can have a better understanding of its structural causes

and how they might be addressed. This will lead to fairer and more balanced news coverage. News organisations can enhance their social responsibility by improving the quality of their reporting in accordance with the public interest. The interviews suggested that journalists who have first-hand experience are more sensitive to the conflict and to the locals; therefore, support and funding from the organisations to send their reporters to the conflict zone can also help in creating more valuable human resources. Media organisations can also encourage their journalists by giving more space in their newspapers to the social and cultural aspects of the conflict so that journalists can provide alternative types of information with the aim of widening the perspectives of their readers.

For the journalists, they should be aware that the Thai public still lacks adequate knowledge about the complicated background and history of the southern conflict, and so it is their responsibility to give a fair, balanced and accurate view of the conflict. Since the public gains much of its knowledge and information from the media, the way that journalists report issues can influence the public's perspectives about the crisis and how it may be resolved. The interviews from this research suggest that the way in which the journalists write their reports is entirely dependent on the individual journalists in terms of their personal knowledge of the issues and their skills in conflict reporting. While journalists may have different personal perspectives on the issues of the conflict, they have to be careful how they report them because their coverage may affect the locals and the perception of the general Thai public. Because the southern conflict involves sensitivity on historical, religious and cultural issues, it is necessary for the journalists who cover the conflict to have a firm knowledge and understanding of the background of the conflict, and on how to report the conflict without worsening the situation. The Thai media were criticised before as one of the factors worsening the situation. The idea of peace journalism is helpful in this regard, offering as it does a basis for reconsidering traditional practice in order to deliver balanced and fair reporting, with the ultimate goal of offering a solution to the conflict. In this sense, journalists not only act as a medium, but can also act as one of the factors in the peace process.

The public can help media organisations maintain standards and credibility in their journalistic practices by voicing their concerns when they see a biased report or articles that carry inaccurate information. In addition, the advancement of media technology and social networks these days has opened up ways for the public to become part of citizen journalism by reporting on events and opening

up public comments on social issues. In the same way as the media, the public should be aware of the effects of the information they share on social media. The use of social media and the information these channels provide have raised ethical issues that are much-debated topics for public discussions these days, ironically, often on the social media that have become so pervasive in modern society. On the other hand, the public also have the power to perform the role of monitoring the media and demanding that the media perform their duties responsibly and in a way that serves the public interest. The public can help monitor the work of the media by revealing any improper conduct if found, and supporting those news organisations that are committed to a high standard of social responsibility and morality in their profession.

There is clear evidence to suggest that peace journalism can be implemented into Thai media practices. The effort to engage with its tenets has been received positively, as shown by this study. The journalists and editors who participated in the interviews expressed strong support for the idea. However, this does not mean that it will not be a formidable challenge to implement alternative, people-centred forms of reporting. As the findings indicate, peace journalism has been implemented in Thai journalistic practices since the first year of the southern conflict, but the goal of solution-orientation is yet to be achieved. As we have seen, there are several structural and operational limitations that stop Thai journalistic institutions from embracing peace journalism in a more wholesome manner, and it is important that the government, media organisations, journalists and the public work together to overcome these and promote meaningful and viable peace practi

Endnotes

¹ Lertratanawisute, p. (2005) in Siriyuvasak, U. (2005). *Silencing the Media: Rights and Freedom of Expression Under Political Corporate Seized*. pp. 202-209.

² Al-Hakim, A. 2013. An Open Letter to Thai Media [*Surat terbuka kepada media Thai*] Translated by Al-Hakim, A., *Deep South Watch* [online], 4 November 2013. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/4913> [Accessed 18 November 2014].

³ The key newspapers to the INC were: *Post Today*, *Bangkok Post* and *Krungthep Turakij*. Others were: *Maticchon*, *Prachachart Turakij*, *Naew Na*, *Manager*, *The Nation* and *Kom Chad Luek*. *Thairath* and *Daily News*, the most popular newspapers among the Thais, were not engaged in the project.

⁴ Prado, M., 2010. Introduction to English Language Newspapers, *Thailand guru* [online]. Available from: <http://www.thailandguru.com/newspapers-bangkok-post-the-nation-thailand.html> [Accessed 26 November 2011].

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ However, some historians disagree that Siam had lost its own territories, as Patani was a vassal state and not owned by Siam.

⁷ Aphornsuvan (2007, p.33) explained that *masjid* is a centre of rule and administration as well as a place for religious practices and community halls. The *pondok* is a learning center for the community. After administrative centralisation, the old *masjid* was replaced by the provincial hall, as a sign of the separation between religion and politics.

⁸ *Monthon* were the administrative subdivisions of Thailand and were created as a part of the local government (*Thesaphibarn*). Each *Monthon* was governed by a royal commissioner. The system was adopted by the 1897 Local Administration Act and was abolished with the 1933 Provincial Administration Act (Rajanubhab 2002).

⁹ According to Aphornsuvan (2007), at the prospect of war, the Thai government was forced to choose sides; in order to be recognized as civilized and modern by powerful nations, the country had to pursue a national cultural policy. The most sensitive of all was the 'State Decrees' or *ratthaniyom*, which changed the name of the country from Siam to Thailand and generally promoted the idea of 'Thainess' and Thai Nationalism'.

¹⁰ Examples included the replacement of *Sharia* Law with Thai law, the banning of traditional Muslim clothing, attempts to establish the Buddhist faith, and the implementation of the Thai educational system (Forbes 1982; Scupin 1998; Croissant 2007). The forced assimilation policy assaulted the Malay Muslim identity in every aspects of life (Croissant 2007, p.2). However, it ended after Phibun; subsequent governments were more sympathetic to Muslim sentiments (Forbes 1982, p. 1059).

¹¹ Scupin (1998) explained that *Chularatchamontri* is a person who acts on behalf of the King with regard to Muslim concerns. The position was first established by Royal decree during the Ayuddhya period: in order to provide a personal consultant to the King on Islamic affairs in the Kingdom. Although it represented the link between Muslim communities throughout the land and the Thai state,

it still lacked the ability to serve Muslim social or political interests. The responsibilities of the *Chularatchamontri* are “to issue *fatwa*(religious rulings), regulate the administration of the mosques, distribute subsidies for the mosques, support Islamic publications, organize the Islamic festivals, coordinate the *hajj*, oversee the certification of *halal* in the manufacturing and production of foods and other consumer goods for Muslims, and other religious activities” (p.235).

¹² A “seven point demand” amounted to the first time that the Muslim minority had asked for greater political autonomy from the Thai state: with one of the demands calling for self-government or the decentralisation of the Bangkok administration (Aphornsuvan 2008, p.111).

¹³ According to Cline (2007), the first such organization was the National Patani Liberation Front (BNPP), formed in 1959. The second group was the National Revolutionary Front (BRN), formed in the early 1960s. The BRN stressed political organization and had a key issue that it maintained contact with Communist parties in the area. The most significant of these groups was the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO), which enjoyed strong foreign contacts with much of its leadership based in Mecca. The group has received considerable financial support from Arab countries.

¹⁴ Aphornsuvan (2007), however, regarded the history of Muslim separatism in Thailand as a scapegoat which has helped facilitate the myth of the integrity of Thailand as a nation state.

¹⁵ At least three types of Muslim communities can be found in Thailand. Malay Muslims living in the southern border provinces have a strong Malay identity. Their integration has been a crucial issue in the Thai government's policy toward religious minorities. The Thai-speaking Muslims in Satun, in contrast, seem to be integrated smoothly into Thai society because they have proficiency in Thai. Muslims in the last group are found among the Buddhist majority in and around the Bangkok metropolitan area, where they are tightly integrated and more or less adapted to Buddhist social customs (Ishii 1994, p. 460).

¹⁶ For example, freedom to practice Islam, political representation and governance of domestic relations under Sharia or Islamic law (Albritton 2010).

¹⁷ Haji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir was a leader of the Malay Muslim movement separatism at the time of the rise of Malay nationalism. He was a symbol of the southern Malay struggle. He was among the modern generation of Patani intellectuals, studied in Mecca and returned to open religious schools in the south and break the old rules of the former generation of Muslim leaders. Haji set up a ‘Patani People’s Movement’, which brought an emergence of Malay Muslim self-awareness and identity under Islamic rules. Haji believed that the political intrusion of the Thai state into legal and religious matters since the reign of King Rama V corrupted the purity of Islam. He was famous for issuing the ‘seven demands’: which called for power to be devolved to the Malay Muslims in the region. He was arrested in 1948 and murdered in 1954, after being released (Aphornsuvan 2007, 2008; Funston 2008).

¹⁸ The Dusun Ngor rebellion in 26-28 April 1948 lasted for two days and involved around 1,000 men in an open battle. The clash caused the deaths of at least 400 Malay Muslims and 30 policemen. It also resulted in the release on bail of Haji Sulong. According to Aphornsuvan (2008), the Thai authorities viewed the events as a ‘rebellion’; however, Malay Muslims referred to it as ‘*perang*’ or ‘*kebangkitan*’: meaning war.

¹⁹ The Civilian-Police-Military Command 43 (CPM 43) was based in Yala in order to reduce the military's power and give the civilian and police a wider security role. CPM 43 was a part of the Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC). The Southern Border Province Administration Centre (SBPAC) was created as a part of a Centre for Coordination of Southern Affairs in Yala, but increased its role and power over time. It used to be under the Fourth Army Commander; then the Ministry of the Interior, headed by the deputy permanent secretary. The SBPAC acted as a medium between the Malay Muslims and the government. It set up institutionalised consultation with local Muslims, organised seminars and provided new administrators in the region.

²⁰ Jitpiromsri and McCargo (2010 p.180) argued that it is true that some violent incidents in the region can be explained as ordinary crime; but the way in which the government denied the reality of the insurgency is entirely pointless. The attackers lack a united sense of their objectives: which range from a separate Patani state, to some form of autonomy, or simply a desire to lash out at Thai rule. In this way, the political offensive from the state could undermine the will of the militants to continue their struggle.

²¹ The Nation, 2005. Takbai and Kruese official report, *The Nation* [online]. Available from: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/specials/takbai/p2.htm> [Accessed 6 December 2013].

²² *Berjihad di Pattani* (The struggle for Patani) was described as a distorted version of the Koran and false interpretation of orthodox Islam: prescribing a programme of radical insurgency as a religious duty for youth. The document was written in 2002 in Yawi script. The authors of the leaflet announced jihad against the Thai state by urging Muslims to take up armed struggle and fight for separatism. It was taken as the only authentic, detailed proof of the radical Muslim militant movement in the southern conflict (Sagunnasil 2006). However, Islamic leaders in southern Thailand firmly rejected radical Islam (Albritton 2010). Cline (2007, p. 280) highlighted that "The document also directs that 'hypocritical' Muslims should be attacked along with Thai security forces. Significantly, it does not mention global sufferings of the Muslim community (the *umma*), or the creation of a regional caliphate; instead, it focuses solely on local issues, albeit in more intensified religious terms."

²³ Aphornsuvan (2008) noted that Kruese resulted in a revival of the 56-years-old Dusun ngor uprising among the public. The date, their weapon of choice (primarily knives and machetes), and their willingness to use their weapons against guns showed that they were willing to die fighting as martyrs (Satha-Anand 2006). The attack on the mosque by the state officials "...has cut into cultural ties that bind together peoples of differences in a political community... Once broken, these ties will be difficult to mend" (Satha-Anand 2006, p. 24).

²⁴ Funston (2008, p. 29).

²⁴ Funston (2008); Cline (2007).

²⁶ Wahhabism is a conservative and intolerant form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia

²⁷ The 'Network Monarchy' is a set of power structures linked to the palace. In his theory, McCargo (2006b) argued that Thaksin was engaged in a competition for power within the monarchical institution; and that he used the southern conflict as a battleground for this. "The South" was no longer about the South: it was about the legitimacy of the Thaksin government, and of the Thai state itself."

²⁸ These included an academic, Srisompob Jitpiromsri; former NRC members, including Gothom Ariya; academic philosopher, Mark Tamthai; and former deputy NSC chief, Jiraporn Bunnag; former NRC vice chair and leading social critic, Prawase Wasi; ex-premier, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh; and former interior minister Chalerm Yubamrung (McCargo 2010, p.279).

²⁹ Hassan Taib from BRN led the talks; while the Thai government's team was led by the Secretary-General of the National Security Council, Lieutenant General Paradon Pattanatabut: tasked by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Hassan demanded Thailand to withdraw troops from the south, to give an amnesty for insurgents and to declare the area a special administrative zone.

Available from: http://www.xingyimax.com/wiki/?title=South_Thailand_insurgency [Accessed 12 June 2014].

³⁰ Corben, R., 2013. Thailand Looks to Restart Southern Peace Talks, Despite Little Progress. *VOA news* [online], 30 October 2013. Available from <http://www.voanews.com/content/thailand-looks-restart-southern-peace-talks-despite-little-progress/1779764.html> [Accessed 4 December 2013].

³¹ Bangkok Post., 2014. Opinion: Back to the Peace Talks, *Bangkok Post* [online], 4 March 2014. Available from: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/398044/back-to-the-peace-talks>. [Accessed 23 April 2014].

³² From a public discussion of civil society, "On the (Peace) Road Again: Pa(t)tani in New Conditions": Wanpen Khongkachonkiet, the Director of the Cross Cultural Foundation, proposed that the martial law should be lifted to open up talking space; Asst. Prof. Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana, Director of the Institute for Peace Studies, Prince of Songkla University, put forward that local people are interested in the peace talk and that public participation is needed in the peace process. From Deep South Watch. 2014. On the (Peace) Road Again: Pa(t)tani in New Conditions. *Deep South Watch* [online], 18 December 2014. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/6548> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

³³ In 2014, there were a total of 806 violent incidents happened with 341 deaths and 672 casualties. From Deep South Incident Database (DSID), 2015. *Deep South Watch* [online]. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/6631> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

³⁴ Currently, Thailand is under the 2014 interim Constitution under General Prayuth Chan-ocha, who led the coup against Yingluck Shinawatra's government in 22 May 2014. This Constitution then replaced the 2007 Constitution, and was drafted without public consultation.

³⁵ Lèse-majesté in French means 'the crime violating the majesty'. In Thailand the monarchy is a highly respected institution, and defamation of the Royal Family is an offence. This law is generally respected by all Thais (Article 19 2009; Paireepairit 2012).

³⁶ The Thai monarchy and the military have a close relationship. The Thai military culture has been established on the foundation of respect and protection for the monarchy, the King does not have an executive power over the Thai politic but has a high symbolic power to the Thai society and the Thai military as a whole (Chongkittitavorn 2010). The Thai army sometimes intervned in the Thai politic, the 2006 and the 2014 coups can best support this point.

³⁷ Supinya Klangnarong, the Secretary General of the campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR) and editor of *Thai Post*, was sued in October 2003 with other two editors, on the basis of her interview published in the *Thai Post*, which related to Thaksin and the profit his Shin Corp made during that period. The case has brought worldwide condemnations from organisations such the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the Committee for the protection of Journalists (CPJ), Human Rights Watch (HRW), SEAPA and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) (Article 19 2009, p.81-83).

³⁸ Thammasathien (2010) claimed that deception and inaccurate information is a constant problem for covering the southern conflict as the dangerous situation led the Thai press to rely more on government sources, thus created a credibility issue with the locals. The information from the local stringers cannot be trusted since they are not journalists by profession and they often act to their own self-interest. Also, no more reporters are sent to the south except for a special report on some occasions. Some editors claimed that there is no new angle of the southern conflict to present to the public and that the stories become repetitive.

³⁹ In *The Structure of Foreign News*, Galtung and Ruge (1965), identified 5 key factors of newsworthiness in the coverage of international conflict in the Norwegian press. Threshold (a big story that has extreme effects on a large number of people); Negativity (Bad news is more exciting); Frequency (events that occurs suddenly and fit well with the news organisation's schedule); Unexpectedness (the unordinary event that will have a great effect); Unambiguity (events with clear implications make better copy). Later, Galtung (1998) adopted this basic insight to propose a 'four-factor news communication model'. Negative events, befalling elite individuals in elite countries, were top stories. Positive processes, benefiting non-elite groups in non-elite countries, were non-stories.

⁴⁰ Which are: level of conflict escalation; the cognitive framework of the conflict; entanglement in the conflict; societal belief; text genre; and the audience and its interpretation of journalism.

⁴¹ In her Master thesis, Kanwerayothin (2006) studied the performance of INC by focusing on the coverage of two hostage incidents in 2005 and 2006 and found that the INC encountered problems of human resources, capacity and a lack of understanding of peace journalism. However, this did not mean that the idea of peace journalism had failed. The findings suggested that this was because the idea of peace journalism is still new in Thailand, and many reporters and journalists do not understand it very well, and were still used to their style of reporting in a sensationalist way. These journalists had a strong commitment and tie with their newspapers, which resulted in their lack of commitment to the centre and the responsibility to promote peace journalism.

⁴² Deep South Watch: About section. Deep South Watch [online]. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/about> [Accessed 23 October 2014].

⁴³ Deep South Journalism School Website. Deep South Watch [online]. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj> [Accessed 23 October 2014].

⁴⁴ 'International' topic refers to news on the southern conflict from International perspectives.

⁴⁵ The Dusun ngor incident in 1948 is considered to be one of the violent incidents that happened in the history of Thailand's southern conflict. It was a battle between the state and the local people that caused the deaths of around 400 locals and 30 policemen.

⁴⁶ That is, the study found no indicator of PJ11 (avoidance of victimising language), one indicator of PJ13 (avoidance of emotive words), and 13 indicators of PJ12 (avoidance of demonising language).

⁴⁷ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *Bangkok Post* that have WJ3 (elite-oriented) as one of the indicators:

- PM lambastes army, Wan Nor (2/132, 5th January 2004)
- New command post to be set up: Defence minister wants full-scale force (4/132, 6th January 2004)
- Deadline: 7 days to catch raiders: Angry Thaksin sends ministers back South (8/132, 7th January 2004)
- Thaksin says martial law necessary: Denies investment will be affected (26/132, 10th January 2004)
- PM to develop 3 provinces: Shots in arm for Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani (31/132, 11th January)

⁴⁸ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *Bangkok Post* that have WJ5 (focus on here and now) as one of the indicators:

- Soldiers die, schools burn: Arms stockpile stolen; martial law declared (1/132, 5th January 2004)
- Bombs explode in Pattani: Disposal experts die defusing explosive (3/132, 6th January 2004)
- Police station attacked: 'Hell tour' patrols take on insurgents (12/132, 8th January 2004)

⁴⁹ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *Bangkok Post* that have PJ3 (people-oriented) as one of the indicators:

- Sixth-graders greet news of trip to capital (23/132, 9th January 2004)
- Muslims upset over arrest of teachers (25/132, 10th January 2004)
- Released Islamic teacher insists he is not a terrorist (34/132, 11th January 2004)

⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, the Kruese Mosque incident represented an attack on the Thai state when Muslim assailants planned coordinated attacks on 11 government and police outposts across the region. However, the difference was that the incident ended when the assailants retreated to Kruese Mosque and were later killed by the Thai army. The incident caused wide public criticism as it contained religious undertones when the Thai army killed the Muslim attackers in the holy mosque of the region. Because of the nature of the incident, *Bangkok Post* changed its style of reporting to include more PJ indicators.

⁵¹ Examples of headlines from the Kruese Mosque incident in *Bangkok Post* that have PJ7 (multiparty orientation) as one of the indicators:

Voices of the local people

- Woman's prayers answered: Spared from an agonising death (38/132, 29th April 2004)
- Families of slain deny rebel links (52/132, 30th April 2004)
- Bereaved families struggle to explain what went wrong (54/132, 1st May 2004)
- Widow of slain Muslim wonders how to bring up four children: Jobless, and a fifth child due next month (88/132, 5th May 2004)

Voices from the Muslim community

- Muslims say mosque storming 'overreaction': Will lead to further violence, they predict (45/132, 30th April 2004)

Voices from the human rights organisation/international organisation

- Rights group calls for govt investigation: Troops' use of lethal force questioned (48/132, 30th April 2004)
- UN rights chief urges probe: Treaties cite ban on use of excessive force (57/132, 1st May 2004)

Voices from the opposition/senators

- Senators want PM to give explanation: To submit motion seeking answers (70/132, 2nd May 2004)
- Chaun slams comparison of mosque, hospital standoff (71/132, 2nd May 2004)

Voices from neighboring country

- Joint Thai – Malaysian checkpoints to open (83/132, 4th May 2004)
- Malaysia says poverty main cause (85/132, 5th May 2004)

⁵² Examples of headlines from the Kruese Mosque incident in *Bangkok Post* that have WJ5 and WJ2 as one of the indicators:

- Rebels die in bloodbath: Militants in dawn attacks; Soldiers storm mosque; Senior army man removed (35/132, 29th April 2004)
- Mosque drenched in blood (36/132, 29th April 2004)
- 'Jihad Warriors' died in siege: Panel says militants sacrificed their lives (46/132, 30th April 2004)

⁵³ For example,

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- Historic Krue-Se knows tragedy (51/132, 30th April 2004)
 - Hearing on Krue Se bullet holes (68/132, 2nd May 2004)

⁵⁴ The Takbai demonstration incident started from a demonstration of around 1,000 Muslim villagers in front of Takbai police station in Narathiwat demanding of the release of six Muslim suspects. The situation got out of control and the police started to fire tear gas and guns to disperse the demonstrators. The incident ended when the demonstrators were arrested and put into trucks to be transferred to the Army camp in Pattani. When the trucks reached the destination, 78 demonstrators were found dead due to suffocation. The incident signified the mistreatment of the southern Muslims by the Thai government and again caused wide public and international criticism and condemnation on the issue of human rights violations. Therefore, it is foreseeable that *Bangkok Post* would use a peace journalism approach in its reporting of the incident.

⁵⁵ Examples of headlines from the Takbai demonstration incident in *Bangkok Post* that have WJ2 and/or WJ5 as one of the indicators:

- Bloodshed, mayhem in South (91/132, 26th October 2004)
- 81 more dead; riot toll hits 87 (93/132, 26th October 2004)
- Death toll secrecy deplored (96/132, 26th October 2004)

⁵⁶ Examples of headlines from the Takbai demonstration incident in *Bangkok Post* that have PJ7 as one of the indicators:

Voice of High authority

- Thaksin: I'm not quitting; no snap poll (107/132, 29th October 2004)
- PM in TV appeal for understanding (110/132, 30th October 2004)
- Thaksin urged to offer apology (110/132, 30th October 2004)

Voices of people affected by the incident

- Kin of the missing demand explanation: Hundreds flock to army camp in Pattani (95/132, 26th October 2004)
- Violence in the South: Relatives doubt suffocation claim (99/132, 28th October 2004)
- Detainees tell senators of stompings, beatings (104/132, 29th October 2004)

Voices of the Muslim community

- Islamic leader: troops overreacted (92/132, 26th October 2004)
- Muslims to ask King to change govt: Want HM to appoint a royal administration (103/132, 29th October 2004)

Voices of the opposition/senators

- Senators cast doubt on govt claim rioters suffocated

(100/132, 28th October 2004)

- Senators want CSD to assure detainees' safety

(117/132, 30th October 2004)

Voices of international organisations/human rights organisations

- NHRC begins probe into Tak Bai crackdown

(116/132, 30th October 2004)

- UN rights watchdog urges probe

(120/132, 30th October 2004)

Voices of neighbouring countries

- Indonesian press vent fury at Tak Bai deaths

(108/132, 29th October 2004)

- Mahathir suggests self-rule negotiation

(119/132, 30th October 2004)

⁵⁷ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *The Nation* that have PJ7 (multiparty orientation) as one of the indicators:

- **New approach to security needed**

ACADEMICS AND SECURITY veterans say the latest spate of violent attacks in the southern province of Narathiwat calls for a rethink of how the long-standing violence in the Muslim-dominated region should be handled.

(13/166, 7th January 2004)

- **Kuala Lumpur briefed on 'terrorists'**

Thailand has informed Malaysia that it suspects terrorists were involved in a series of deadly attacks in the south, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told reporters yesterday. Syed hamid told reporters Thailand considered the attacks as those of terrorists and not bandits.

(19/166, 8th January 2004)

- **Tourism groups fear a lengthy curfew**

THE TOURISM industry yesterday warned that visitor arrivals will plummet if enforcement of martial law in the Kingdom's southernmost provinces prolonged.

(20/166, 8th January 2004)

The examples given show that *The Nation* included different sides involved in the conflict in its reporting. Apart from voices from academics and security forces, voices from Malaysia and from tourism groups were also represented in the examples above. In addition, there are also voices from the government, from the oppositions, from religious teachers and from the people affected by the incident in the coverage. This point indicates that *The Nation* attempted to give news space and voices to all sides involved and did not put emphasis only on the voices of those in high authority.

⁵⁸ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *The Nation* that have PJ5 (causes and consequences) as one of the indicators:

- **Govt approach 'wrong from the start'**
THE GOVERNMENT cannot solve the problem of violence in the South if it continues to hold the wrong people responsible for it, Democrat Party chief adviser Chuan Leekpai said yesterday. (3/166, 5th January 2004)
- **Iron-fisted response may worsen the crisis: *Thaksin govt's lack of sensitivity has alienated locals, who now fear more violent suppression.***
...In the past three years, more than 50 officials have been killed in organized criminal gangs who wanted to rob weapons to sell overseas. (6/166, 5th January 2004)
- **A Troubles legacy:**
Pattani's history is a tale of constant tug of war, of self-rule versus Siam
Pattani IS a land under a curse. At the heart of the province lies an ancient mosque, a brick structure under the curse of a young Chinese woman Lim Kuan Yew who cast a spell and took her own life after failing to persuade her brother to return home to their mother in China. (32/166, 11th January 2004)
- **Letter from south: Pattani picks up the pieces**
Smiling people take recent turbulence in stride as life slowly returns to normal
ONE WEEK after insurgent groups attacked a nearby army battalion and a bomb killed the two police officers who were trying to defuse it, life is slowly returning to normal in the Islamic South. (33/166, 11th January 2004)

From the examples above, we can see that *The Nation* represented the conflict by looking into its causes and consequences. The first example suggests that one of the causes of the conflict was the government's approach; the second example suggests that a hard response from the government would worsen the crisis, with a brief background on the history of conflict also given; the third example explains the long history of the conflict between Siam and Pattani; and the last explores the consequences of how the conflict affected the lives of the local people. All of the examples given show that *The Nation* explored the formation of the conflict before representing it in its coverage.

⁵⁹ Examples of headlines from the arsenal raid incident in *The Nation* that have PJ3 (people-oriented) as one of the indicators:

- **Teachers improvise as 90% of students return to class**

TENTS, canteens and parking lots served as makeshift classrooms as students from the 20 schools damaged in Sunday's arson attacks in this southern provinces yesterday returned to class.

(7/166, 6th January 2004)

- **Family struggles to deal with loss of father**

MONDAY'S BOMB blast in Pattani, which claimed the lives of two policemen, occurred shortly before one of the victims was due to travel to Bangkok for a family reunion with his two daughters.

Pol Sr Sgt Major Sarit Lakatep had been eagerly looking forward to catching up with his daughters, who study at a Bangkok college, his wife Kolima said yesterday.

(12/166, 7th January 2004)

- **Students want culprits caught**

STUDENTS FROM Narathiwat province flying into Bangkok today to celebrate Children's Day said the greatest gift Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra could give them was to catch the terrorists who torched their schools.

(26/166, 9th January 2004)

- **Hoaxes, stray bags cause panic among jittery southerners**

SEVERAL SOUTHERN provinces were plunged into panic yesterday as police rushed to deal with a number of hoax bomb alerts and other false alarms.

(18/166, 8th January 2004)

- **Mullahs, teachers, fleeing homes**

Govt warned that random arrests will play into the dissidents' hands

The detention on Thursday of the local school teacher Muhammad Haji Wae Sahoh and his neighbour Isma-ae, who senior officers said were members of the Bersatu gang, has persuaded many other religious teachers that they themselves could be arrested without clear charges, said the local Muslim leader.

(28/166, 10th January 2004)

The coverage that has PJ3 as one of the indicators has five main voices: the students whose schools were burnt, the teachers, the local people affected by the incident, the families of the soldiers killed in the incident, and the accused religious teachers. This point indicates that *The Nation* engaged different voices of people affected by the conflict to a great degree. However, it is worth noting that the number of the most frequently used WJ indicator, WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of the violence), found in the coverage was the same as the number of PJ3 indicators. As discussed earlier, because the study looked into the reporting of a violent incident, I expected to see a focus on the visible effects of the violence.

⁶⁰ *The Nation's* voice:

- **“Comment: Will our country be the same again?”**

WE THAIS woke up yesterday to a new reality. The televised images of bloodstained streets, of an ancient mosque riddled with bullet holes, and of machetes still in the firm grips of dead young militants were so surreal that they took some time to register, but they eventually merged to give us a rude awakening. What happened yesterday morning may change Thailand forever.

(37/166, 29th April 2004)

- **Restoring peace: Does Chaturon's plan still have a chance?"**

MANY REGARD the "peace plan" proposed by Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisang exactly two weeks before last Wednesday's bloodbath to be history. It seems, perhaps, a bit naïve to talk about peace when we are reinforcing our defense, dispatching more troops and heavy weaponry – including tanks – to the region and beginning to worry about suicide-bombing attacks in Bangkok.

(101/166, 5th May 2004)

⁶¹ Examples of headlines from the Kruese Mosque incident in *The Nation* that have multiparty orientation (PJ7) as one of the indicators:

Voices from high authorities

- **Reaction of top officials: Contradictory statements**

Chetta, Chavalit sing different tunes over circumstances

of yesterday's bloody clashes in the South, with one side playing down political aspects of the drama and the other warning the worst is yet to come.

(43/166, 29th April 2004)

- **High death toll 'was necessary'**

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY yesterday said the government regretted that the crackdown on Muslim militants on Wednesday had resulted in a high death toll, "but it was necessary to preserve public security and safety".

(65/166, 1st May 2004)

Voices from the opposition/senators

- **Opposition warns killing only adds to the climate of fear**

THE OPPOSITION yesterday warned that the government's killing of Muslim militants in the Southern provinces would heighten the violence and the fearful atmosphere there, saying relatives of those killed had honoured the dead as holy warriors.

(59/166, 30th April 2004)

- **Senate lets PM off hook**

THE SENATE YESTERDAY dismissed a motion summoning the prime minister to answer questions on the security situation in the South.

(95/166, 4rd May 2004)

Voices from the Muslim community

- **Chula Rajamontri calls for unity**

THAILAND'S MUSLIM spiritual leader Sumalyasak, the Chula Rajamontri, urged the Kingdom's people to unite and uphold the monarchy as the guiding light in a bid to quell the restlessness in the South following Wednesday's carnage.

(51/166, 30th April 2004)

Voices from other countries

- **Washington expresses its concern**

THE UNITED STATES expressed concern on Wednesday over the militants killed in clashes with security forces and the bloody raid on a mosque.

(55/166, 30th April 2004)

- **Malaysia worried over border clashes**

MALAYSIA IS WORRIED the bloody clashes that killed more than 100 people in neighbouring Thailand could spill across its border, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday.

(58/166, 30th April 2004)

Voices from human rights organisations/international organisations

- **Human rights activist question why so many dead**

VILLAGERS' ACCOUNTS of Wednesday's clashes that ended with the loss of more than 100 lives beg the question whether authorities used excessive force against the militants, the National Human Rights commissioner said yesterday.

(70/166, 1st May 2004)

- **Kingdom's image: UN wants swift probe**

Govt told to investigate deaths of 108 militants

THE UN's top human rights official yesterday called on the Thai government to investigate the deaths of more than 100 people in clashes between security forces and Muslim separatists in southern Thailand on Wednesday.

(72/166, 1st May 2004)

Voices from the academics

- **Govt told to consider alternatives to violence**

Thai academics from five universities yesterday called the government to reconsider the deputy prime minister's plan for resolving conflict in the South and to stop using violence.

(78/166, 2nd May 2004)

- **Militants, govt 'must initiate dialogue'**

A DIALOGUE must be initiated between the government and Islamic militants on the issue of separatism and independence movements, an historian at Thammasat University said yesterday.

(84/166, 3rd May 2004)

⁶² Examples of headlines from the Kruese Mosque incident in *The Nation* that have WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of war) as one of the indicators:

- **Kingdom shaken**
107 suspected militants killed; Pattani mosque littered with bodies after raid; PM upbeat, but more attacks expected
BODIES of more than 100 Muslim militants, most of them teenagers, littered the roads and a revered mosque yesterday following clashes across the deep south between insurgents and security forces.
(36/166, 29th April 2004)
- **Troubled South's worst day of violence**
BODIES LAY ON the roads in pools of blood, armoured personnel carriers patrolled the streets, and a mosque was left bullet-scarred and smoking.
In one of the most violent days in Thailand's history, 107 suspected Muslim separatists and five members of the security forces were killed in the Muslim dominated southern provinces.
(42/166, 29th April 2004)

⁶³ Examples of headlines from the Kruese Mosque incident in *The Nation* that have people-oriented (PJ3) as one of the indicators:

- **Peace shattered at ancient mosque**
HAJI NISENG NILASH, the 75-year-old caretaker of Krue Se Mosque, was doing his usual rounds at around 8.30pm on Tuesday when a group of young men carrying bags arrived and told him to get out.
(38/166, 29th April 2004)
- **Residents describe their 'greatest fear'**
LOCAL RESIDENTS of three southern border provinces say they have been gripped by "the greatest fear in their lives" following yesterday's bloody clashes between security forces and Muslim separatist militants that left more than 100 dead.
(45/166, 29th April 2004)
- **Militant tells: 'It was a sacrifice for God'**
Says he was not paid, but part of separatist group
A MILITANT arrested during clashes in Yala on Wednesday said he was part of a separatist movement and not paid to attack police.
"All of us were sacrificing ourselves for God," Mana Matiyoh, a native of Pattani's Nong Chik district, said yesterday during a brief encounter with reporters during a re-enactment of the attacks.
(53/166, 30th April 2004)
- **Villagers surprised at 'quiet, devout' teacher's role**

ALL WHO knew Sakariya Yuso personally said the quiet religious teacher was a most unlikely leader of a group of Muslim militants who participated in attacks on security forces in the South on April 28.

(85/166, 3rd May 2004)

⁶⁴ Examples of headlines from the Takbai demonstration incident in *The Nation* that have multiparty orientation (PJ7) as one of the indicators:

Voices from Muslim community

- **Muslim anger spills over**
Religious leaders urge govt restraint

THE LEADER of a Muslim group and Muslim academics yesterday attacked the use of violence by authorities in suppressing protestors outside Tak Bai district police station, saying it would prolong hostilities in the South.

(111/166, 26th October 2004)

Voices from the senators

- **Independent probe needed: senators**

SENATORS YESTERDAY called for a judicial inquiry into the deaths of Muslim protesters in Narathiwat on Monday. Senator Panas Thassaneeyanont said the government should quickly dispel doubts over the high death toll by allowing judicial proceedings to run its course.

(140/166, 31th October 2004)

Voices from Muslim community

- **Muslim leaders demand action against officials**

Muslim leaders yesterday stepped up pressure on Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to bring to justice those officials responsible for the 85 deaths in the Tak Bai crackdown.

(157/166, 29th October 2004)

- **15 Muslim groups: bucks stop with PM**

An ALLIANCE of 15 Muslim organizations submitted an open letter yesterday calling on Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to take responsibility for the deaths of 85 protesters during and after last week's demonstration at Tak Bai.

(161/166, 1st November 2004)

Voices from human rights organisations

- **Troubled South at 'point of no return'**
Rights groups call for govt to open investigation into Monday's carnage

THE THAKSIN government has lost its legitimacy for taking the Kingdom to "the point of no return" with its latest mishandling of the violence in the deep South, leading human-rights groups said yesterday.

(120/166, 27th October 2004)

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- **Govt urged to launch independent probe**
 THE NATIONAL Human rights Commission yesterday called upon the government to establish an independent committee to investigate the alleged use of excessive force to suppress the demonstrators in Tak Bai, Narathiwat.
 (126/166, 28th October 2004)
 - **Tak Bai Independent Inquiry: ‘ Whole truth’ pledge**
Nominated panel chief promises full transparency, openness to media in investigation
 PICHET SOONTORNPIKIT, a former Ombudsman who will lead a government-assigned independent inquiry into the deaths of 78 people detained in the wake of the Tak Bai demonstration, has pledged total transparency in his attempt to answer the public’s questions.
 (158/166, 1st November 2004)

⁶⁵ Examples of headlines from the Takbai demonstration incident in *The Nation* that have PJ5 (focus on the causes and consequences) as one of the indicators:

- **Anger, concern, defiance**
The clampdown on Muslim protesters as well as scores of avoidable deaths due to suffocation has the country and led to condemnation. Here, leading figures speak to The Nation while the prime minister minces no words in his response.
 THE CONFLICT in the Deep South has become more severe than ever. Before this government, there were some tensions now and then, but there was never really any bloodshed. The root cause is government policy.
 (125/166, 28th October 2004)
- **Comment: Body count spirals during PM’s reign**
 It was yet another black day for Thaksin Shinawatra’s premiership.
 When more than 80 Thais perished at the hands of Thai troops in the deep South on Monday – six in the clash between protesters and security forces and 78 reportedly from suffocation after being rounded up and put in the back of military trucks – everything else that has marred his highly controversial reign now pales in comparison. His contempt for human rights has resulted in a scattering of personal tragedies, masked by the proclaimed success of the war on drugs. But now this flawed trait of his leadership is threatening to plunge the country into the bitterest and most detrimental divide between the people and the state.
 (114/166, 26th October 2004)

⁶⁶ The article "Anger, concern, defiance" (125/166, 28th October 2004) was placed on the second page under the section "Takbai aftermath". For the first time in the coverage of the southern conflict incidents, *The Nation* featured opinions of leading figures in many fields in its coverage of the Takbai incident. Voices of the leading Thai monk, Muslim leaders, senators, a professor and peace scholar, an ex-southern Army commander and the Prime minister were placed together on one page, all sharing their comments on Takbai, and on the southern conflict as a whole. In this sense, the readers were provided with views on the conflict from different sides. I believe that this is the way not only to widen their perspective on the issue but also to encourage them to use their own judgment by balancing accounts from different perspectives. Another example was in a 'comment' piece on the front page, where *The Nation* expressed its opinions and stood its ground in judging the PM and his mishandling of the conflict. The background of the conflict was presented together with comments that the southern conflict had worsened and the death toll increased during the time of PM Thaksin. *The Nation* did not support the government and also blamed the government for its mishandling of the conflict. The examples given not only show how *The Nation* explored the formation of the conflict from different perspectives, but it also indicates that *The Nation* placed itself as one of the actors in the conflict by giving its comments and standing its ground in disagreeing with high authority. The positioning of the comments and opinion articles on the front and second page of the newspapers also show that a high prominence was given to these news pieces.

⁶⁷ The examples of headlines from the Takbai demonstration incident that have WJ2 (focus on the visible effects of war) as one of the indicators:

- **Six killed in bloody clashes with troops**

PM visits scene after day-long siege of police station ends in bloodshed; curfew imposed in 8 districts

AT LEAST six people were killed and more than 20 others injured yesterday when government troops clashed with about 3,000 Muslim protesters in the southern province of Narathiwat.

(110/166, 26th October 2004)

- **78 perish in custody**

Protesters suffocated in military trucks; More than 60 still missing; Activists demand PM's resignation

SEVENTY-EIGHT protesters died of suffocation or from convulsions after they were arrested and herded into military trucks for detention following a bloody clash on Monday in Muslim-dominated Narathiwat province.

Autopsies performed on the victims found no bullet wounds on their bodies, just bruises and small cuts on their faces, said Dr Pornthip Rojanasunand, deputy director of the Justice Ministry's Central Institute of Forensic science.

(113/166, 27th October 2004)

The first example was the news story from the front page of the 26th October. At the time, the public as well as the newspapers only knew about the clash between the police and the local demonstrators that caused deaths of six people at the scene. The second news story was published the day after when the truth about the death by suffocation of the 78 demonstrators broke out. The number of deaths was given but the tone of the news was of fact-finding and investigating the incident.

⁶⁸ For example, *The Nation* put a small box on the front page with the title 'What do you think?' asking the readers to give comments on the southern conflict incidents, and on the second page printed the title 'Aid sought', asking for its readers to donate learning-equipment and money to the schools that had been attacked (6th January 2004). On the next day (7th January 2004), *The Nation* printed some of the comments received from its readers on the front page.

⁶⁹ On 11th January 2004, *The Nation* published a report on the history of Pattani and the power struggle with Thailand on the front page under the title 'A trouble Legacy', as well as an article on the life of the local people seven days after the attacks, titled 'Letter from the South: Pattani picks up the pieces' (see Appendix IV (a)).

⁷⁰ On the first day of the reporting, *Bangkok Post* assigned the whole front page, page 3 and page 4 under the section 'Violence in the South' to reporting the Kruese Mosque incident. The news on the front page had a focus on here and now, the visible effects of the violence, and the use of emotive words as seen from the main headline 'Rebels die in bloodbath', and the small headline 'Mosque drenched in blood' (29th April 2004) (see Appendix IV (b)). The main headline reported the timeline of the incident which happened on the day before in a breaking news format together with the death toll and accounts from people in positions of high authority.

Inside the newspaper, various voices were featured in the news. For example, the voice of an unnamed cabinet source criticised the government's decision in an article titled 'Crackdown may trigger terror attacks'; the voice of the local people who were at the scene were represented in 'Woman's prayer's answered'; the voice of a human rights organisation was presented in 'Concern over rights abuses'; and the voice of the opposition commented on the incident in 'Opposition urges govt to restore peace'. The article 'Muslims: Revive Chaturon's peace plan' focused on the possible resolution of the conflict by suggesting that the government should impose the peace plan formally proposed by the Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisaeng.

⁷¹ On the first day of reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident, *The Nation* too gave the whole front page, page 2 and page 4 over to reporting the incident (see Appendix IV (b)). The main headline, 'Kingdom shaken', presented the voices of the local officials and eyewitnesses with a focus on the death tolls and the use of sensational language. In the same way as for the arsenal raid coverage, *The Nation* put its own comment piece on the front page in 'Comment: Will our country be the same again?', which was presented with a worrying and remorseful tone supported by the excessive use of emotive language. I can see that *The Nation* tried to perform its social responsibility role by asserting its view

on the situation to the public and putting it on the front page. *The Nation* provided little space for presenting a brief background of the southern conflict timeline, and the death toll since 1973.

Also, its news articles on the front page were all people-oriented, and references to high authority were made on the front page. The news on the second page was put under the section 'Southern carnage', and featured accounts from high authority on the follow-up investigation into the incidents. A large amount of space was given for a map and a timeline of the attacks on districts across Pattani, Songkhla and Yala and also for the timeline of the Kruese Mosque incident.

⁷² On the first day of reporting on the Takbai demonstration incident (26th October 2004), both newspapers reported the incident with a high use of WJ2 (focuses on the visible effects of the violence) and WJ5 (focus on here and now). *Bangkok Post* presented the incident with the emotive headline 'Bloodshed, mayhem in South', together with a description of what happened in the incident that culminated in the clashes between the police and the demonstrators, which caused six deaths at the scene. *The Nation*, too, presented the incident with an emotive headline incorporating the death toll, 'Six killed in bloody clashes', while its report was on what happened in the incident supported by the accounts of witnesses, religious leaders, the PM and the Army commander. *The Nation* used the whole of page 4 to publish photographs and a report of the incident, as well as the timeline of what happened at the demonstration. It is worth noting that on the first day of reporting this incident, the Thai public still did not know about the deaths from suffocation of the detainees during the transfer to the Army camp in Pattani. The reporting on the first day thus was only on the clash at the scene of the demonstration.

In the second day of reporting (27th October 2004), the news on the incident became a national headline after the truth about the deaths of the detainees during the transfer came out. Both newspapers used headlines with emotive language and the number of deaths, with *The Nation's* '78 perish in custody', and *Bangkok Post's* '81 more dead, riot toll hit 87'. Again, both newspapers presented the incident with a focus on here and now and on the visible effects of the violence, by reporting on what happened to cause the deaths during the transfer and on the number of missing people.

⁷³ The categories can be classified as 'local' with 20 sources, 'high authority' with 15 sources, 'foreign source' with 8 sources, 'other' with 7 sources, 'official source' with 6 sources, 'opposition' with 5 sources, 'local authority' with 5 sources, and 'religious' with 2 sources.

⁷⁴ The number of sources and the times mentioned for other categories are 'opposition' 20 times, 'official' 24 times, 'local authority' 14 times, 'foreign' 15 times, and 'others' 26 times

⁷⁵ There were 115 sources, comprised of 'local' with 30 sources, 'high authority' with 18 sources, 'local authority' with 16 sources, 'opposition' with 11 sources, 'official' with 10 sources, 'others' with 8 sources, 'academic' with 6 sources, 'organisation' with 6 sources, 'foreign' with 5 sources, and 'religious group' with 5 sources.

⁷⁶ That is, ‘foreign sources’ with 19 sources, followed by ‘local’ with 17 sources, ‘opposition’ with 15 sources, ‘high authority’ with 14 sources, ‘religious group’ with 11 sources, ‘academic’ with 8 sources, ‘others’ with 8 sources, ‘official’ with 6 sources, and ‘local authority’ with 3 sources. The use of ‘local’ was half as much and ‘local authority’ one fifth, but the use of ‘foreign’ sources was 4 times higher than in the reporting of the Kruese mosque incident.

⁷⁷ That is, 33 ‘local’ sources, followed by ‘high authority’ with 13, ‘foreign source’ with 12, ‘local authority’ with 9, ‘academic’ with 9, ‘official’ with 8, ‘other’ with 5, ‘opposition’ with 4, and ‘religious’ with 3 sources.

⁷⁸ ‘High authority’ was mentioned 85 times, and ‘local’ was mentioned 65 times. ‘Foreign source’ and ‘academic’ were mentioned 31 times each, while the number of times other groups were mentioned were ‘local authority’ (22), ‘official source’ (20), ‘other’ (20), ‘opposition’ (16) and ‘religious group’ (10) times. The only one category not cited was the ‘organisation’ group.

⁷⁹ The highest number of sources were from the ‘local’ category with 51 sources, almost twice as high as for the first incident. There were 25 sources from ‘high authority’, 22 sources from ‘local authority’, 20 from ‘organisation’, 13 from ‘foreign’, 10 from ‘official’, 8 from ‘scholars’, 6 from ‘opposition’, 6 from ‘other’, and 2 from ‘religious’.

⁸⁰ ‘Religious’ with 13 sources and 39 citations and ‘Foreign’ with 22 sources and 68 citations.

⁸¹ ‘High authority’ was mentioned 177 times, followed by ‘local’ at 101 times.

⁸² The remaining numbers were ‘opposition’ with 25 sources, ‘official’ with 23 sources, ‘local authority’ with 40, ‘academic’ with 24, ‘organisation’ with 33, ‘religious’ with 27 and ‘other’ with 15.

⁸³ Compared to *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation* used ‘high authority’ as a source 13 more times, ‘local authority’ 16 more times, ‘foreign source’ 15 more times, ‘academic’ 10 more times, ‘religious’ 9 more times, ‘local’ 45 more times and used ‘official source’ the same number of times.

⁸⁴ ‘Local’ accounted for 67 sources in total, compared to 112 sources used by *The Nation*.

⁸⁵ *Bangkok Post* used ‘high authority’ for 47 sources while *The Nation* used it for 60 sources. Again the third in rank was ‘foreign source’ for both newspapers: 32 sources from *Bangkok Post* and 47 from *The Nation*. The least used sources from *Bangkok Post* were ‘academic’ and ‘organisation’, 14 and 15 respectively, while the least used source of *The Nation* was ‘others’ with 15 sources.

⁸⁶ Apart from ‘local’, which ranked second at 175 times (different from the top one by 219 times), those in mid-rank positions (‘other’, ‘foreign’, ‘local’, ‘official’, ‘religious’ and ‘oppositions’) were mentioned between 70-83 times. The least-mentioned groups were ‘academic’ and ‘organisation’, at 49 and 44 times respectively. ‘Local’ groups came second in the coverage of *The Nation* in the frequency analysis too. Meanwhile, ‘official source’ and ‘religious group’ were mentioned the same number of times in *Bangkok Post* as in *The Nation*. Other groups, comprised of ‘foreign source’, ‘organisation’, ‘academic’ and ‘local authority’, were mentioned more times than in *Bangkok Post*, by 82, 56, 45, and 27 times respectively. ‘Opposition’ was the only group mentioned more times by *Bangkok Post* than by *The Nation*.

⁸⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 5 (5.2.2.3), because the interviews may contain opinions on sensitive issues, the use of pseudonyms is required to protect the identities of the interviewees and to preserve the confidentiality of the data. I assigned unique Thai names to each interviewee. These pseudonyms have no relation to their real names. However, the gender identity of the interviewees and the name of the organisations they work for were not changed. The profiles of the interviewees are provided in Appendix VI

⁸⁸ From the analysis of news sources, *The Nation* has 112 sources from 'local', 47 'foreign', 37 'organisation', 27 'religious group', and 25 'academic', while *Bangkok Post* has 67 'local', 32 'foreign', 18 'religious', 15 'organisation', and 14 'academic'.

⁸⁹ A 'second bombing incident' is when attackers plant the first bomb so that the authorities and those involved go to investigate the scene. When these figures are present at the scene, a second bomb is then detonated. One journalist was killed from a second bombing incident.

⁹⁰ As discussed in Chapter 3, the Issara News Project was set up in 2005 in order to educate journalists and reporters on reporting the southern conflict. The training also included information about the background of the conflict, investigative reporting, safety skills, and how to live in a conflict zone.

⁹¹ The most obvious case was the 'Tanyong Limo' incident in 2005, when two marines were held captive in Tanyong Limo village after being accused of the drive-by attack that caused the death of one local the day before. The villagers closed the village to block the security forces from entering the area and demanded that journalists from Malaysia come to report the incident because they did not trust the Thai media. The two marines were later killed before the Malaysian press arrived.

⁹² Currently, the Faculty of Communication Science, Prince of Songkla University has announced a plan to set up a center of education and development of peace communication. The center reflects a concrete idea that the academic institutions see the importance of peace journalism, and that it is seen as part of the solution to the southern conflict.⁹² The center will provide a platform for local people, media professionals, academics, organisations and other sides involved to discuss and exchange ideas on the southern conflict and the path to peace. The center also aims at educating local people and other actors in peace communication so that they can act as a 'messenger' and a 'receiver' in support of the peace process in the area. From Changkamol (2015) "Peace Communication", *Deep South Watch* [online]. Available from: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/6926>. [Accessed 8th April 2015].

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Appendix I

Extracts from the Constitution of Thailand (1997)

Chapter III 'Rights and Liberties of the Thai People'

Section 37:

'A person shall enjoy the liberty of communication by lawful means. The censorship, detention or disclosure of communication between persons including any other act disclosing a statement in the communication between persons shall not be made except by virtue of the provisions of the law specifically enacted for security of the State or maintaining public order or good morals.'

Section 39:

'A person shall enjoy the liberty to express his or her opinion, make speeches, write, print, publicize, and make expression by other means.'

Section 40:

'Transmission frequencies for radio or television broadcasting and radio telecommunication are national communication resources for public interest.'

Section 41:

'Officials or employees in a private sector undertaking newspaper or radio or television broadcasting businesses shall enjoy their liberties to present news and express their opinions under the constitutional restrictions without the mandate of any State agency, State enterprise or the owner of such businesses; provided that it is not contrary to their professional ethics.'

Section 45:

'A person shall enjoy the liberty to express his or her opinion, make speeches, write, print, publicize, and make expression by other means.'

Section 48:

'A person holding a political position shall not own or hold shares in a newspaper, radio or television broadcasting or telecommunication business.'

Available from: The Administrative Court of Thailand [online]

http://www.admncourt.go.th/amc_eng/02-LAW/laws/ContitutionBE2540-1997.pdf.

[Accessed 10th January 2014].

Appendix II

Coding category I: 13 indicators of War and Peace Journalism

War Journalism	Peace Journalism
Approach-based criteria	
1. Reactive (waits for war to break out, or about to break out, before reporting)	1. Proactive (anticipates, starts reporting long before war breaks out)
2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war (casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property)	2. Reports also on invisible effects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture)
3. Elite-oriented (focuses on leaders & elites as actors and sources of information)	3. People-oriented (focuses on common people as actors and sources of information)
4. Focuses mainly on differences that led to the conflict	4. Reports the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict
5. Focuses mainly on the here and now	5. Reports causes and consequences of the conflict
6. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys, victims and villains	6. Avoid labeling of good guys and bad guys
7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)	7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in conflict)
8. Partisan (biased for one side in the conflict)	8. Nonpartisan (neutral, not taking sides)
9. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)	9. Win-win orientation (many goals and issues, solution-oriented)
10. Stop reporting aftermath of war	10. Stay on reporting aftermath of war

Language-based criteria	
11. Uses victimizing language (e.g., destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized) that tells only what has been done to people	11. Avoids victimizing language, reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping
12. Uses demonizing language (e.g., vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist)	12. Avoids demonizing language, uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names
13. Uses emotive words, like genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)	13. Objective and moderate. Avoids emotive words. Reserves the strongest language only for the gravest situation. Does not exaggerate.

From Galtung (1986, 1998) in TRANSCEND (2000), a peace and development network. *Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means (Transcend Method): Participant-Trainer's Manual*, United Nations.

Appendix III

Coding category II: Four broad categories of War and Peace Journalism framework

WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM	PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM
<p>I. WAR/VIOLENCE-ORIENTED</p> <p>Focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation</p> <p>Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone</p> <p>Making wars mysterious/secret</p> <p>"Us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us"</p> <p>See "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war</p> <p>Dehumanization of "them"; more so the more frightening the weapon</p> <p>Reactive: waiting for violence before reporting</p> <p>Focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)</p>	<p>I. PEACE/CONFLICT-ORIENTED</p> <p>Explore conflict causation, x parties, y goals, z issues general "win, win" orientation</p> <p>Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture</p> <p>Making conflicts transparent</p> <p>Giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding</p> <p>See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity</p> <p>Humanization of all sides; more so the more devastating the weapons</p> <p>Proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs</p> <p>Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</p>
<p>II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED</p> <p>Expose "their" untruths "Our" cover-ups/lies</p>	<p>II. FACT-ORIENTED</p> <p>Expose untruths on all sides / uncover all cover-ups</p>
<p>III. ELITE-ORIENTED</p> <p>Focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece</p> <p>Give name to their evil-doers</p> <p>Focus on elite peace-makers</p>	<p>III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED</p> <p>Focus on suffering everywhere; on women, the aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless</p> <p>Give a name to all evil-doers</p> <p>Focus on people peace-makers</p>
<p>IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED</p> <p>Peace = victory + ceasefire</p> <p>Conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand</p> <p>Focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society</p> <p>Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up</p>	<p>IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED</p> <p>Peace = nonviolence + creativity</p> <p>Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war</p> <p>Focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society</p> <p>Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation</p>

From Galtung (1986; 1998) in Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, p. 6). *Peace Journalism*. Hawthorn Press: Gloucestershire.

Appendix IV

Samples of news coverage from *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

a) The coverage of Arsenal raid incident



From *Bangkok Post*, 5th January 2004 (front page)



From *The Nation*, 5th January 2004 (front page and page 2A)



From *The Nation*, 11th January 2004 (front page)

b) The coverage of Kruese mosque incident



From *Bangkok Post* on 29th April 2004 (Front page and page 4)



From *The Nation*, 29th April 2004 (Front page)

c) The coverage of Takbai demonstration incident



From *Bangkok Post*, 27th October 2004 (Front page)



From *The Nation*, 27th October 2004 (Front page)

Appendix V

The findings from the second analysis on four broad orientations of WJ/PJ of *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*

From the total 298 articles analysed, the most recurrent frame found was war-oriented, with 72 articles, followed by people-oriented (69 articles), and truth-oriented (54 articles). As explained earlier, I applied the four broad WJ/PJ orientations to the news coverage in order to identify the framework used when reporting the conflict. The four main orientations of WJ and PJ each consist of two opposing frames: war/peace, propaganda/truth, elite/people and victory/solution. News that cannot be categorised into any of these frames would be marked as a 'neutral' article.

It is, perhaps, not surprising to see that the most prominent framework was war-oriented. The study focused on the news reports of the three major incidents in 2004, so it is hard to avoid a WJ frame when reporting on violent incidents. War-oriented refers to when a news report focuses on the conflict arena; on the visible effects of violence; on a two-party orientation; one goal to win; and on the dehumanisation of the opposite side of the conflict (in this study the Thai state and the Muslim actors). For example:

Rebels die in bloodbath

Militants in dawn attacks; Soldiers storm mosque; Senior army man removed

One hundred and seven southern militants, most of them teenagers, died yesterday in a series of battles with troops and police in Yala, Pattani and Songkhla provinces. It was the bloodiest day in the history of Thailand's restive South. There were five deaths on the government side.

(Bangkok Post, 35/132, 30th April 2004)

The example above is a news report that was published one day after the Kruese Mosque incident. The focus on the visible effects of war refers to when the news story emphasises the details of the amount of deaths, wounded and damage, for example: 'Rebels die in bloodbath' and 'one hundred and seven southern militants...died yesterday in a series of battles...' and '...five deaths on the government side'. The focus on war refers to when the news reports presents the incident from a here and now

perspective that does not provide any background of the conflict but focuses more on the conflict scene. For example, 'militants in dawn attacks', 'soldiers storm mosque' and '...series of battles with troops and police...' Because of the focus on different aspects of war (casualties and arena), the above article was categorised in the second stage of analysis as a war journalism report with a war-oriented frame.

The second highest frame found in the study was people-oriented, which suggests the attempts of both newspapers to present more than the simply the official side of the conflict by including the voices and stories of the people, some of whom were seen to challenge the authorities, and also to position them centrally in the news reports. People-oriented is when the story focuses on giving voices to people affected by the conflict and not only on giving voices to people in authority.

For example:

<p style="text-align: center;">Detainees tell: 'We were kicked, beaten, and hit with rifle butts'</p> <p>Demonstrators packed five high in the back of trucks 'like bricks'; senator confirms rough treatment, blames PM</p> <p>POLICE AND SOLDIERS beat and kicked protesters before piling them up "like bricks" for a five-hour truck ride to an Army camp, according to Muslim detainees who spoke yesterday about Monday's brutal clash with security forces.</p> <p>A rubber tapper, who did not want to be identified, described how police packed hundreds of men into trucks after the protest on Monday, resulting in the deaths of 78 from suffocation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(The Nation (138/166), 29th October 2004)</i></p>

The example above was published four days after the Takbai demonstration incident. The story focuses on the account of the detainees on what happened in the incident. The detainees told that they were beaten and hit by rifle butts by those in positions of authority, before being stacked up in the back of the trucks. The report brings into focus the first-hand experience of the detainees who survived the incident, and challenges the authorities with the truth from 'the other side of the story'. Because of the giving of voices to the 'voiceless' feature, I categorised the reports as a peace journalism article with a people-oriented frame.

The truth-oriented news indicates the attempt to perform investigative journalism by exposing the truth and uncovering lies, which suggests, in my reading, that the newspapers have a sense of responsibility to the public. I classified the reports into 'truth-oriented' when the article involves an investigation into the truth behind each incident, and not only reports the authority's account of what happened.

For example:

<p style="text-align: center;">Senators want PM to give explanation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To submit motion seeking answers</i></p> <p>A group of senators plans to seek a Senate resolution to demand that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra explain the government's handling of violence in the South.</p> <p>Bangkok MP Chirmasak Pinthong said a number of "independent" senators including himself were gathering signatures to support a motion seeking the resolution.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Bangkok Post, 70/132, 2nd May 2004)</i></p>

The example above was published four days after the Kruese Mosque incident, which caused public criticism of the government's mishandling of the conflict, which resulted in the deaths of the Muslim attackers, and damage to the sacred mosque. The news report focuses on the senators' demand for an explanation from the government and the Prime Minister, which shows that the newspaper attempted to challenge the version given by the authority. I categorised the reports as a peace journalism article with a truth-oriented frame because of the exposing of the truth and uncovering of lies features of the report.

The next part will feature an explanation of the findings on both newspapers.

Bangkok Post

Figure A illustrates the findings from the analysis of WJ/PJ indicators in the coverage of the three major incidents in 2004 by *Bangkok Post* as informed by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations.

The findings show that out of 132 articles analysed, 60 reports were categorised as WJ, 58 as PJ and the remaining 14 as neutral (see figure A). In addition, it is interesting to see that the number of war

and peace reports was quite close, which also confirmed the findings from the first stage of analysis that revealed a very similar number of war and peace indicators in the coverage.

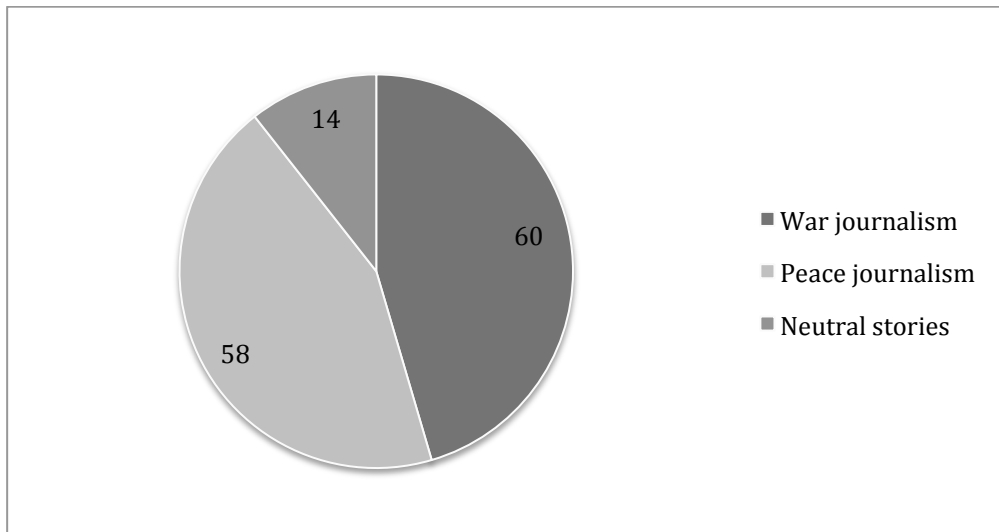


Figure A: The number of war journalism, peace journalism and neutral reports as classified by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations (Galtung 1998) in the conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post*

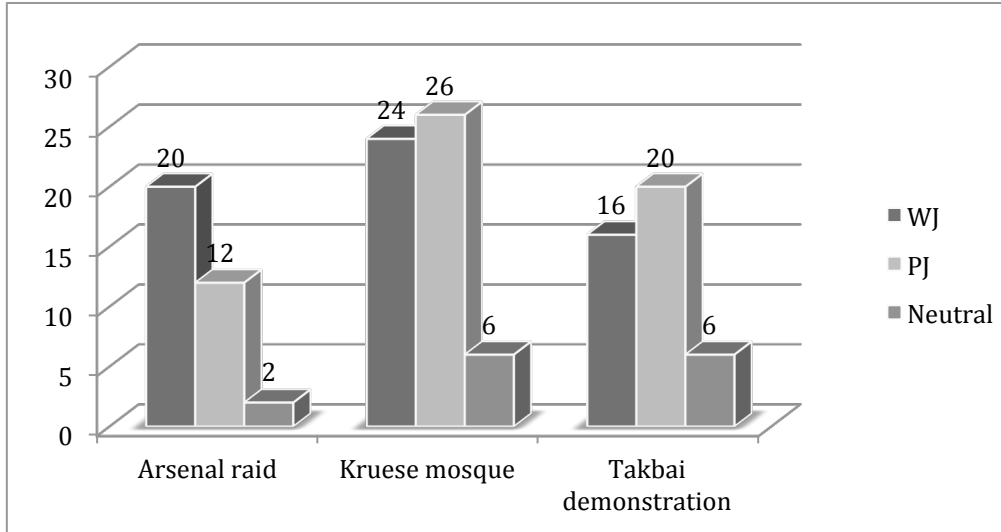


Figure B: The number of war journalism, peace journalism and neutral reports as classified by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations in the conflict coverage of each of the three incidents under scrutiny in *Bangkok Post*

A closer analysis into the WJ/PJ frames applied in the coverage of each of the three incidents is needed. It is interesting to see that the results from this stage of analysis revealed similar patterns to the

findings from the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators. That is, the reporting began with a pro-war stance in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, included pro-war and peace elements in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, and evolved into a pro-peace stance in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration incident (see figure B). I believe that the nature of each incident influenced the reporting style of the newspaper. The fact that the results from both stages of analysis revealed similar trends indicates that the application both of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators, and of the four broad WJ/PJ orientations in the content effectively helped to validate and cross-check the data.

	Arsenal raid	Kruese Mosque	Takbai demonstration
War-oriented	12	16	8
Propaganda-oriented	1	2	-
Elite-oriented	6	6	7
Victory-oriented	1	-	1
Peace/conflict oriented	-	4	4
Truth-oriented	1	10	9
People-oriented	8	9	5
Solution-oriented	3	3	2
Neutral stories	2	6	6
Total (news)=	34	56	42

Table A: The number of articles classified under each of the four broad orientations of WJ/PJ for each of the three incidents

Table A shows the findings from a content analysis of the four broad WJ/PJ orientations in the conflict coverage of *Bangkok Post* across the three major incidents. The findings reveal that a war-oriented frame was mostly used in the reporting, especially in the coverage of the arsenal raid (12 articles) and the Kruese Mosque incident (16 articles). A war-oriented frame involves reporting a conflict from a here and now perspective, an us and them paradigm, and with an emphasis on the visible effects of violence. War-oriented and elite-oriented, which are the two frames of war journalism, were used consistently across the three incidents. The results can be validated by the finding from the content

analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators that the WJ indicators found in the highest frequency across the three incidents were also 'focus on the visible effects of war' (WJ2) and 'elite-oriented' (WJ3). The victory-oriented and propaganda-oriented frames were the least used in the coverage, which suggests that *Bangkok Post* maybe relied highly on high authority figures as news actors and sources but it did not allow itself to be used as the government's tool for publishing its propaganda and winning the conflict.

The second most used frame was people-oriented, which involves focusing on the people affected by the incident. The study found a fair number of people-oriented reports from the coverage of the arsenal raid incident (8 articles) and the Kruese Mosque incident (9 articles). It is surprising to see that only 5 articles were categorised as people-oriented in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration, while 7 reports were categorised as elite-oriented, which creates an interesting discussion point because it was the incident that most directly affected the lives of the local people. To explain, I expected to see more truth-oriented and people-oriented news from the coverage of the Takbai demonstration because this incident was considered to show the government's incompetency in its handling of the southern conflict, with the victims of the situation being the local people. The reason for this may be attributable to the fact that *Bangkok Post* relied greatly on high authority as its sources. The newspaper's close ties with the government may have been a major reason that influenced its reporting style.

The third most used frame was truth-oriented, which involves an investigation of the truth from all sides. The truth-oriented frame was found the most in the coverage of the Kruese mosque incident (10 articles) and in the Takbai demonstration incident (9 articles). This point indicates that *Bangkok Post* attempted to practice investigative journalism by focusing on 'what really happened' in the incidents and did not rely only on the information provided by the authorities.

Another interesting point was the number of solution-oriented articles. Solution-oriented refers to when news reports focus on seeking a resolution of a conflict and reconciliation of all sides. I believe that solution-oriented is one main and strong feature of peace journalism that stresses the social responsibility role of the media by offering ways to find a resolution of the conflict. Overall, the study found 8 solution-oriented articles across the three incidents, which indicates that *Bangkok Post* engaged

a peace journalism approach to its style of reporting, even though a large number of WJ frames were still in use. The use of solution-oriented frames shows that *Bangkok Post* did not only focus on reporting on what was happening in the conflict, but also sought answers from all sides involved on how to resolve the conflict.

To conclude, the analysis of four broad WJ/PJ themes showed that the most used frame in *Bangkok Post*'s reporting of the southern conflict was 'war-oriented'. Other main frames were: people-oriented, elite-oriented, and truth-oriented. The findings from the second analysis are in accordance with the findings from the main analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators. The second analysis shows that 'elite-oriented', 'multiparty orientation', and 'focus on the visible effects of violence' are the indicators found in the highest frequency in the coverage of all three incidents. This point indicates that *Bangkok Post* relied highly on high authority as news actors and sources, and at the same time reported the incidents with a focus on the visible effects of the violence.

The number of multiparty orientation (PJ7) articles found also indicates that *Bangkok Post* engaged a peace journalism approach by including voices from sides of the conflict in its news reports.

The findings of both stages of analysis revealed quite a similar pattern and one main reason behind the style of the reporting was the nature of the situation of the three incidents. It can be concluded that the reporting style was pro-war in the arsenal raid incident, before changing to include both pro-war and pro-peace aspects in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident, as seen from the fact that the number of WJ and PJ articles was quite similar in both stages of analysis. Finally, the style changed to pro-peace in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration. Both stages of WJ/PJ content analysis in *Bangkok Post*'s coverage of the three incidents can help with validating the data in comparative terms. That is to say, the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators helped to identify the most used WJ/PJ elements in the news coverage, while the analysis using the four broad WJ/PJ frameworks helped to look at the main themes of each news story, all of which can reveal the orientation and reporting style of the newspaper in question

The Nation

Figure C illustrates the findings from the analysis of WJ/PJ indicators in the coverage of the three major incidents in 2004 by *The Nation* as informed by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations.

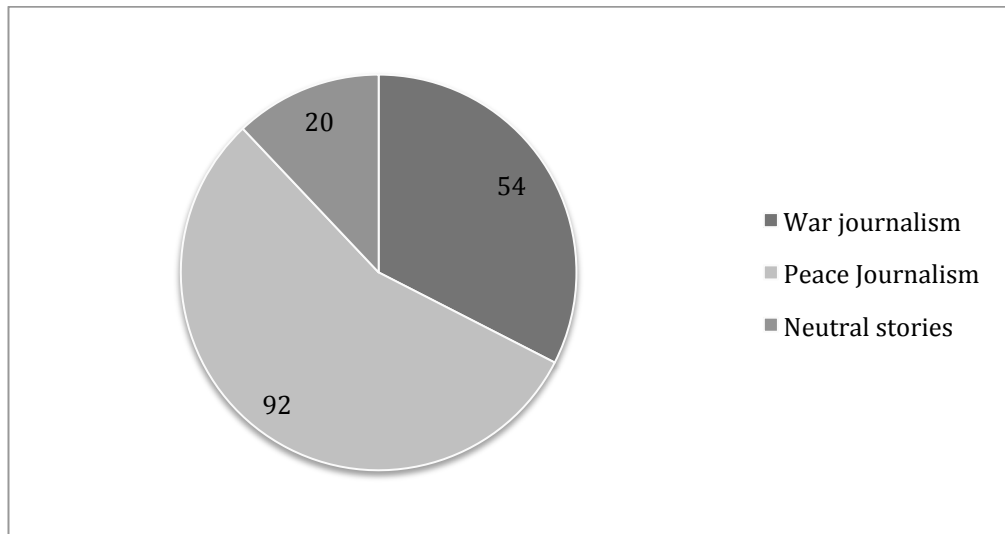


Figure C: The number of war journalism, peace journalism and neutral articles as classified by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations (Galtung 1998) in the conflict coverage of *The Nation*

The findings at from the second stage of content analysis show that out of 166 news reports analysed, 92 were categorised as peace journalism articles, 54 as war journalism articles and 20 as neutral articles. The results indicate that *The Nation's* representation of the southern conflict incidents mostly incorporated a peace journalism approach. Most of the news under the war journalism approach placed an emphasis on giving details on the number of casualties and the visible damages of war. A closer analysis into the categorisation of WJ/PJ in the news articles from the coverage of each incident is provided in figure D.

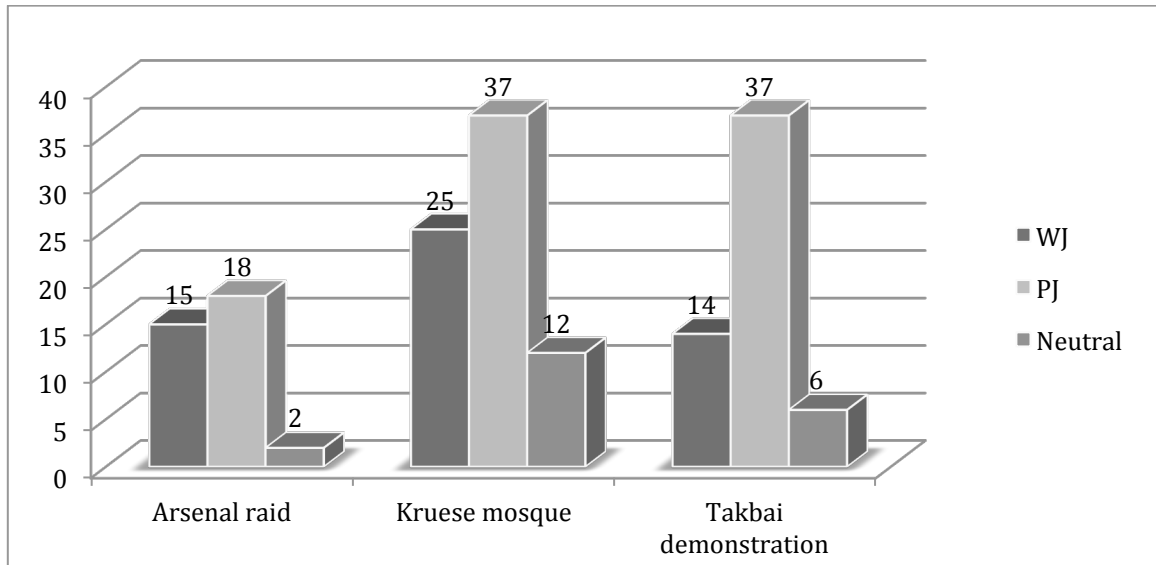


Figure D: The number of war journalism, peace journalism and neutral articles as classified by the four broad WJ/PJ orientations in the conflict coverage of each of the three incidents under scrutiny in *The Nation*

Figure D reveals the trend of the war, peace and neutral articles in the coverage of the three incidents. In the coverage of the arsenal raid incident, the number of WJ and PJ reports was very close, and the number of PJ articles was only slightly higher than the number of WJ reports. The trend changed and became more obvious in the reporting of the Kruese Mosque incident when the number of PJ articles was two times higher than the number of PJ articles found in the coverage of the arsenal raid incident. The difference in the number of WJ and PJ articles became more distinct over these two incidents. Lastly, in the coverage of the Takbai demonstration, there was a sharp contrast between the number of WJ and PN news articles when the number of PJ reports was more than two times higher than the number of WJ articles.

From Figure D, presented above, it can be concluded that *The Nation's* style of reporting was pro-peace in all of the three incidents, as seen from the fact that the number of PJ articles increased from the coverage of the arsenal raid incident to the coverage of Kruese Mosque incident and the Takbai demonstration. On the other hand, the number of WJ reports was lower than the number of PJ articles in the coverage of all three incidents. It is worth mentioning that by comparing the findings from the classification of WJ/PJ articles from the two analyses — the main analysis of the application of 13 WJ/PJ indicators and the four broad WJ/PJ orientations — the results on the number of war, peace and

neutral/balanced news reports are in the same direction. At this point, I believe that the two stages of content analysis worked efficiently in the validation and cross-checking of the data.

	Arsenal raid	Kruese Mosque	Takbai demonstration
War-oriented	13	17	6
Propaganda-oriented	1	3	4
Elite-oriented	1	5	4
Victory-oriented	-	-	-
Peace/conflict oriented	2	6	5
Truth-oriented	4	12	13
People-oriented	9	14	15
Solution-oriented	3	5	4
Neutral stories	2	12	6
Total (news)=	35	74	57

Table B: The number of news articles as classified by the four broad orientations of WJ/PJ in each of the three incidents.

Table B shows the findings from a content analysis of the four broad WJ/PJ orientations to the conflict coverage of *The Nation* across the three major incidents. People-oriented was the frame most used in the coverage; 38 out of 166 articles were classified as having people-oriented frames. People-oriented refers to when a news report focuses on local people as news actors and sources. The number of people-oriented reports identified for each incident was 9 in the arsenal raid coverage, 14 in the Kruese Mosque coverage and 15 in the Takbai demonstration coverage. It is also worth mentioning that the number of articles found in this study that were produced under the opposite elite-oriented frame was surprisingly low; a total of 10 articles had elite-oriented as their frame. This point stresses the peace journalism style of reporting of *The Nation*, which placed more emphasis on people than on the authorities.

The study found a total of 36 news articles with a war-oriented frame, which makes war-oriented the second most used frame in *The Nation's* coverage of the three incidents. War-oriented refers to reporting a conflict from a here and now perspective, an us and them paradigm, with an emphasis on the visible effects of violence, and placing 'war' as the main focus of the story. In the coverage of the arsenal raid and Kruese Mosque incidents, war-oriented articles were found in the highest number (13 and 17 articles, respectively) compared to other frames. However, the number of war-oriented articles dropped substantially to 6 in the reporting of the Takbai demonstration. In my reading, the Takbai demonstration signified the injustice and mistreatment of the Muslim minority by the Thai state, and the findings show that *The Nation* chose not to put 'war' as the focus of its articles but instead to place 'people' as the main focus of the coverage of the Takbai incident.

The third most used frame was truth-oriented, accounting for 29 articles. Truth-oriented refers to a news report that focuses on uncovering lies, and exposing truths from all sides. It is interesting to see that the truth-oriented frame was applied to the news reports in a much higher proportion than propaganda-oriented and elite-oriented frames, which suggests that *The Nation* made an attempt to investigate the truth behind the incidents more than relying solely on the authorities as its sources. Truth-oriented reports were largely found in in the coverage of the Kruese Mosque incident (12 articles) and the Takbai demonstration incidents (13 articles). The reports in *The Nation* with a truth-oriented frame often echoed the voices of different sides involved in or affected by the conflict in an attempt to uncover the truth and for justice to be served. The two incidents share one thing in common: the government was seen as the wrongdoer. This point is reflected in the finding that *The Nation* used the elite-oriented and propaganda-oriented frames less as time progressed, and placed more emphasis on producing articles with truth-oriented and people-oriented frames in the representation of the incidents.

In sum, the findings from the analysis of the four broad WJ/PJ orientations show that the most used frame in *The Nation's* representation of the southern conflict was 'people-oriented', while the second most used frame was 'truth-oriented', and the third was "war-oriented". On the other hand, the findings from the analysis of the 13 WJ/PJ indicators show that 'multiparty orientation' (PJ7), 'focus on causes and consequences' (PJ5) and 'focus on the visible effects of violence' (WJ2) were the main indicators

found in the highest frequency in *The Nation's* coverage. The findings from the two analyses illustrate that *The Nation* engaged a peace journalism approach in its reporting by including voices from all sides involved in or affected by the conflict, and providing the background of the conflict in its reporting. However, at the same time, the newspaper also employed a war journalism approach, especially its focus on the visible effects of violence, in its representation of the conflict.

The findings from the two analyses reveal somewhat similar results and it can be concluded from this that the style of reporting used in the coverage of the three southern conflict incidents by *The Nation* followed a peace journalism approach.

Appendix VI

List of the Interviewees (presented with pseudonyms)

1. Chatri (Editor, *Bangkok Post*) (interviewed 8th April 2013)
 - Chatri was sent to the south to work in 2004, and worked on the southern conflict until 2006. Chatri joined the Issara News Center in 2005 when it was first set up. He is now an editor, working from the newspaper's Bangkok desk.
2. Damrong (Field reporter/journalist, *The Nation*; Freelance journalist) (interviewed on 23rd May 2013)
 - Damrong is considered to be one of the journalists most specialised in the southern conflict. He has been working in the conflict area and has a good relationship with the locals. Damrong has published books and many articles related to the southern conflict.
3. Kowit (Journalist, *The Nation*) (interviewed 1st April 2013)
 - Kowit has been working on covering the southern conflict from 2004 until now. He is considered to be one of the journalists most specialised in the southern conflict because of the continuity in his work. Kowit joined the Issara news Center when it was first set up in 2005. Kowit currently writes articles on the southern conflict for Issara News Agency's website.
4. Patra (Journalist, *Bangkok Post*) (interviewed 4th April 2013)
 - Patra works at the foreign and international news desk. She has never been sent to the conflict area; however, she has covered the southern conflict news (since 2004), especially when other countries or international organisations are involved.
5. Pokin (Director, the Thai Journalists Association) (interviewed 3rd April 2013)
 - Pokin used to work for *Bangkok Post*. He currently works at the TJA. He has published books and articles on the southern conflict under the TJA.
6. Somsak (Senior journalist/editor, *The Nation*) (interviewed 1st April 2013)
 - Somsak worked on covering the southern conflict during 2004-2006. He has close ties with the academics in the field. He has also published two books on the southern conflict. He currently works on the international news desk. In 2013, Somsak went to Malaysia

with a group of representatives from the Thai government for the latest rounds of peacetalks.

7. Suda (Field reporter/journalist, *Bangkok Post*) (interviewed 4th April 2013)

- Suda was sent to the conflict area during 2001-2003, and has been working in the area since. She joined the Issara News Center when it was established in 2005. She has built a good relationship with the locals and the army. She is considered to be one of the journalists most specialised in the southern conflict.