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**Communication policy and national development: A  
comparative analysis of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand**

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**California State University, Fresno, 1990**

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## ABSTRACT

### COMMUNICATION POLICY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND THAILAND

This study explored the nature of communication policies related to national development goals in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. A comparative analysis, using a historical-descriptive method, was used to understand how past and present political, social, and economic factors impact on communication planning for development in each of the countries. The policies were also evaluated based on their effectiveness in meeting desired objectives. Historical analysis shows that all three nations have had a significant amount of Western influence in their political, social, economic, and media environments. To counteract this, national objectives which reflect alternative approaches to development have been instituted. Included in such objectives are the pursuit of democratic ideals, the encouragement of self-reliance, and regional cooperation in development undertakings. The findings, however, reveal an over-all lack of specific communication policies directly related to pursuing national development goals. Future directions in communication policy and planning are discussed.

Enrique Caudal Bonus  
May 1990



COMMUNICATION POLICY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MALAYSIA,  
THE PHILIPPINES, AND THAILAND

by  
Enrique Caudal Bonus

A thesis  
submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The power of the mass media as a tool for disseminating and exchanging information on a large-scale basis has long been recognized by media practitioners and communication researchers as an undisputed fact. With the rapid growth and development of mass communications technology, more and more countries are beginning to show concern over the ways such technologies can be properly utilized for particular national goals. Since modern technology has also brought about the integration of countries into a global communications network, individual societies have begun to confront the problems associated with co-existing with other nations. Central to these problems is the transfer and exchange of communications technology and content among nations.

The necessity of having to deal with such issues or problems has forced many nations to scrutinize and closely monitor the public policies that regulate the public's use of mass media technologies. Numerous developing countries and international organizations have also started to look into policies that directly affect the conduct of information and technology exchange on an international level. The important linkages that exist between the uses

of mass media technology and sociopolitical development and the orientation of media policy towards national development are only two of the many issues that have earned considerable attention.

Because of the vital role played by public policy in the mass media structure of any given society, an analysis of the nature, formulation, and implementation of communication policies is offered in this study. Particular emphasis is placed on communication policies employed by developing countries largely because of the lack of significant research undertaken in their context and because of their status as emerging development centers.

#### Statement of the Problem

In recent years, mass communication researchers have expressed a growing concern about the role of the mass media and new information technologies in the development of Third World countries. Studies on this issue focus on the problems associated with the social, economic, and political implications brought about by the importation of technology from the developed countries.

Some scholars advocate the modernization of media systems in emerging countries along the paths that Western or industrialized nations have followed.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Lerner, "Toward a Communication Theory of Modernization: A Set of Considerations," Communications and Political Development, ed. Lucian W. Pye (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), 327-350.

criticize the transfer of communication content and technology from industrialized to developing countries by suggesting that such a transfer erodes the cultural identity of developing countries and makes them more economically dependent on industrialized nations and multinational corporations.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the crucial issue concerning the use of communication as a tool for national development has attracted close scrutiny, widespread debate, and innumerable challenges in academic as well as professional and political circles. Evidence indicates that the mass media and new information technologies have been used successfully in Third World development projects aimed at improving agriculture, health, and education.<sup>3</sup> Yet, other evidence suggests that Third World countries are experiencing economic and cultural difficulties as a result of their reliance on imported communication content and technology.<sup>4</sup>

While no consensus has yet been reached on effectively dealing with such problems, communication researchers and media practitioners nevertheless agree that public policy is

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Golding, "Media Role in National Development: Critique of a Theoretical Orthodoxy," Journal of Communication 24, no. 3 (1974): 39-53.

<sup>3</sup> Heather E. Hudson, ed., New Directions in Satellite Communications: Challenges for North and South (Dedham: Artech House, 1985).

<sup>4</sup> Rita Atwood and Emile G. McAnany, eds., Communication and Latin American Society: Trends in Critical Research, 1960-1985 (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986).



of vital importance within the context of these arguments. Evidently, the focal point of studies in the area of policy research has included the scrutiny of policy-making institutions of both local governments and international organizations that are directly responsible for policy creation in the area of mass communication. As a result, a number of scholars have argued that the potential benefits of using mass communication to further development goals in Third World countries can only be achieved through careful policy formulation and implementation.<sup>5</sup>

Concern for the critical issues involved in the relationship of mass communication and national development has fostered policy research undertakings in specific emerging countries. As in many countries in Latin America and Africa, the need for an examination of policies concerning the use of new communication technologies is also felt in the developing nations of Southeast Asia. An exploration into the nature of such policies as employed in the countries of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand is, therefore, offered. This study also examines the variety of complex factors which are considered by these countries as they shape effective communication policies for national development.

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<sup>5</sup> Oswaldo Capriles, "From National Communication Policies to the New International Information Order: Some Lessons for Research," New Structures of International Communication?: The Role of Research (Leicester: IAMCR, 1982), 10-59.

### Purpose of the Study

Communication policy studies have been undertaken by both media and political organizations as well as academic institutions. Numerous research projects have focused on policies used by specific countries and international organizations. However, many of these studies have been concentrated in the developing nations of Latin America and Africa. This study fills the void created by the lack of policy research in Southeast Asia, where governments are also grappling with the issues of communications technology transfer and exchange.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the nature of communication policies in three emerging countries of Southeast Asia: Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Specifically, the research emphasis is on the study of the policies that regulate or control the structure, organization, and utilization of broadcast media resources for purposes of national development.

A comparative assessment of the similarities and differences of these policies on a country-to-country basis is also offered to identify how policies are consistent with specific national realities. Furthermore, an exploration into the future directions of policy planning in these emerging societies is undertaken to provide a better understanding of the implications and trends of communication policy at the present. The research is also

expected to contribute useful data for further study of communication policy by scholars as well as practitioners engaged in policy-making.

#### Scope of the Study

This historical-descriptive study will focus on the public policies in communication found in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The ways in which the policies are formulated and implemented will be assessed according to their orientation towards meeting national goals for each of these countries.

The next chapter provides a background on the rise of mass communication policy research at national as well as international levels. A discussion is also offered on the current debates concerning the processes of development in Third World nations with implications for the use of communication as an instrument for nation-building. The ways in which these research issues are reflected in communication policy planning and implementation is then analyzed to form an explicit explanation of the conceptual framework that guides this study. Research questions are presented at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the methodology used in this research work. Chapters 4 and 5 report the findings gathered in response to the research questions. These chapters will offer a brief history and description of communication policies in each country. The description

will include how these policies were created, what these policies are, how they are implemented, and which of them have been most successful and why.

Chapter 6 offers a discussion of the findings, the limitations of the study, and some suggested directions for future research on the subject.

## Chapter 2

### RESEARCH ISSUES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Communication, by its very nature, is an indispensable component of any society. In virtually all levels of interaction, exchange of information oftentimes takes place with the use of a variety of tools or avenues that serve as conduits for sharing ideas. The concept of mass communication, or the exchange of information involving large numbers of people, has made possible the extensive use of such tools.<sup>1</sup>

In many societies, this utilization of communication systems is regulated through public policies.

The ways in which communication is used, the networks through which it flows, the structures of the media system, the regulatory framework for the system, and the decisions of the people who operate it, are all the outcome of communication policies. Policies are the principles, rules and guidelines on which the system is built and may be specifically formulated or remain largely implicit.<sup>2</sup>

The need for the establishment of communication policies has a basis in a society's demand for the structuring and organization of communication systems

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<sup>1</sup> David R. Maines and Carl J. Couch, "On the Indispensability of Communication for Understanding Social Relationships and Social Structure," Communication and Social Structure, ed. David R. Maines and Carl J. Couch (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), 3-18.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lloyd Sommerland, National Communication Systems: Some Policy Issues and Options (Paris: UNESCO, 1975), 7.

available to the public. While some policies may take the form of implicit norms imbedded in social and cultural codes, most countries have recognized the importance of formulating formal doctrines for the use of communication tools by their citizens. The reasons are manifold. One is the necessity of protecting public and national interests. Another is the promotion of specific goals intended to satisfy the needs and wants of the public.<sup>3</sup>

In the creation and implementation of communication policies, societies are beginning to take into account the social, political, and economic factors that affect the conduct of mass communication. The use of modern communication tools by the public has also altered communication activities, relationships, and patterns within societies on national as well as international levels.<sup>4</sup> These considerations have attracted the interest of mass communication scholars over the past decade.

#### Background

Mass communication research in the field of communication policy has been described by numerous scholars as a relatively new area of study.<sup>5</sup> Varying accounts have

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<sup>3</sup> Sommerland, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Marco A. R. Dias et al., National Communication Policy Councils (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ithiel de Sola Pool, "The Rise of Communications Policy Research," Journal of Communication 24, no. 2 (1974): 31.

been offered regarding the exact time when mass communication scholars started to become directly concerned with policy planning. However, a number of researchers agree that the rise of interest in the study of policy-making may be attributable to the increasing awareness, felt in the 1950s and 1960s, of the nature and powers of mass communication in the context of any societal interaction. As such, communication studies began to focus on the public policies that regulate, control, or affect communication flow.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the rapid increase of new information technologies after the 1950s may have also spurred the growth of communication policy research.<sup>7</sup> Particular examples of these technologies include satellite communication, cable television, fiber optics technology, facsimile or FAX machinery, digital recording, and high-definition television (HDTV).<sup>8</sup> The development of these innovations has been brisk and marked with a multitude of

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<sup>6</sup> Dias et al., 8.

<sup>7</sup> Although the entry of policy research as a category in the area of mass communication research occurred only a few years ago, other disciplines, particularly legal research, were already dealing with communication policy as a specific research interest long before mass communication scholarship did. It could then be said that only recently did the issues surrounding the social implications of new communication technology and public policy become coalesced to form a specific area of concern for mass communication scholars.

<sup>8</sup> Pool, 31.

mass producers competing for international markets, as well as an influx of consumers eager to replace their outdated machines.

This feverish growth of communication technology paved the way for an expansion of innovative spirit among the century's inventors and technocrats. On the other hand, such developments in communications also brought about problems in the ways consumers dealt with the changes, the manners in which industry coped with the increasing demands, and most importantly, in the courses of action that political institutions had to take as a response to the alterations in communication system use. Existing communication laws, media guidelines, and broadcasting regulations, for example, had to be modified to accommodate the influx of cable programming and other technologies. In the case of new inventions, new regulations had to be created in areas where none had existed before.<sup>9</sup>

Such problems brought about new areas of interest for researchers in communications policy planning. Pool noted in 1974 that

we are now at the point, on the exponential acceleration of change, where major innovations in our

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<sup>9</sup> William H. Melody, "The Role of Advocacy in Public Policy Planning," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 165-181; Janet Wasko, "New Methods of Analyzing Media Concentration," Policy Research in Telecommunications, ed. Vincent Mosco (Norwood: Ablex, 1984), 213-219.



communications systems are coming every decade, and there is no reason to expect that acceleration to stop. We are entering a period in which the whole communications system will be in a process of constant flux. That makes communications system itself an object of research. The important issues for scholars looking at the next decade are not only how people behave in the existing communications systems, but what the communications systems [themselves] will be.<sup>10</sup>

This fast-paced acceleration of communication technology also provided a stimulus for researchers in academic institutions, as well as in government and private foundations, to work hand in hand on numerous communications systems studies. In the United States, research projects based in universities and funded by private and public organizations were undertaken to study the economic, technical, and educational dimensions of cable programming. Other institutions focused their studies on the social and political issues of using new communication technologies as they relate to policy creation, implementation, and evaluation. Major universities also began to offer specific courses aimed at studying communications law, social implications of policy, and communication economics.<sup>11</sup>

In other countries, policy research was also oriented to studying means of using the new technologies, particularly the use of satellites and other communication

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<sup>10</sup> Pool, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas H. Martin, "Information and Communication Policy Research in the United States: The Researcher as Advocate, Facilitator, and Staff Member," Progress in Communication Sciences, ed. Brenda Dervin and Melvin J. Voigt, vol. 4 (Norwood: Ablex, 1984), 23-42; Pool, 33-34.

facilities that have the capability of reaching out to the rural areas.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, academicians and mass media practitioners also tackled a wide variety of subjects ranging from the regulatory aspects of ownership, licensing, and distribution of mass media systems to the exploration and determination of cost-efficiency measures that can be applied to media system use.<sup>13</sup>

The United Nations and its agencies, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have made significant contributions to the field of communication policy research, particularly in the arena of international communications development. Pool concurs that

UNESCO has probably done more than any other single organization to promote the study and research of communication needs of the developing areas. UNESCO studies consider such matters as the needs for radio, press agencies, newsprint, mimeographed newspapers, communication satellites, organized viewing and listening groups, and journalism training in developing countries. It has sponsored institutions and experiments as well as publications and conferences.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to UNESCO, there are other United Nations

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<sup>12</sup> Edward W. Ploman, "Communications Policy and Planning: A Comparative Perspective with Particular Emphasis on Broadcasting," Communications Policy for National Development: A Comparative Perspective, ed. Majid Teheranian, Farhad Hakimzadeh, and Marcello L. Vidale (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 51-77.

<sup>13</sup> Gail M. Martin, "The Social Component in Communications Policy Research," Gazette 22, no. 1 (1976): 18-25; Pool, 35.

<sup>14</sup> Pool, 34.

agencies like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) which have manifested strong involvement in the fields of policy formulation, adoption of international legal principles, planning, and research.<sup>15</sup> The cooperative activities that have resulted from this conglomeration of nations have led to a growing awareness and concern for the critical issues surrounding communication policy in many parts of the world, particularly in emerging nations.

#### Development Issues

A major topic of interest that has attracted not only research scrutiny but also considerable debate among mass communication scholars and practitioners is the use of communication within the dynamics of nation-building. Underlying the issues surrounding the role of communication in the modernization process of countries is the recent shift in the theoretical and conceptual assumptions regarding development.

The roots of the issues can be traced to the rise of the United States as a world power right after World War II. In the years following, significant gains were made in the areas of technological innovation, rural development, and leadership in world affairs.

The decade of the 1950s in America was characterized by a mixture of optimism in the moral correctness of

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<sup>15</sup> Ploman, 64-66.

pluralist democracy and a fear of the perils of the imminent communist threat. Foreign policy combined a mixture of assistance under the Marshall Plan for European reconstruction after the devastation of WWII with additional aid to developing countries to promote modernization and stem the tide of world communism.<sup>16</sup>

The promotion of modernization included the transfer of modern communication technology from the United States to other countries. Along with the exportation of such technology came the transfer of communication content that served the interests of media producers who discovered new markets in the international scene.<sup>17</sup>

This mode of technology and content transfer began to be investigated by mass communication scholars in the latter part of the 1950s. The works of Lerner, Schramm, Rogers, and Pye, among others, focused on the beneficial effects of mass media systems as a major component in the modernization of developing countries, or more specifically, in the transition of traditional to modern societies.<sup>18</sup> Central to these studies was the fundamental assertion that all

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<sup>16</sup> Marjorie Fish, "A Study of Mass Communication Research and Scholarship" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1984), p. 94.

<sup>17</sup> Cees J. Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications (New York: Longman, 1983), 1-23.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958); Lucian W. Pye, ed., Communications and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963); Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York: Free Press, 1962); Wilbur Schramm, Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1964).

societies are moving towards the same form of social, economic, and political organization that characterizes the existing highly-industrialized countries of the United States and Europe. Furthermore, in these developed countries, it was believed that

the information society represents the highest pinnacle of development, where an increasing proportion of economic resources is devoted to the production and distribution of information services and products.<sup>19</sup>

### Challenges

In the following years, a handful of mass communication researchers began to pose challenges to these traditional assumptions of modernization. Providing the impetus for such challenges were the criticisms voiced by a number of American and European scholars against the dominant positivist-oriented nature of North American mass communication research. Primarily, these "critical" scholars pointed out that the empiricist-positivist assumptions of objectivity in research and replicability of findings were flawed. Other opposing viewpoints against this so-called traditional mainstream effects research in mass communication included:

- (1) the lack of adequate theoretical underpinnings and the emphasis upon method in the research agenda,
- (2) the neglect of the influence of the social structure in assessing the importance of mass media in peoples' lives, and
- (3) the control of mass media

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<sup>19</sup> William H. Melody et al., eds., Communication, Information, and Culture: Annotated Bibliography (Vancouver: William H. Melody & Associates, 1985), 10.

research by the funding and grant allocation procedures of institutions.<sup>20</sup>

Critical scholars also began to question the validity of the development approach applied by the United States in the context of its assistance programs to the less developed nations. Essentially, the challenges came in the form of criticisms regarding the assumptions of the traditional modernization paradigm and its shortcomings in the actual experiences of developing societies.<sup>21</sup>

Studies during this period revealed that the notion of development, which stipulated that developing societies should follow the same path of modernization as the industrialized nations, became equated with the problems of dependency. Developing societies subjected to this form of modernization program were not modernizing. Instead, these countries were relying heavily on technology itself and as such, were becoming too dependent on the developed countries for financial resources. With the accompanying influx of multinational corporations that were actively engaged in marketing information goods and services across the globe, more "dependencies" were created.<sup>22</sup> Further, research

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<sup>20</sup> Fish, 99.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Golding, "Media Role in National Development: Critique of a Theoretical Orthodoxy," Journal of Communication 24, no. 3 (1974): 39-53.

<sup>22</sup> S. N. Eisenstadt, "The Changing Vision of Modernization and Development," Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years -- and the Next, ed. Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner (Honolulu: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1976), 31-

materials began questioning the alleged beneficial effects of imported media technology to developing countries. Findings pointed to the failure of the transfer of media technology and content in bringing about the desired modernization of developing countries.<sup>23</sup> As a result of such technology transfer, Third World nations began to experience not only an increase in poverty and political instability, but also cultural dependency and disharmony.<sup>24</sup> Dependence on the highly industrialized nations and multinational corporations encouraged the growth of debt-ridden economies. As the economic and social gap between the developed and developing nations began to grow, imbalances in international trade and in the flow of

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44; Heraldo Munoz, "The Various Roads to Development," From Dependency to Development: Strategies to Overcome Underdevelopment and Inequality, ed. Heraldo Munoz (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 1-11.

<sup>23</sup> Robert F. Arnove, "Sociopolitical Implications of Educational Television," Journal of Communication 25, no. 2 (1975): 144-156.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Fox de Cardona, "Multinational Television," Journal of Communication 25, no. 2 (1975): 122-127; Elihu Katz, "Television as a Horseless Carriage," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New Cultural Revolution, ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 381-392; John A. Lent, "The Price of Modernity," Journal of Communication 25, no. 2 (1975): 128-135; Jeremy Tunstall, "The American Role in Worldwide Mass Communication," Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures, ed. George Gerbner (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977), 3-13.

information among countries became increasingly visible.<sup>25</sup>

Proposals Regarding the  
Use of Communication  
for Development

In the light of the challenges posed against the modernization and dependency paradigms, a significant amount of mass communication research has called for conceptual shifts in the notion of development and the role of communication in society.<sup>26</sup> The bulk of research in this area represents varying points on a continuum of alternative models of development.

Initial proposals tackled the pros and cons in the introduction and use of new communication technologies for the attainment of national development goals.<sup>27</sup> On one side

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<sup>25</sup> Sarath L. B. Amunugama, "Communication Issues Confronting the Developing Nations," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 56-62; Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "The Global News Wholesalers," Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures, ed. George Gerbner (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977), 13-20; Mustapha Masmoudi, "The New World Information Order," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 14-27.

<sup>26</sup> For example: William Derman and S. Whiteford, Social Impact Analysis and Development Planning in the Third World (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Robert Hornik, Development Communication: Information, Agriculture, and Nutrition in the Third World (New York: Longman, 1988); Herald Munoz, ed., From Dependency to Development: Strategies to Overcome Underdevelopment and Inequality (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981); Breda Pavlic et al., eds., The Challenges of South-South Cooperation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983).

<sup>27</sup> George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody, eds., Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution" (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973).



is the call for a continued use and application of new information technologies, particularly satellite communication systems, as beneficial instruments for social change and development in Third World countries.<sup>28</sup> For example, Frutkin's assessment of a 1974 satellite broadcast experiment jointly conducted by the United States and India revealed the cost-effective potentials of direct broadcasting in education and national development for developing countries.<sup>29</sup>

At the opposite end, however, are other scholars who view this approach as detrimental to societies that aim for liberation from the economic and cultural constraints posed by multinational corporations which market such technologies. Schiller argues that "new communication technology, rather than diminishing, [widens] the communication gaps in the poorer nations and [accentuates]

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<sup>28</sup> Dieter Kimbel, "An Assessment of the Computer Telecommunications Complex in Europe, Japan, and North America," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 147-163; O. W. Riegel, "Satellite Communication and National Power," Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures, ed. George Gerbner (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977), 63-72.

<sup>29</sup> Arnold W. Frutkin, "Space Communications and the Developing Countries," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 369-380.

economic disparities between classes.<sup>30</sup>

Other writers recommend more practical solutions to the question of new technology use by suggesting the encouragement of alternative modes of technologies,<sup>31</sup> the use of "small media,"<sup>32</sup> the necessity of emphasizing local organization and decentralization,<sup>33</sup> and the realization of the benefits that can be reaped from the application of participatory communication strategies.<sup>34</sup> Hornik proposed the "creation of an all-purpose rural telecommunications infrastructure" with the understanding that such "technology can take a myriad of roles in development and that its success in those roles depends on how it is done and in what circumstances."<sup>35</sup> However, these recommendations have not

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert I. Schiller, "Computer Systems: Power for Whom and for What?" Journal of Communication 28, no. 4 (1978): 192.

<sup>31</sup> Ronald Rice and Edwin B. Parker, "Telecommunications Alternative for Developing Countries," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 262-275.

<sup>32</sup> R. J. Gwyn, "Rural Radio in Bolivia: A Case Study," Journal of Communication 33, no. 2 (1983): 79-87.

<sup>33</sup> Luis Gonzaga Motta, "National Communications Policies: Grass Roots Alternatives," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 382-388.

<sup>34</sup> Fernando Reyes Matta, "A Social View of Information," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 63-68.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Hornik, "Communication as Complement in Development," Journal of Communication 30, no. 2 (1980): 23.

escaped criticism largely because the solutions themselves still call for technology importation and the objectives for such undertaking ultimately follow the same path of the traditional modernization approach.<sup>36</sup>

In other works, scholars focus on the larger power structures that affect the conduct of communication use in development. Specifically, the proposals in this research area lay out the different strategies on how to deal with multinational corporations. Some writers say that the presence of multinational corporations is beneficial to developing societies because they stimulate growth within these countries by transferring capital, technology, and knowledge.<sup>37</sup> The opposing camp, however, suggests that multinational corporations are self-serving since they are only interested in capital gains for themselves and therefore, ignore the interests of the Third World countries. Moreover, dealing with these corporations only results in creating new forms of dependency.<sup>38</sup>

Additional literature extends the role of power structures in development to the major actors within the

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<sup>36</sup> Melody et al., 11.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph N. Pelton, "INTELSAT and Initiatives for Third World Development," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 411-417.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert I. Schiller, "Transnational Media and National Development," National Sovereignty and International Communication, ed. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Herbert I. Schiller (Norwood: Ablex, 1979), 21-32.

social, economic, and political framework of Third World societies.<sup>39</sup> Proposals that were presented called for a rectification of the existing institutional structures which play significant roles in mass media use for development.<sup>40</sup> One recommendation stipulated that developing countries should aim for dialogues and establish cooperation between the public and private sectors of their societies and between the governments and industrial figures of industrialized societies, with the end goal of pursuing drastic changes in current unfair practices.<sup>41</sup> Another scheme included the development of strategies for implementing changes that are practical and in conformity with the reality of existing power structures. As such, the goal is not to dissociate from multinational corporations but to work out a determination of the volume and scope of

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<sup>39</sup> Rita Atwood and Sergio Mattos, "Mass Media Reform and Social Change: The Peruvian Experience," Journal of Communication 32, no. 2 (1982): 33-45; Goran Hedebro, Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical Review (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> Kaarle Nordenstreng and Tapio Varis, "The Nonhomogeneity of the National State and the International Flow of Communication," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 393-412.

<sup>41</sup> Rolf T. Wigand, "Direct Satellite Broadcasting: Definitions and Prospects," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 246-253.

trade with these institutions on the basis of national priorities.<sup>42</sup>

The concern for the social and cultural dimensions of development associated with communication and technology is also addressed by other researchers.<sup>43</sup> Essentially, writers who express such concerns call for research that can show a detailed analysis of structural factors that play significant roles in nation-building.<sup>44</sup> An example is Melody and Mansell's proposition for historical, institutional, and macro-level analyses of communication flows that can allow the development and implementation of solutions to the problem of media imperialism, among other things.<sup>45</sup> A suggestion was made regarding the screening of technological imports for purposes of protecting and

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<sup>42</sup> Herbert I. Schiller, "Authentic National Development Versus the Free Flow of Information and the New Communications Technology," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 467-480.

<sup>43</sup> Schiller, "Computer Systems," 193.

<sup>44</sup> Ploman, 71-77; Everett M. Rogers, "Future Directions in Communication Research: Toward Network Analysis and Convergence Models," New Structures of International Communication?: The Role of Research (Leicester: IAMCR, 1982), 122-136; Robert A. White, "Communication Strategies for Social Change: National Television Versus Local Public Radio," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 279-293.

<sup>45</sup> William H. Melody and Robin E. Mansell, "The Debate Over Critical vs. Administrative Research: Circularity or Challenge," Journal of Communication 33, no. 3 (1983): 103-116.

cultivating indigenous cultural values, as well as promoting grass roots awareness and active involvement of the citizenry in national development.<sup>46</sup> Other works in this area outline the need to "maximize the import of technical ideas while minimizing the import of hardware"<sup>47</sup> and the encouragement of indigenous programming that will express authentic cultural forms.<sup>48</sup>

A few researchers who have advocated structural reforms have also been quick to mention the much larger and more important element in the proposals that others have neglected or failed to see. These scholars share the view that any structural reform in the mass media system of a country necessitates a simultaneous change in the people's perception of mass communication processes. In order to allow for real and democratic reforms, alternative ways of treating information are necessary.

If information is conceived of as something people create from their message environment and put to use in ways they find most appropriate, then the focus of media reform strategies must shift from message senders to message receivers. Such a shift allows one to envision alternative media reform strategies designed

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<sup>46</sup> Gonzaga Motta, 382-388.

<sup>47</sup> Edwin B. Parker and Ali Mohammadi, "National Development Support Communication," Communications Policy for National Development: A Comparative Perspective, ed. Majid Teheranian, Farhad Hakimzadeh, and Marcello L. Vidale (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 183.

<sup>48</sup> Elihu Katz, "Cultural Continuity and Change: Role of the Media," National Sovereignty and International Communication, ed. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Herbert I. Schiller (Norwood: Ablex, 1979), 65-81.

to create receiver-based communication systems.<sup>49</sup>

Such proposals have had their share of criticism from other critical scholars who say that the suggestions are unrealistic because dependency is an inherent feature of existing institutional structures and an essential element of the current form of global capitalist organization. Included in the institutional structures are government constraints and economic pressures.<sup>50</sup> Emphasized in the arguments is the view that a democratized media can only be possible if Third World nations completely sever their dependency ties on Western mass media and other foreign sources of information. These scholars, who align themselves with the structuralist school of thought, focus particular attention on the alleged imbalance in the global information flow system by saying that

. . . the current order in international communication [is] extremely unjust and beyond redemption. The status quo is intolerable and cannot be saved through reforms. Reformists' offers of increased aid, technology, and training from the West to the Third World are [simply] "benevolent cosmetic surgery."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Atwood and Mattos, 42.

<sup>50</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, "Economic Dependence, Class Structure, and Underdevelopment Policy," Dependence and Underdevelopment: Latin America's Political Economy, ed. James D. Cockcroft, Andre Gunder Frank, and Dale L. Johnson (New York: Anchor, 1972), 19-45.

<sup>51</sup> William H. Meyer, Transnational Media and Third World Development: The Structure and Impact of Imperialism (Westport: Greenwood, 1988), 10, citing Phil Harris, "News Dependence and Structural Change," Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects, ed. Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1981), 360.

As such, structuralists have demanded a total replacement of the existing international systems of information by building another one that would permit a balanced flow of communication from country to country.<sup>52</sup>

The work of the United Nations and its agencies has also contributed to the research literature concerning the issues of communication and development.<sup>53</sup> Particular emphasis is placed on international cooperation in the areas of research, communication development projects, economic and technical assistance, and regular symposia.<sup>54</sup>

One vision that has earned the close scrutiny of researchers in this field is the New World Information Order or NWIO, whose roots can be traced back to a 1974 position paper that called for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) through United Nations channels. At that time, Third World member countries of the United Nations, through a UNESCO forum, expressed concerns over an increase in poverty and Third World dependence on the industrialized West in terms of technology, finance, and trade. As such, they

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<sup>52</sup> Meyer, 10.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas L. McPhail, Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and Communication (Newbury Park: Sage, 1987); Kaarle Nordenstreng, "Defining the New International Information Order," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 28-36.

<sup>54</sup> William G. Harley, "UNESCO and the International Program for the Development of Communications," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 467-474.



"demanded . . . a fairer share of the world's resources and an alternative way of defining and applying concepts of development."<sup>55</sup>

Sean MacBride of Ireland headed the UNESCO International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems in 1977 and produced a report that was generally described as a "consensus of how the Commission sees the present communication order and foresees a new one."<sup>56</sup> The document, initially called the MacBride Report, eventually became known as the call for a New World Information and Communication Order by recommending the following points:

- (1) . . . more democratic social order . . . gained . . . by free, open, and balanced communications,
- (2) . . . elimination of imbalances and disparities in communication and its structures, and particularly in information flows,
- (3) . . . democratization of communication at national and international levels,
- (4) . . . development of communication patterns in accordance with each country's own conditions, needs, and traditions, and
- (5) . . . new attitudes for overcoming stereotyped thinking and the promotion of more understanding of diversity and plurality, with full respect for the dignity and equality of peoples living in different conditions and acting in different ways.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Rosemary Richter, "World Communication Issues," Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects, ed. Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1981), 58.

<sup>56</sup> Sean MacBride, Many Voices, One World (UNESCO: International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980). Rpt. in Mass Communication Yearbook, ed. D. C. Whitney and E. Wartella, vol. 3 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982), 209-235.

<sup>57</sup> MacBride, 213.

This UNESCO report has caused a variety of reactions. Opubor argues that the report has little to contribute to those who look for new theories and data about the field.<sup>58</sup> Nordenstreng considers the report as ahistorical because it treats communication history in isolation and does not link it with other social phenomena.<sup>59</sup> Others point out the inability of the report to propose realistic and practical solutions to the existing social problems.<sup>60</sup>

A more recent international activity that has attempted to confront problems related to communication and development was the formation of the Independent Commission for World Wide Telecommunications Development. Otherwise known as the Maitland Commission,<sup>61</sup> this group of experts

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<sup>58</sup> A. Opubor, "Groping Toward Elusive Concepts," Communication in the Eighties: A Reader on the MacBride Report, ed. Cees Hamelink (Rome: IDOC International, 1981). Rpt. in Mass Communication Yearbook, ed. D. C. Whitney and E. Wartella, vol. 3 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 237-240.

<sup>59</sup> Kaarle Nordenstreng, "The Paradigm of a Totality," Communication in the Eighties: A Reader on the MacBride Report, ed. Cees Hamelink (Rome: IDOC International, 1981). Rpt. in Mass Communication Yearbook, ed. D. C. Whitney and E. Wartella, vol. 3 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 241-249.

<sup>60</sup> Oswaldo Capriles, "Some Remarks on the New International Information Order," Communication in the Eighties: A Reader on the MacBride Report, ed. Cees Hamelink (Rome: IDOC International, 1981). Rpt. in Mass Communication Yearbook, ed. D. C. Whitney and E. Wartella, vol. 3 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 257-259; John C. Merrill, "The Global Perspective," Global Journalism: A Survey of the World's Mass Media, ed. John C. Merrill (New York: Longman, 1983), 57-58.

<sup>61</sup> After its chairman, Sir Donald Maitland of the United Kingdom.

from both the developed and developing countries has made recommendations that basically call for the appropriation of resources for the expansion of telecommunications facilities in emerging nations. The Commission also proposed the establishment of an advisory board that

will provide the necessary policy direction for [the Commission-proposed] Center [for Telecommunications Development] to ensure that it will be responsive to the needs and views of its potential financiers as well as its beneficiaries.<sup>62</sup>

The withdrawal of the United States from the UNESCO in 1984, however, became a major deterrent to the operations of the Maitland Commission. The United States began encouraging private sector involvement in international communication affairs and government financial assistance were re-directed to other agencies.<sup>63</sup> Many scholars believe that this move strengthened the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) as a bilateral foreign assistance arm devoted to providing economic support and training of personnel in developing countries. Lately, the AID's position as a rich source of assistance for

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<sup>62</sup> William L. Ellinghaus and Larry G. Forrester, "A U.S. Effort to Provide a Global Balance: The Maitland Commission Report," Journal of Communication 35, no. 2 (1985): 17.

<sup>63</sup> Ellinghouse and Forrester, 19; Michael R. Gardner, "Private Sector Initiatives: The U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute," Journal of Communication 35, no. 2 (1985): 22-26.

development projects in emerging nations has received considerable attention.<sup>64</sup>

Adding to the list of proposals suggested for Third World nations that are currently dealing with conceptual shifts in the notion of development is the work of scholars who advocate regional cooperation as a complement to national development strategies.<sup>65</sup> Hamelink suggests that despite the heterogeneous nature of Third World states as a collective entity, these countries could mobilize resources to their advantage while adhering to carefully formulated strategies. Specifically,

there are currently promising signs of increasing commitment from developing countries to engage in economic and technical cooperation among themselves. Such increased regional and interregional joint ventures can strengthen local capacity for self-reliant development and enhance conditions for collective bargaining power.<sup>66</sup>

In terms of communication as a tool for development, significant emphasis is placed on international cooperation concerning funding for research, for the purchase of

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<sup>64</sup> Clifford H. Block, "Bilateral Aid in Communications: The U.S. Agency for International Development," Journal of Communication 35, no. 2 (1985): 27-38.

<sup>65</sup> For example: Margaret Hardiman and James Midgley, The Social Dimensions of Development: Social Policy and Planning in the Third World (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1982); Meheroo Jussawalla and D. M. Lamberton, eds., Communication Economics and Development (Elmsford: Pergamon Press, 1982); Marjorie L. Suriyamongkol, Politics of ASEAN Economic Co-operation: The Case of ASEAN Industrial Projects (Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988).

<sup>66</sup> Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy, 127.

selected telecommunication equipment, the sharing of technical expertise, as well as the establishment of joint investments in communication industries.<sup>67</sup>

### Policy Implications

A growing consensus among mass communication scholars who have addressed the issues of communication use in the development process is the necessity and utility of aligning national communication policies for national objectives.<sup>68</sup> Schiller emphasizes this point by suggesting that

the issue now is to create a state of mind that does not accept unquestioningly the transfer of already developed technical equipment and the accompanying process. Communications (consciousness) policy demands, if it is to be liberating and not merely an excuse for a repetition of past historical blunders, a critical selectivity of technology, process, and information based as far as possible on self-determined national (community) needs and aspirations.<sup>69</sup>

Findings have shown that the links between developmental communication and effective policy formulation should be analyzed in the context of the proposals that have been suggested. Along with this is the careful consideration of the important social, economic, and

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<sup>67</sup> Pavlic et al., 405-412.

<sup>68</sup> Luis Ramiro Beltran and Elizabeth Fox de Cardona, "Latin America and the United States: Flaws in the Free Flow of Information," National Sovereignty and International Communication, ed. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Herbert I. Schiller (Norwood: Ablex, 1979), 33-64.

<sup>69</sup> Schiller, "Authentic National Development," 479.

political issues concerning development.<sup>70</sup>

The rapidly changing environment in which these issues are evolving demands that a sound empirical and historical framework be constructed as a basis for enlightened public policy. This is a challenge for academic institutions as well as for those who will design and implement such a policy.<sup>71</sup>

Hamelink deals with policy-making in more specific terms by proposing a model for the establishment of national information policies, based on participatory decision-making processes, for countries which are aiming for autonomy in their development processes.

In the formulation of information policies, objectives have to be clearly defined. Resources necessary for the achievement of these objectives have to be carefully analyzed. Resources and policy objectives have to be matched in light of overall developmental goals and principles. In the implementation of the information policy, resources will have to be deployed so as to create infrastructures and software that meet the defined objectives. For the evaluation of information policy, some form of monitoring has to be established through which corrections and adjustments are made possible.<sup>72</sup>

The work of the United Nations extends the critical importance of careful policy planning and implementation within an international framework by sponsoring comparative

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<sup>70</sup> Oswaldo Capriles, "From National Communication Policies to the New International Information Order: Some Lessons for Research," New Structures of International Communication?: The Role of Research (Leicester: IAMCR, 1982), 31; Gonzaga Motta, 382-388.

<sup>71</sup> G. Russell Pipe, "Transnational Data Flow: An International Policy Survey," World Communications: A Handbook, ed. George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert (New York: Longman, 1984), 201.

<sup>72</sup> Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy, 102.

country studies and conducting conferences among its member nations.<sup>73</sup> Many of these undertakings emphasize international cooperation and coordination in the attainment of agreed objectives and considerations. For example, underlying most of UNESCO's symposium agenda is the necessity of incorporating communication policy plans into an "overall national policy for development and progress," with special planning and policy implementation assistance accorded to Third World nations.<sup>74</sup> The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems has also stressed the democratic participation of the citizenry in every nation that engages in policy making. In the Commission's final report, it was agreed that

every country should develop its communication patterns in accordance with its own conditions, needs, and traditions, and cultures [in order to] strengthen its integrity, independence, and self-reliance.<sup>75</sup>

#### Conceptual Framework

The variety of critical issues concerning the redefinition of the concept of development in Third World countries that have surfaced lately raise key points that

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<sup>73</sup> UNESCO, Dynamics of Nation-Building With Particular Reference to the Role of Communication (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1983).

<sup>74</sup> Patricia Edgar and Syed A. Rahim, eds., Communication Policy in Developed Countries (London: Kegan Paul, 1983), 2.

<sup>75</sup> MacBride, 230.

serve as underlying assumptions of this study. Regarding the issue of Third World development, the traditional concept of modernization that creates dependency on developed countries and cultural disharmony as a result of excessive reliance on imported technology is rejected in favor of alternative paths to development. The emerging alternative constitutes the freedom of each developing nation to choose its own strategy based on national goals and needs and to evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies on the basis of greater equality concerning the "socioeconomic benefits of development."<sup>76</sup> Other key points of this alternative path include the necessity of integrating traditional and modern political, economic, and social systems that are adequate, viable, and beneficial to the country; the demand for popular participation in decentralized development planning; the emphasis on achieving self-reliance in development; and the promotion of international as well as regional cooperation in various development endeavors.<sup>77</sup>

These assumptions about development are further reflected in the underlying notions of communication as a tool for development that this study adheres to. The

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<sup>76</sup> Everett M. Rogers, "The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm: Reflections on Diffusion Research," Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years and the Next, ed. Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner (Honolulu: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1976), 52.

<sup>77</sup> Rogers, "The Passing," 50.



traditional linear view of the communication process that treats communication receivers as passive and predictable recipients of messages, that considers messages as concrete and received in the same way they are sent, and that adheres to the alleged effectiveness of sender-based information or top-down flow of communication, is altogether dismissed.

In place of these traditional assumptions is the position that communication is a dynamic exchange of information, with receivers having individual and distinct ways of getting and reacting to messages. Further, a central assumption guiding this research effort is that receiver-based information strategies are necessary components of effective communication systems.

In light of these assumptions, this study posits that an effective national communication policy must be comprehensive enough to include clearly defined goals, priorities, resources, and functions. The policies should also incorporate the elements of political participation in policy-formulation and evaluation; the strategies necessary to control the importation of information technology and content; the alternative communication programs required to promote independence and self-sufficiency; the protection and promotion of indigenous cultural forms attuned to the interests of the public; and the mechanisms necessary for pursuing international and regional cooperation.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy, 101-117.

The preceding literature outlining the major communication debates within the context of new development strategies suggests two major points: (1) that developing countries can make use of communication and communication tools as a complement to national development strategies of their own, and (2) that national communication policies can be oriented towards meeting development goals.

In light of these issues, this study offers an analysis of the communication policies that guide the conduct of development in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

The comparative study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the political, social, and economic characteristics of these countries at present?
  - a. What changes can be seen in each of the countries' history that are reflected in the changes of their development goals?
  - b. What major similarities and differences in political, social, and economic characteristics do these countries have?
2. What, if any, are the national development goals of each country?
  - a. How do these goals reflect a shift from the traditional approach of modernization to alternative approaches like equal distribution of socioeconomic benefits; popular

- participation in determining national goals; integration of modern and traditional social, political, and economic systems that are beneficial to the country; encouragement of self-reliance; and regional cooperation?
- b. What major similarities and differences in national goals can be found in the countries?
3. What communication policies have been created in each of the countries?
- a. How do these communication policies reflect national development goals?
- b. How were these policies created? What goals, priorities, functions, and resources are stipulated in the policies? Do these policies include elements of public participation; guidelines on the importation of communication technology and content; alternative strategies for the encouragement of independence; self-sufficiency; the preservation and promotion of indigenous cultural forms; and regional cooperation?
- c. How different or similar are the communication policies among the countries?
4. Based on historical accounts, how effective have these communication policies been and why?
5. What future directions does communication policy

planning need to take in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand?

- a. How can communication policies be effective in attaining the national development objectives of these countries?
- b. What lessons can be learned from the use of media that can be oriented towards achieving democratic goals of other emerging countries?

## Chapter 3

### METHODS

The primary concern of this study is to analyze the nature of communication policies that have been formulated and implemented in three emerging nations. To undertake this research, various methodological approaches are employed.

A historical approach is used to understand the extent of influences in communication policy that have been brought about by political, social, and economic factors in each of the countries' past. This approach is also chosen to analyze communication policies and communication development by recognizing previous shifts in the national development strategies of the countries.

Placing the study of communication policies within a historical framework has been found to be a necessary procedure for understanding current trends in policy-making.<sup>1</sup> The procedure undertaken by the humanist historian is further underscored in this study for the purpose of discussing the development of communication policies over time and within the context of changes in the nations' institutional structures. As some historians would agree:

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<sup>1</sup> Cees Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications (New York: Longman, 1983).

The humanist [historian] is interested primarily in unique events and sequences, seeks to understand an event by understanding its context in a particular place and time, must generalize and make comparisons, but is reluctant to generalize too broadly lest sight is lost of the rich variety of human history.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, in order to offer a suitable context for the discussion and comparison of each of the countries' national development goals and communication policies, a brief history of the countries is described. These historical overviews deal with political, social, and economic factors that shaped or influenced the nature and development of communication within the countries. Current conditions of each country, with respect to political, economic, and social aspects, as well as existing media structures or facilities, are also reported.

To conduct the historical research, an empirical strategy proposed by Smith is employed.<sup>3</sup> Research questions are first specified to guide the study. Then, source materials are searched, collected, and analyzed. For the histories of the three countries, secondary sources are utilized. Examples of these sources include historical documents, books, journal/periodical articles, area and

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<sup>2</sup> David Paul Nord and Harold L. Nelson, "The Logic of Historical Research," Research Methods in Mass Communication, ed. G. H. Stempel and B. H. Westley (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 281-282.

<sup>3</sup> MaryAnn Yodelis Smith, "The Method of History," Research Methods in Mass Communication, ed. G. H. Stempel and B. H. Westley (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 305-319.

country handbooks, and other unpublished reference materials. Historical accounts of the nations from various authors are compared and combined with each other to report balanced and credible accounts. For example, the report on the history of the Philippines includes citations from both Filipino and non-Filipino historians. Informal interviews with students from Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand are also undertaken to verify authenticity and credibility of reference materials and provide minor translations of important documents.

Documentary analysis is then undertaken after data collection. The findings are presented in a narrative/descriptive style. Attempts are made to carefully extract pertinent material from credible sources by properly providing their identity and allowing varying viewpoints to surface. Cumulative data (historical/critical accounts and numerical data) from different sources are synthesized and analyzed to provide meaningful explanations to each research question. Some generalizations are also inferred.

In line with the research problems posed in this study, a comparative research methodology is used to draw distinctions and identify similarities among the ways in which three countries utilize the mass media for the attainment of their national development goals. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand were chosen as the sample countries because of the historical similarities they share

and their current status as emerging nations in Southeast Asia.

Scholars have found that comparative communication research is necessary for a better understanding of the current conditions prevailing in developing countries. Such research has been useful in studying international communication issues like news and information flows between countries and cultural dependency.<sup>4</sup> The utility of comparative methodologies has been stressed by researchers. For example, Edelstein states:

Comparative methods are essential in those areas to note the extent to which behaviors are universal and/or based upon understood dynamics, or if they are largely unique to the political and social structures, e.g., the contemporary and derived cultures in which they are found. The challenge to comparative communication research is to identify the important world problems that can be addressed most meaningfully and effectively.<sup>5</sup>

In this study, comparisons among the countries are conducted in the areas of historical and current conditions, national development goals, communication policies, and effectiveness of communication policies.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas H. Martin, "Information and Communication Policy Research in the United States: The Researcher as Advocate, Facilitator, and Staff Member," Progress in Communication Sciences, ed. Brenda Dervin and Melvin J. Voigt, vol. 4 (Norwood: Ablex, 1984), 23-42; Peter B. Orlik, "Comparative Media Systems: A Societal Approach," Mass Comm Review 6, no. 2 (1979): 17-24.

<sup>5</sup> Alex S. Edelstein, "Comparative Communication Research: A Response to World Problems," Progress in Communication Sciences, ed. Brenda Dervin and Melvin J. Voigt, vol. 4 (Norwood: Ablex, 1984), 62.



Immediately following the reports on historical and current conditions is the discussion of national development goals and communication policies of each country. The report on national development goals focuses on a review of specific government documents that stipulate state principles, national priorities for development, and general long-term economic plans. Sources utilized for this section are the countries' constitutions, other government publications, and books or articles that deal with the subject. Comparisons with regard to national development objectives are then discussed after the individual countries' overviews.

In discussing the present national development goals and communication policies of the countries, primary sources that were used mainly included government documents (such as constitutions), official legal publications (such as government circulars and decrees), and administrative handbooks (such as Information Malaysia, The KBP Standards Authority Primer, and Law of Mass Communication in Thailand). Secondary sources utilized in this section are published research works, trade publications, and related books and journal articles. Publication dates and places are checked to establish authenticity and credibility.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In an effort to gather more primary sources for this study, an attempt to contact pertinent personnel who are familiar with the subject of the research was done. Telephone calls and letters addressed to information officers in each of the countries' embassies in the United

The national communication policies that are studied include those which are explicitly stated by the governments of the countries. Policies which stipulate the roles or courses of action that mass media should play in the fulfillment of national development objectives are selected as the basic samples of study.

Other samples include those policies which deal with mass media regulation, i.e., censorship laws, issuance of licenses/permits, codes of ethics/professional conduct, guidelines on the general operation and management of mass media facilities, and promulgated standards of responsibility. This study does not include those policies which deal with other related (though more legal and technologically-oriented) aspects of communication activity, i.e., local and international copyright laws, policies on the operation of interactive exchange systems, regulations concerning cable access, telephone, telegraph, and computer-related information systems, and international laws on satellite operations and radiowave allocation. Although such communication-related activities are considered to be important aspects of international communication research, it is necessary to limit the concerns of this study to more general and outstanding features of communication policies within the framework of national development goals.

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States, however, did not produce any usable data.

The effectiveness of these communication policies on a per-country basis is also studied by discussing reports pertinent to the subject. The difficulty associated with the evaluation of policies is the apparent lack of materials that are openly critical of such government-instituted policies. Furthermore, first-hand observations allow for a more suitable measure of "effectiveness." This study, however, is limited to a data-gathering method that relies heavily on printed materials. Critiques of communication policy planning and implementation in each of the countries which are found in international/regional communication journals and related books constitute the primary sources for this subject. Evaluations reported in this section are weighed against other written observations that refer to similar topics. Conflicts and agreements among the criticisms are presented to allow for a balanced presentation of views. At the end of the country reports on communication policy effectiveness, comparisons are again made.

The future directions of each country, with respect to the planning and use of communication policies towards national development, are discussed in the next section. As in the previous parts of the study, this section makes use of documents, books, and articles that deal with projections for the future. Various viewpoints on policy issues and political, social, and economic concerns that will remain

for the coming years are presented.

The reporting of the findings follows the sequence of the research questions found in the preceding chapter. The first part of the findings section includes the historical account of the political, social, and economic characteristics of each country that have influenced the role of communication vis-à-vis national development. The second part discusses the present national development goals of each country, the nature and structure of the countries' communication policies, and the effectiveness of such policies. The future directions of communication policy planning in each of the countries are also discussed.

In reporting the findings, the library facilities of California State University, Fresno and Stanford University were used. Some materials about Thailand were provided by a Thai graduate student who also did some translations for works that were originally written in the Thai language. Additional government publications, originally published in Malaysia, were also provided by a Malaysian graduate student.

## Chapter 4

### FINDINGS: HISTORICAL AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

To provide a background for the study of national communication policies of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, an overview of their political, economic, and social characteristics is presented. This overview includes a discussion of shifts in the roles of communication of each country within a historical framework. Current political, social, and economic conditions as well as the present media structures in each of the countries are also presented. The historical background is then followed by a comparative analysis of the three countries.

#### Historical Conditions

A review of each country's past will reveal how political, social, and economic factors influenced the nature and structure of its communication systems and the changes in its development goals.

#### Malaysia

Early Malaysia consisted of settlements that were inhabited by various indigenous nomadic tribes. The first Malay settlers were known to have started inhabiting the peninsula by 1000 B.C. Later on, waves of immigrants who engaged mostly in farming and fishing settled in the area

and established small villages. Because of the remoteness of these communities from the urban centers, much of their original culture still exists at the present.<sup>1</sup>

Although historical evidence suggests the existence of small Hindu empires within the Malaysian peninsula from as far back as the 7th century, scholars attribute the beginning of Malaysia to the founding of the Malaccan dynasty by a Hindu prince at around 1400 A.D.<sup>2</sup> At first, the practice of Hinduism among the people was instituted. However, its cultural impact on society was not as great as the influence brought about by the introduction of the Islamic faith. In sharp contrast to Hinduism, which limited religious education to the elite, facilitators of Islam brought the study and practice of religion to the masses. As such, Muslim-oriented tenets permeated every aspect of the early Malays' social and political ways of life.<sup>3</sup>

Trading with the Chinese, Indians, and Arabs at this time also had profound influences on the Malay way of life. As one historian writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Gulrose Karim, ed., Information Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Berita, 1986), 45-46.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Lowe, "Malaysia," Dynamics of Nation-Building (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1984), 110.

<sup>3</sup> Hashim Awang and Wan Abdul Kadir Yusof, "Cultural Aspects of the Information Revolution in Malaysia," The Passing of Remoteness?: Information Revolution in the Asia-Pacific, ed. Meheroo Jussawalla, Dan J. Wedemeyer, and Vijay Menon (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 141-143.

Diplomacy, war, and trade were the main forces in inter-polity communications during this period. Each of these forces left its own imprint of influences, some cultural while others were administrative and political. [For example,] the concepts of Kingship and noble titles, which exemplify a court-based system of administration, derive from the influences of Indian traders, and from the suzerainty of Hinduised Javanese Kingdoms.<sup>4</sup>

The different cultural forms that emerged in traditional Malay societies encouraged the preservation of values and traditions of the Malaccan empire. Even with the coming of the Portuguese in 1511 and the Dutch in 1641, Malays were able to maintain their own identity partly by retreating to the mountains where access was limited, and mostly by fostering rigid interpersonal communication practices. Folklore, in the form of songs and dances, depicted romantic court histories, fables, and legends. Rituals interspersed with comical interludes were also performed in theaters. Such performances depicted true stories laced with thought-provoking messages and were expressed in layman's language. With the encouragement of kings or sultans who acted as symbolic representations of unity, such cultural forms were successfully handed down from one generation to the next.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the traditional Malay culture that bore strong influences of Arab Muslim traders still remained intact during the British colonization period which started in

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<sup>4</sup> Lowe, 111.

<sup>5</sup> Awang and Yusof, 143; Lowe, 111-112.

1874. While the British controlled political and economic activities within the states, sultans maintained titular control over their subjects in the areas of personal law, religion (Islam), and customs.<sup>6</sup>

Along with the introduction of a new economic and educational system, the British concentrated on developing the urban areas by making them centers of social and cultural development. A profound imbalance in economic and social terms grew between the rapidly developing urban centers and the remote rural areas. Contact between the rural and urban Malays was encouraged only later on with the building of roads and bridges. As with education, however, every Malay was subjected to western-style teaching that included, among others, the mastery of the English language. The arrival of this modern educational system also "facilitated and generated the publication of newspapers, periodicals, and books."<sup>7</sup>

During the time of the British rule, other telecommunications facilities were also introduced. The first wireless system was installed in 1921 and broadcasting services were administered by the London-based British Post and Telegraph Offices, which had a branch in Malaysia. From the outset, all broadcasting activities were strictly overseen by the colonial government. Following the

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<sup>6</sup> Karim, 46-47.

<sup>7</sup> Awang and Yusof, 144.



programming objectives of the then British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Malaysian radio programs were oriented to fulfill public service roles. Initially, the bulk of programming centered on providing news that was either transmitted by the domestic radio stations or carried live and direct from England. Later on, musical, religious, and children's programs were added to the line-up.<sup>8</sup>

The British forbade commercial broadcasting to be practiced in Malaysia. Many local broadcasters were trained at the BBC in London and most programs were geared toward providing information, education, and entertainment that strictly adhered to government policies.

At the early stages of [mass media] development in Malaya (1921-1930), radio appeared to be a common tool of communication, such as giving warnings of impending floods in the East Coast, [helping] security forces in their daily work, and [facilitating] communication domestically or internationally. Radio [functioned] as a stabilizing factor in the British administration, apart from maintaining and even augmenting the people's allegiance to the British.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1930s, ownership of wireless sets were increasing rapidly. Radio programs were being broadcasted in several languages and Chinese dialects. News programs were beginning to get more popular. Other program types like those which focused on children's education, health,

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<sup>8</sup> Asiah Sarji, "The Historical Development of Broadcasting in Malaysia (1930-1957) and Its Social and Political Significance," Media Asia 9, no. 3 (1982): 150-155.

<sup>9</sup> Sarji, 157.

social issues, religion, and pro-British politics, were also developed.<sup>10</sup>

At the time when Malaysian broadcasting was rapidly developing, two major issues of a political and social nature were confronting its citizens. One was the increasing threat to the government posed by the Communists. Another was the rise of hostilities between Malaysia's two major races: the Chinese and the Malays. The root of this problem can be traced to the beginning of British colonization when laborers from China and India were brought in to work in the rapidly developing urban centers of the peninsula. This labor importation created racial tensions between the Malays, who maintained traditional occupations in the rural areas, and the non-Malays, who became the dominant fixtures in the commercial centers.<sup>11</sup> During World War II, the tension between the races became more amplified as Japanese-occupied Malaysia brought about a division of the country, with the Chinese, who were anti-Japanese, on one side, and the Malays, who were tolerant of the temporary rulers, on the other.<sup>12</sup>

When the Japanese took over from 1942 to 1945, every media program "had to have the elements of praise and

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<sup>10</sup> Sarji, 155-157.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Wawn, The Economies of the ASEAN Countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 38-40.

<sup>12</sup> Lowe, 115.

support for the ruling power and its Emperor."<sup>13</sup> Although the Japanese did not institute any major changes in British-style broadcasting activities, Malaysians were given a dose of new programs which focused on physical exercises and learning the Japanese language. Prior censorship continued to be strictly enforced and tuning in to outside broadcasts, especially those coming from the BBC, was tantamount to a death penalty.<sup>14</sup>

After the war, most of the media activities centered on rehabilitating the country and preparing it for self-rule. Broadcasters assisted in making the public understand the meanings of the democratic process as translated in the first elections that were held later.<sup>15</sup>

The period after the war also intensified the hostilities between the Chinese and the Malays as various political groups representing the different races and states fought for unification. Malay groups used strong interpersonal social networks that were channelled through religious and educational institutions. Newspapers and other printed materials were also utilized to reach the masses in the scattered states. Some Chinese, on the other hand, aligned themselves with the newly-formed Communist

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<sup>13</sup> Sarji, 155.

<sup>14</sup> Sarji, 152-155.

<sup>15</sup> Sarji, 152.

Party and showed unsympathetic attitudes towards Malays and their political goals.<sup>16</sup>

The racial tensions ensued up until 1948 when Malays, Chinese, and their British rulers opted to work together towards fighting communist insurgency, achieving unity, and working for national independence. Broadcasting and print facilities introduced earlier by the British were utilized for information campaigns targeted at quelling communist activities and mobilizing the masses for political participation.<sup>17</sup>

By 1951, the earlier reliance chiefly on targeted and interpersonal communication (leaflets, direct spoken word, voice, aircraft, etc.) was balanced by more attention being paid to films, cinema slides, and broadcasting.<sup>18</sup>

By the time Malaysia gained independence from the British in 1957, the communication structures that were prevalent and state-controlled still focused on eradicating Communist insurgency and fostering political integration among the races. Along with the development of mass media facilities, telephone, telegraphic, postal, and railway systems were established. State institutions which handled broadcasting and information services were combined to form the Ministry of Information that was assigned the chief task of "combating communist propaganda and providing publicity

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<sup>16</sup> Lowe, 116.

<sup>17</sup> Sarji, 157-158.

<sup>18</sup> Lowe, 119.

build up for the new nationalist leaders."<sup>19</sup>

The decade after Malaysia's independence in 1957 was marked by a surge in communications development particularly in the area of broadcasting. Urban areas which were the centers of commerce and trade during and after the British rule also became originating points of media messages. Television was introduced in 1963 and color transmission began in 1978. In 1970, direct satellite transmission of broadcast signals from other parts of the world was made possible with the inauguration of the first satellite earth station in Malaysia.<sup>20</sup>

The encouragement of telecommunication infrastructure in Malaysia, intensified by the entry of printed materials, films, and audio and video tapes from the developed countries, has spurred the rapid flow of information into the country. Recently, concern about widespread importation of television productions from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan have been raised. Moreover, the latest addition to the variety of broadcasting stations available in Malaysia, a commercial television network that fills most of its broadcast time with American shows, has caught the attention of concerned citizens.<sup>21</sup> Over the years, modern

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<sup>19</sup> Lowe, 121.

<sup>20</sup> Mohammad Hamdan Adnan, "The Mass Media in Malaysia," Media Asia 12, no. 3 (1985): 164.

<sup>21</sup> Awang and Yusof, 145.

mass communication facilities have rapidly replaced the traditional interpersonal communication systems that were prevalent during the colonization period.

However, the State has sought to avoid cultural erosion by emphasizing the need to preserve Malay identity. Even at the present, the Malaysian political system makes this possible by enhancing the roles and principles of the traditional Malay culture.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the society balances this special interest accorded to Malays by avoiding government intervention in the business affairs of the Chinese. Nevertheless, this process of integration and attainment of political stability has had its share of problems. The violent riots in 1969 were a result of divergent opinions between the Malays and the non-Malays on the issues of national language choice, election results, and favoritism towards Malays, among others. Even among the Malays, political factions that vie for power and control over the legislative body continue to exist.<sup>23</sup>

### Philippines

When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in the 16th century, they found several small communities that had cultures of their own. Various forms of communication were

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<sup>22</sup> Awang and Yusof report that the concept of the Malay "indigenous" culture is difficult to define although a majority understands that it specifically refers to the traditional Malay Islamic culture.

<sup>23</sup> Lowe, 110-140.

already in existence among the Filipino tribes who trace their roots from the early settlements founded by Malays, Indonesians, and Borneans. Most of these societies had political and economic structures that were in transition from communal to class states.<sup>24</sup> The larger and more advanced communities engaged in trading with the Chinese, the Indians, and the Muslims in the south. Generally, these foreign economic exchanges produced profound influences on the ways of life of the settlements. However, none could be more significant than the distinctly Malayan civilization that was pervasive in various Philippine societies at that time.<sup>25</sup>

The ancient Filipinos had a culture that was basically Malayan in structure and form. They had written languages that traced their origin to the Austronesian parent-stock and used them not only as media of daily communication, but also as vehicles for the expression of their literary moods. The bulk of their literature was folk literature which represented a group heritage and reflected their daily lives. They had music and dances for almost all occasions and a wide variety of musical instruments indicative of their ingenuity.<sup>26</sup>

Traditional Filipinos had their own units of government, agricultural economies, and religious practices that encouraged the propagation of systems of writing and

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<sup>24</sup> Renato Constantino, The Philippines: A Past Revisited, Vol. I (Manila: Tala Publishing, 1975), 40-41.

<sup>25</sup> T. M. Burley, The Philippines: An Economic and Social Geography (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1973), 125.

<sup>26</sup> Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, History of the Filipino People (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1970), 58.

artistic expressions. While some of the writings were done on barks of trees or bamboo sticks, most of their literary pieces were handed down orally from generation to generation. These included songs, dances, and rituals.

Much of the traditional culture was eradicated with the coming of the Spaniards. Some exceptions included those minority groups which were forced to retreat to remote areas and the Muslims in the southern part of the country who resisted invasion by force.<sup>27</sup>

The Magellan expedition, which reached the Philippines in 1521, signalled the beginning of more than 300 years of Spanish colonization. Under Spain, the Philippines was subjected to fundamental changes in the areas of politics, economy, religion, and way of life.

The Spaniards implemented a colonial policy designed not only to keep the Filipinos in political subjection, but also to exploit to the utmost the country's natural resources. This was clearly manifest in the crippling system of taxation and forced labor, the undue pre-occupation with the galleon trade and government monopolies as well as harsh agricultural and trade policies. The result was not merely an underdeveloped but a distorted and completely unbalanced economy.<sup>28</sup>

Generally, cultural development under Spain reflected Spanish political policies and the dominance of the religious orders in the sphere of colonial affairs. In 1593, the Dominican friars introduced the first printing press in Manila and subsequently published numerous books

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<sup>27</sup> Constantino, 29-41.

<sup>28</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, 94.



that were basically Christian-oriented. During this time, "all types of literature were subjected to previous censorship (*pensura previa*) by a Church-dominated Censor's Commission before publication."<sup>29</sup>

The friars also controlled the educational systems that they themselves established, and made sure that Filipinos did not learn the Spanish language to ensure continued subjugation. However, the Hispanization of traditional Filipino culture was pervasive enough to cause the erosion of values and traditions in place of the colonialists' dictates. In view of the racial discrimination attributed to the Spanish belief that Filipino culture was inferior to Spain's, seeds of discontent among the masses began to surface from time to time. Various rebellions, however, were subjected to brutal repressions imposed by the colonial government.<sup>30</sup>

The opening of the Philippines to international trade in the 19th century brought about significant changes. The initial consequence was the rise of the middle class who prospered in the commercial centers and were given the opportunity to be educated like the Spaniards.<sup>31</sup> Exposure to outside influences through European education raised

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<sup>29</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, 109.

<sup>30</sup> Constantino, 75-82; Usha Mahajani, Philippine Nationalism: External Challenge and Filipino Response, 1565-1946 (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1971), 11-80.

<sup>31</sup> Constantino, 143-145.

national consciousness among these elite groups of people who, in turn, passed on their sentiments to the masses. Reformists began active demonstrations against oppressive Spanish rule mainly by circulating newspapers internationally and locally. Publications, in the form of novels, speeches, satirical articles, and parodies, became common and well-received sources of unity and inspiration among the victims of colonial injustice.<sup>32</sup>

Improvement of transportation and communication facilities that were deemed necessary in the conduct of foreign trade also opened avenues for unification among the masses. Historians observe that such improvements "brought the Filipinos closer to one another and gave them opportunities to realize their universal plight."<sup>33</sup>

The various press propaganda instruments that were used by the reformists were met with extreme retaliation by the colonial government. Some of the prolific writers faced execution while others escaped the country. The less educated masses, however, continued the uprising and eventually, organized a revolution in 1896 to demand liberation from Spanish rule. Books and newspapers, now

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<sup>32</sup> Jose Luna Castro, "Philippine Journalism: From the Early Years to the Sixties," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 3-6.

<sup>33</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, 128.

written in the native language,<sup>34</sup> were widely circulated to propagate the aspirations of the revolutionary leaders. Privately-funded underground printing presses also became very active in raising the national consciousness of the people.<sup>35</sup>

Although the 1896 revolution successfully ended Spanish rule in the Philippines, the critical events that followed later allowed for a continued colonization by another foreign power. This time, it was the Americans. Under a treaty worked out between the Spanish and the Americans, and without participation by the Filipinos, the country was ceded to the United States in the amount of 20 million dollars.

What followed was a time of suppressed nationalism characterized by American policies aimed at subverting independence-oriented activities through rigorous censorship of publications. Under a "Benevolent Assimilation" proclamation, then-president William McKinley instituted political, economic, and social reforms that ushered in the practice of democratic principles, the establishment of free educational institutions, the creation of social welfare

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<sup>34</sup> The native language referred to here is known as "Tagalog." While it has been in existence since before the coming of the Spaniards, Tagalog has retained most of its original qualities with a sprinkling of Spanish and English variations. It is widely spoken in Manila and adjacent provinces and, currently, is used as the lingua franca.

<sup>35</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, 238-239.

agencies, and the propagation of capitalist enterprises.<sup>36</sup>

Communication and transportation systems were improved. Radio and telephone service facilities were introduced in 1933.<sup>37</sup> Freedom of expression was encouraged in the different media forms, particularly the press and the theater. Various English-language newspapers that were started by Americans and, subsequently, operated by the Filipinos, began to be published and circulated in the major metropolitan areas.<sup>38</sup> Radio broadcasting was introduced in the 1920s and soon became a popular source of entertainment and information.<sup>39</sup>

While the period of American occupation was marked with positive improvements that were comparatively better than what the Spaniards did, most observers were quick to note of the negative repercussions associated with the new rulers' seemingly benevolent policies.<sup>40</sup> These negative outcomes included

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<sup>36</sup> Constantino, 312.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Burke Elliott, The Philippines: A Study in Tropical Democracy (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 279-337.

<sup>38</sup> Castro, 8-10.

<sup>39</sup> Francisco Trinidad, "Philippine Radio: The Early Years," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 47.

<sup>40</sup> Glenn Anthony May, Social Engineering in the Philippines: The Aims, Execution, and Impact of American Colonial Policy, 1900-1913 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980), 179-183.

the general economic dependence on the United States, the partial loss of the racial heritage, the continuance of the colonial mentality, and the distortion of the people's culture and sense of values.<sup>41</sup>

The influence of the Americans over much of the Filipinos' culture and values was so pervasive that even after the Japanese Occupation during World War II, people embraced the entry once again of American rule.<sup>42</sup> Much of this open-arms attitude can be attributed to the destruction of national economic structures during the war that forced a reliance on the United States for material aid. In return, however, the newly-independent government in 1946 promised Americans exclusive rights to the exploitation of its natural and manpower resources. Further, the United States was also allowed retention of several military bases in the country.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the attainment of independence, the relationship of dependence was not abolished. Instead, the culture, the institutions, the sciences and the arts that evolved only served to confirm in the minds of orthodox Filipinos the need for some form of dependence on the United States. The economy that prevailed reversed development by concentrating not on local necessities but on the needs and interests of the foreign corporations that had trade relationships with the country.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, 423.

<sup>42</sup> Mahajani, 401-474.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Rosskamm Shalom, eds., The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 87-88.

<sup>44</sup> Constantino, 401-402.

The inherited economy was in ruins and internal problems of security became a significant issue in the succeeding governments. Citizens became actively engaged in utilizing the media systems for commercial, political, and social purposes. The rapid growth of the press systems stimulated stiff competition among the media enterprises and encouraged the growth of hard-hitting and politically conscious newspapers. Some press establishments also branched out into other related areas of enterprise such as radio and television stations.<sup>45</sup> Radio became information-oriented and was a popular forum for political discussions, as well as public service broadcasts and drama serials.<sup>46</sup> Television, which was introduced by the Americans in 1950, became an excellent source of revenue for businessmen and also served as a promotions arm for politicians later on. In the 1960s, television gained significant ground as a viable source of entertainment with its predominantly imported (American) shows and a sprinkling of local programs.<sup>47</sup>

All of the broadcasting activities were halted in 1972

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<sup>45</sup> Castro, 11-12.

<sup>46</sup> Mario Ampil, "Two Decades of Philippine Radio: A Brief Survey," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 61-63; Trinidad, 51-52.

<sup>47</sup> Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr., "Philippine Television: A History of Politics and Commerce," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 73-77.

when then-president Ferdinand Marcos proclaimed martial law and ordered the take-over and control of the existing mass media. This year marked the beginning of Marcos' dictatorial regime which resulted in the destabilization of the political machineries, the downfall of the economy, and the suppression of civil liberties. Specifically, the countryside saw a rise of Communist insurgency, student demonstrations were quelled, dissenting media personnel were imprisoned, and the country's foreign debt increased tremendously. Marcos and his cronies controlled all the media establishments.<sup>48</sup>

The 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, a senator who escaped Marcos-style detention and went into exile in the United States, fueled the rise of popular sentiments against the authoritarian regime. In 1986, the Marcos administration was eventually toppled and replaced by opposition groups led by Aquino's widow, Corazon.<sup>49</sup> Several factors prompted what has been known as the "Philippine Revolution" of 1986. The Catholic Church played a major role in mobilizing the masses through its radio broadcasts.

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<sup>48</sup> Benjamin N. Muego, Spectator Society: The Philippines Under Martial Rule, Monographs in International Studies, no. 77 (Athens: Ohio Univ. Center for International Studies, 1988), 147-171; Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo, "The Press Under Martial Law," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 15-16; Schirmer and Shalom, 163-165.

<sup>49</sup> Schirmer and Shalom, 333-338.

Military rebellion and American involvement through political pressures and support for the opposition also aided the relatively non-violent power take-over. Critical in their roles as watchdog, information facilitator, and mobilizer were the media, both on the domestic as well as on the international fronts.<sup>50</sup>

Currently, the popular support that mounted the Aquino government to power has resulted in the return to more democratic political processes. A new constitution was ratified and elections were held for a renewed national assembly. The media, now mostly privately-owned, are once again active and free.

Although the Aquino administration has been in power for only a few years, a number of citizens have expressed concern over the relatively few and ineffective reforms that have been instituted by the government. On the other hand, Aquino supporters point to the futility of expecting changes overnight. True enough, Marcos has left a legacy of not only political instability but impoverished economic conditions. Foremost on the present government's agenda of reforms include the continued fight against Communist

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<sup>50</sup> Amando Doronila, "The Media," The Philippines After Marcos, ed. R. J. May and Francisco Nemenzo (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 194-195; Hernando Gonzalez, "Mass Media and the Spiral of Silence: The Philippines from Marcos to Aquino," Journal of Communication 38, no. 4 (1988), 33-48; M. Rajaretnam, ed., The Aquino Alternative (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 1-7.



insurgency, political turmoil, and poverty. Genuine land reform, effective social welfare programs, and national economic stability are also prime considerations.<sup>51</sup>

### Thailand

Like Malaysia and the Philippines, Thailand's use of communication has been significantly influenced by the its political, social, and economic conditions through the years. Such influences are most evident in the area of politics where:

communication has been widely used by both the ruling group and the opposition for their respective political purposes, [thereby] significantly [affecting] the course and cause of nation building.<sup>52</sup>

In the past, however, religion, not politics, was the moving force in Thailand's early development as a nation. With the founding of the first major Thai kingdom in 1219, the Indianized Khmer empire, which was basically Hinduistic in character and which dominated most of Southeast Asia for centuries, was ousted. Replacing the empire was a distinct culture that bore a mixture of Hindu and Buddhist faiths. This new faith became known as Theravada Buddhism. From the time of its inception, it became the dominant force in the

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<sup>51</sup> Charles A. Buss, Cory Aquino and the People of the Philippines (Stanford: Stanford Alumni Association, 1987), 186-189; Schirmer and Shalom, 401-404.

<sup>52</sup> Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Thailand," Dynamics of Nation-Building (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1984), 173.

political, economic, cultural, and intellectual life of the new kingdom.<sup>53</sup>

As in most traditional societies of this time, interpersonal forms of communication were predominant.

Most of the Thai people lived their lives within the context of their own small village community with little contact with the outside world. It is only through social contacts and interpersonal interactions outside the community that traditions, customs, values -- political, cultural, and religious -- were fostered among them. Social norms, values, and tradition were also transmitted by means of dramas, plays, puppet, and other folk shows.<sup>54</sup>

Trading, especially with the neighboring Chinese and Malays, was brisk and brought prosperity to the Kingdoms.<sup>55</sup> The political system of this period, however, was fragile. Government administration by the royalty as well as communication flows were restricted to the central plains and commercial urban centers because of the inaccessibility of the other communities that were located in the mountain regions of the country.<sup>56</sup>

The only major force that served as an agent of integration among these widely distributed societies was Buddhism. Monasteries that were built in most of the

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<sup>53</sup> Frank J. Moore, Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1974), 196-197; David K. Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), 38-39.

<sup>54</sup> Bunbongkarn, 177.

<sup>55</sup> Wyatt, 88-89, 140-141.

<sup>56</sup> Moore, 295.

villages accommodated young boys regardless of social status and served as principal agents of socialization. Buddhist monks played an important role in the transmission of social and cultural values and, thus, helped in the early integration of Thai societies.<sup>57</sup>

The reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868) in the late nineteenth century brought about the entry of Western influences in Thai culture. Because he was exposed to French and American missionaries in the monasteries he attended, Mongkut was the first Thai king who mastered the English language.<sup>58</sup> Bangkok grew to become a bustling commercial center, with the opening of the Kingdom to foreign trade, the rapid expansion of the villages, and the influx of Western technology and culture. This period of rapid modernization was also apparent during the reign of Mongkut's son and successor, Chulalongkorn. The new king introduced reforms that consolidated his powers, centralized government administration, abolished slavery, and encouraged modernization by showing a favorable attitude to Western civilization.<sup>59</sup>

This period of absolute monarchy that centralized the political structure of the state also resulted in the shift

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<sup>57</sup> Wyatt, 24-27.

<sup>58</sup> Charles F. Keyes, Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 41-42; Wyatt, 177.

<sup>59</sup> Bunbongkarn, 179-181.

of national development goals from a focus that encouraged socialization to one that emphasized societal modernization and political integration. As such, religion became less emphasized as the political structure grew prominently. The king required all children to attend school and all citizens were encouraged to use the national language. Modern educational practices were blended with Buddhist traditional norms.<sup>60</sup>

The economy became export-oriented and trading with other nations was brisk. Domestically, the country was rapidly modernizing. Railways, roads, and bridges were constructed. Postal and telegraph services were established. The country's first major newspaper was inaugurated and was initially used as a tool by which the king could communicate with his subjects.<sup>61</sup>

In the 1920s, newspapers and magazines using several languages started to become active in spreading views about a wide variety of subjects. Both the government and the intellectual elite widely used the press as a forum of public opinion. During this period, one historian noted that:

there was no mistaking the fact that criticism of the government was increasing and that elite opinion was

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<sup>60</sup> Area Handbook for Thailand (Washington:GPO, 1971), 36-38; Moore, 245.

<sup>61</sup> John D. Mitchell, "Thailand," The Asian Newspapers' Reluctant Revolution, ed. John A. Lent (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1971), 232-233.

being both expressed and shaped in the popular press.<sup>62</sup>

A major change in the political structure of Thailand occurred in 1932 when a coup, led by military leaders, ended the institution of absolute monarchy. A representative National Assembly was established although only half of its members were directly elected by the citizens. Royalty, however, was preserved and used as a symbolic representation of unity and national identity.<sup>63</sup>

Under the new military-dominated regime, modernization and political integration were emphasized as the country's goals. Radio was widely used by the government to broadcast plays, songs, dramas, and political speeches that encouraged national consciousness among the people. In an effort to create a "modern" country, many traditions were replaced by new social modes of conduct, including a new name for the country and a new written language.<sup>64</sup>

In transmitting the "new culture" to the population, the radio was an important means of communication. It was the first time that information to the people was conveyed in such a systematic way and in a purposeful manner; it became so effective that the local government would never let a private citizen own a radio station.<sup>65</sup>

The press during this period was under tight control. Because some newspapers and journals were privately owned

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<sup>62</sup> Wyatt, 235.

<sup>63</sup> Keyes, 63-64.

<sup>64</sup> Area Handbook for Thailand, 43.

<sup>65</sup> Bunbongkarn, 190.

and maintained, the military government exerted severe pressure on the media practitioners to conform to national policies or risk arrest and closure.<sup>66</sup> During the time of Luang Phibunsongkhram's prime ministership from 1938 to 1944, the manipulation of the press for the benefit of the existing power structures was rampant. Further, the government used its monopoly of the radio facilities to shape public support for its actions and policies.<sup>67</sup>

Although Thailand was not a major participant in the Second World War, the government faced critical decisions concerning its relations with the Japanese and the Allied forces in an effort to preserve its independence. The period after the war, however, marked the start of a close political and economic relationship between Thailand and the United States.<sup>68</sup>

After World War II, economic growth was emphasized by the Thai government. Highways, bridges, and major communication infrastructures were developed. The number of radio stations increased. Television, which was introduced in 1955, grew also from one to nine stations spread across the country. Rural development programs that are still ongoing resulted in the improvement of print media facilities, the refinement of journalistic quality, and an

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<sup>66</sup> Bunbongkarn, 173-191.

<sup>67</sup> Wyatt, 253.

<sup>68</sup> Moore, 325-329; Wyatt, 256-261.

increase in newspaper readership in the countryside.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to economic development, the emphasis on the preservation of national security was also prevalent from the post-war period up to the present. Through the years, Thais have witnessed numerous and abrupt shifts in political power between the military and civilian groups. A series of coups, cabinet and ministerial changes, revisions to the Constitution, and economic crises have caused varying degrees of instability to the nation.<sup>70</sup> Politically, Thais have been subjected through rigorous changes in the power structures, from authoritarian regimes to more democratic ones. Along with such problems came the increasing pressures from neighboring countries who have turned to communism.<sup>71</sup>

As such, government leaders have consistently responded to changes in the political scene by controlling the media. This is mostly reflected in policies concerning press restrictions.

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<sup>69</sup> Hans B. Thorelli and Gerald D. Sentell, Consumer Emancipation and Economic Development: The Case of Thailand, vol. 37 of Contemporary Studies in Economic and Financial Analysis (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1982).

<sup>70</sup> Since 1946, Thailand has undergone four successful coups and several attempted power take-overs. In 1973, mass demonstrations led by students, farmers, and workers, resulted in violent confrontations between the citizens and the army. The constitution has been revised more than 10 times since 1932.

<sup>71</sup> Area Handbook for Thailand, 303; John L. S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 227-228.

Thai press controls have fluctuated almost wildly between complete freedom and virtually complete repression, depending on the particular views of the individuals in power at a given time.<sup>72</sup>

Despite rigorous changes in press censorship policies through the years, the print media have managed to develop quality journalistic practices of their own. In 1973, for example, a national revolution staged by the students was ably supported by the press. The extensive coverage of the journalists during this time was believed to be partly responsible for the successful overthrow of the then-existing regime.<sup>73</sup> From this time on, the press began to play important roles in shaping and echoing public opinion.

The growth of the press has also reflected the economic situations of the country. In the 1950s, the government's emphasis on developing the manufacturing sectors located in the urban areas resulted in the neglect of the rural communities. As the commercial centers developed, mass media facilities in these areas grew as well. Newspaper readership was concentrated among the educated in the cities. Such concentration is still evident today.<sup>74</sup>

While newspapers were popular in the urban areas, radio gained prime importance in the countryside.<sup>75</sup> From their

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<sup>72</sup> Mitchell, 232.

<sup>73</sup> Ross Prizzia, Thailand in Transition (Honolulu: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1985), 111.

<sup>74</sup> Mitchell, 233.

<sup>75</sup> Moore, 344.



inception, radio and television have been government owned and controlled. Through the years, radio has developed into a popular entertainment source for the rural dwellers. News and entertainment programs are transmitted in various languages and dialects. Most of the entertainment programs contain traditional elements as reflected in musical interludes.<sup>76</sup>

Television, on the other hand, has concentrated on transmitting to and from the commercial centers. National development goals in the 50s and 60s spurred the growth of television stations as well as telephone and telegraph services.<sup>77</sup>

Because of the surge in communications development spurred by modernization and industrialization policies of the recent administrations, Thailand was subjected to foreign influences in the media. Although much of the foreign materials shown on television are dubbed into Thai, the Western style of programming and production is heavy. The same is true with commercial films and documentaries shown in the theaters.<sup>78</sup>

Over the years, communication activities in Thailand have been shown to be closely linked with the country's political, economic, and social structures. The

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<sup>76</sup> Keyes, 194-196.

<sup>77</sup> Area Handbook for Thailand, 129.

<sup>78</sup> Moore, 344-346.

introduction of modern communication facilities in the latter part of the Kingdom's history produced significant changes in the people's use of communication. Many of the interpersonal forms of communication that prevailed during the early years of Thai history have been replaced by the increased use of print and electronic media forms. The trend for the future shows a heavier use of these "modern" facilities in favor of the more traditional communication channels.

Nevertheless, communication is expected to continue in fulfilling important roles in the social, economic, and more importantly, political processes of the state. At the present, the military continues to exist as a powerful institution. One observer believes that even though the government puts up a civilian character on the outside, the influence of the armed forces in politics remains prevalent.

As long as Thai politics remains military politics, legitimate oppositional forces such as the Parliament and labor union movements will only be as influential as the prevailing military leadership will tolerate.<sup>79</sup>

In the midst of all these power plays, the king, while exercising only a symbolic function, remains as a solid figure of national consciousness. During some critical periods, royalty was able to interfere with political affairs with the consent and appreciation of the people.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Prizzia, 111.

<sup>80</sup> Wyatt, 306.

But on the whole, the country's leaders themselves have shown commitment to preserving tradition as a key to successful modernization. However, diverse changes in the political and social environment of the country have led to serious disruptions in the development states and strategies of each ruling power.<sup>81</sup>

#### Current Conditions

Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand are all located in the Southeastern region of Asia. Malaysia and Thailand both occupy portions of the southern tip of mainland Asia while the Philippines lies farther east, comprised of a group of islands that form an archipelago. The Philippines is the smallest in size among the three countries in terms of total land area (square miles) and has the highest population estimate of 61,971,000.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast, Thailand is the biggest country, with a population of 55,017,000.<sup>83</sup> Malaysia, with an estimated population of only 16,901,000 citizens, is the least populated.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Bunbongkarn, 197-198.

<sup>82</sup> "The World Series of Geography: Philippines," The Fresno Bee, 4 Apr. 1989: A8.

<sup>83</sup> "The World Series of Geography: Thailand," The Fresno Bee, 7 Apr. 1989: A12.

<sup>84</sup> "The World Series of Geography: Malaysia," The Fresno Bee, 31 Mar. 1989: A12.

### Political Structure

Malaysia's political system is defined as a federal system of government under a constitutional monarchy. The country's constitution is based on the body of laws promulgated during the time when Malaysia was called the Federation of Malaya. In 1963, the constitution was amended to accommodate the special interests of Sabah and Sarawak, two states on the island of Borneo which joined the Federation that year. Administration of Malaysia's 13 states is carried out by governors. The supreme head of the federation, called the "paramount ruler," exercises the powers of a constitutional monarch in a parliamentary democracy. Executive powers are vested in the prime minister and the cabinet, both of which are responsible to a bicameral legislature consisting of appointed senators and elected representatives. Judicial power rests in the Supreme Court.<sup>85</sup>

In the Republic of the Philippines, a new constitution, recently ratified by its citizens in 1987, provides for a president who is directly-elected by the people and who serves a single six-year term. This constitution also stipulates the creation of a bicameral congress that includes a Senate of 24 senators and a House of Representatives consisting of 250 partially-elected members.

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<sup>85</sup> Arthur S. Banks, ed., "Malaysia," Political Handbook of the World: 1988 (New York: CSA, 1988), 366-373.

An independent judiciary consists of 15 Supreme Court justices.<sup>66</sup>

Thailand's political system is characterized by a highly-centralized constitutional monarchy functioning through a powerful prime minister. The king exercises very little direct power over political affairs of the state but remains as an influential popular symbol of national unity and identity. A partially-elected bicameral legislative body was reestablished recently under the amended 1978 constitution. This constitution replaced the unicameral and military-dominated National Assembly that was put into power in 1977. Under present laws, the prime minister has special powers in matters of national security and neither he nor the cabinet need to hold elective offices. The Senate has little power. The judicial system, consisting of Supreme Court justices appointed by the king, is patterned after European models. More than 70 provincial governors are appointed by the Ministry of Interior.<sup>67</sup>

#### Social Structure

Malaysia's multiracial population is composed mainly of Malays (46%), Chinese (32%), non-Malay tribal groups (12%), Indians and Pakistanis (8%), and others (2%). Bahasa

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<sup>66</sup> Arthur S. Banks, ed., "Philippines," Political Handbook of the World: 1988 (New York: CSA, 1988), 466-470.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur S. Banks, ed., "Thailand," Political Handbook of the World: 1988 (New York: CSA, 1988), 581-585.

Malaysia, the official language, is spoken by 85% of the population, although English, Tamil, and other Chinese dialects are also widely spoken. Islam is the state religion, but the freedom to profess other faiths is constitutionally guaranteed. Minority religious groups include the Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians.<sup>88</sup>

This booming Southeast Asian country has stark cultural contrasts. The capital, Kuala Lumpur, is a modern metropolis where textile, cement, and rubber industries thrive. Outside the cities are rain forests where natives live in primitive conditions.<sup>89</sup>

The Filipinos, on the other hand, are predominantly of Malay stock, mixed with Chinese and Spanish racial influences. An estimated 85% of the population profess the Roman Catholic faith. The southern part of the chain of islands, however, has a politically-significant Muslim minority. Tagalog is the national language although English and Spanish are widely spoken.<sup>90</sup>

Thailand's estimated population in 1988 was 55,017,000. Out of this number, 75% are of Thai stock, 14% are Chinese, and the rest include minority groups consisting of Malaysians, Indians, Khmers, and Vietnamese. Theravada Buddhism is practiced by most of the rest of the population although the state allows the exercise of religious freedom.

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<sup>88</sup> Banks, "Malaysia," 367.

<sup>89</sup> "The World Series of Geography: Malaysia," A12.

<sup>90</sup> Banks, "Philippines," 466.

Thai is promoted as the national language although some speak various Chinese dialects.<sup>91</sup>

#### Economic Structure

In terms of economy, Malaysia runs a free enterprise system with a heavy public sector development expenditure program. An estimated 46% of the GNP is accounted for by the country's export industries.<sup>92</sup> Malaysia is the world's leading producer of rubber. Other traditional export products consist of palm oil, tin, copper, and timber. The state economy is presently being expanded to concentrate on recently-discovered offshore petroleum deposits. Industrial diversification programs of the current government include the dispersal of manufacturing facilities throughout the country. Although agriculture dominates Malaysia's industrial force and employs half of the labor market, the country is still not self-sufficient in food. Nearly half of the population subsists at poverty level.<sup>93</sup>

The Philippines also operates on a free enterprise system. Rice is the chief agricultural product and is used mainly for domestic consumption. Wood, sugar, and coconut products are the chief exports. Mining, fishing, textiles, tourism, forestry, food processing, and building materials

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<sup>91</sup> Banks, "Thailand," 581.

<sup>92</sup> Lowe, 109.

<sup>93</sup> Banks, "Malaysia," 367.

manufacturing are other major industries. Presently, the Philippines is in the process of stabilizing its economic systems. Long-term balance of payments deficits and mismanagement of government funds during the reign of its former ruler, Ferdinand Marcos, resulted in severe fiscal crises, peso devaluations, and difficulties in meeting external debt payments. In February of 1986, international creditors agreed to restructure the country's 26 billion dollar debt. The government also sought foreign assistance from other countries, mainly from the United States, which pledged 500 million dollars.<sup>94</sup>

Like Malaysia and the Philippines, Thailand's economy operates on a free enterprise system. A majority of the population is engaged in agriculture industries. While Thailand is one of the world's largest net exporters of rice, other products such as rubber, corn, and tin are widely exported. The country has vast mineral resources and maintains large industries that produce textiles, building materials, paper, jute, and tobacco products. In the 1970s, Thailand's economy was described as rapidly developing and stable. However, rapid increases in oil prices caused the country's foreign reserves to diminish. This era also encouraged the growth of burdensome trade deficits and inflation. Thailand's limited recovery at the present is attributed to the exploitation of recently-discovered

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<sup>94</sup> Banks, "Philippines," 466.



natural gas deposits that enables the country to reduce its heavy dependence on imported oil.<sup>95</sup>

#### Media Structure

In addition to the discussion of current political, social, and economic conditions of the countries, a brief report on their present media facilities is also offered. Specifically, these media structures mainly include the print and electronic media.

Malaysia. As of 1985, a total of 76 newspapers were being published in Malaysia. Fourteen of these periodicals were in Malay (the national language), 18 in English, 35 in Chinese, and the rest were in Tamil, Punjabi, and other various dialects. Two newspapers used a mixture of English, Malay, and Kadazan. Currently, most of the printing presses are privately-owned.<sup>96</sup> Total circulation figures of newspapers have been steadily increasing through the years.

Daily sales of newspapers in Peninsular Malaysia rose from 1.44 million copies in 1977 to 2.22 million in 1982. Hence, while there were 7.3 persons to every newspaper in 1977, the ratio was 5.3 persons per newspaper in 1982. This reflects the general improvement in the literacy rate, 58 percent in 1970 to 72 percent in 1980. It also reflects improvement of public access to information through the print media.<sup>97</sup>

The national news agency, Bernama, began with an

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<sup>95</sup> Banks, "Thailand," 581.

<sup>96</sup> Karim, 737.

<sup>97</sup> Adnan, 162.

initial grant from the government and presently services domestic and foreign organizations. Bernama is the country's sole news agency whose functions are to receive and distribute foreign news in Malaysia.

Under Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM), a government body, are two network television stations and five domestic radio networks with regional relay stations. Simultaneous transmission of radio and television programs throughout the country is made possible with the use of two earth satellite stations and an Indonesian-owned space satellite.

Radio Malaysia broadcasts in several languages and has an estimated listenership of 80 percent of the total adult population in 1982. National Network or TV 1 broadcast throughout the country in the national language. In 1982, an estimated 92 percent of the total adult population viewed this channel.

Network 2 or TV 2 transmits local and imported programs in languages other than Malay. TV 2 also carries the Educational Television Services of the country, with programs geared toward the student population.

In 1984, the government allowed the operation of a private television station that came to be known as TV 3. With Chinese as its predominant audience, most of the programs shown are entertainment in nature. Currently, about 40 percent of television programs in Malaysia are locally produced.

The National Film Department, locally known as Filem Negara, produces documentary and feature films about government programs and screens them via television, movie theaters, or mobile media units. The commercial film industry in Malaysia is government supported and regulated. In 1980, the National Film Corporation (FINAS) was established by the parliament to protect the interests of local film producers who face stiff competition from numerous imported movies. The corporation has also provided financial incentives to producers in an effort to improve and develop the local film industry. In 1982, about 58 percent of the adult population patronized more than 500 movie theaters.<sup>98</sup>

Philippines. Before the imposition of martial law in 1972, the Philippines had one of the busiest media environments in Asia. But the Marcos administration halted the publishing of the 19 city dailies and 66 provincial papers, including all the broadcasting facilities, that were in existence at that time. Almost all the media facilities that were available during Marcos' time were either subject to government control and ownership or were heavily repressed.

The emergence of a new government under the Aquino administration, however, signalled the revival of press

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<sup>98</sup> Adnan, 164-166; Karim, 735-743.

freedom, with the resurfacing of media facilities that are privately owned. At the present, seven daily newspapers account for a total of more than one million in circulation. Six of these seven newspapers are printed in English and published in metropolitan Manila. Various weeklies deal with business, general news, and religious affairs. The Roman Catholic Church supports a weekly publication that has a circulation of 50,000.<sup>99</sup>

The only local news agency, the Philippine News Agency (PNA), operates under government supervision. A number of foreign agencies also maintain bureau offices in Manila.

The Aquino administration has also brought about the rise of a very competitive broadcast industry. Currently, the government maintains ownership of a major television station and several radio facilities. More than 300 radio stations and 44 television stations operate in the country. Five major television networks transmit from their studios in Manila.<sup>100</sup> In 1985, 77 percent of the population had at least one radio set while 37 percent had a television set. Radio ownership is concentrated in the rural areas. Television ownership is prevalent in the big cities.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Max C. Azur, Philippine Media Directory, 2nd ed. (Bulacan: Azur Publications, 1989), 1-16.

<sup>100</sup> Banks, "Philippines," 470.

<sup>101</sup> Media Factbook: 1985-1986 (Manila: Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines, 1985), 16-18.

A trade organization, the Association of Broadcasters in the Philippines (Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster sa Pilipinas or KBP), oversees the activities of the broadcast industry on a self-regulatory basis. Through this association, media members are guided by a Code of Ethics that also enunciate the enforcement and policing of broadcast activities.

Cable television is just in its beginning stages. At present, only two commercial cable channels are in operation. One specializes in English features while the other shows only Chinese movies. These cable stations have a subscription total of less than 10,000 homes in 11 exclusive suburban villages near Manila.<sup>102</sup>

Commercial film production and exhibition are big industries. More than 1000 theaters are located in over 300 cities nationwide. Average local film production is 250 films per year. Roving cinemas that visit remote areas are also popular.<sup>103</sup>

Thailand. High newspaper circulation figures can be found in the major cities. The Thai Rath and Daily News are two of the biggest news dailies and have a combined circulation exceeding one million. Most provinces in the rural areas have their own newspapers and magazines that

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<sup>102</sup> Media Factbook: 1985-1986, 107.

<sup>103</sup> Media Factbook: 1985-1986, 95.

have lesser circulation. In 1982, readers chose from a total of 69 daily newspapers and 275 non-dailies. Almost all of the dailies are published in Bangkok, the capital, and most of them use the Thai language. A few are published in English and Chinese. Thailand has no domestic news agency, although foreign news bureaus have offices in Bangkok.<sup>104</sup>

In 1978, 33 percent of more than 200 radio stations were owned by the Public Relations Department of the Prime Minister's office, while 52 percent were controlled by the military. Some are indirectly owned by the Royal Household, the Ministry of Education, and the National Police Department. Broadcasting is done mostly in Thai, English, and major dialects.<sup>105</sup>

The largest two of the nine television stations are presently controlled by the Army. Some stations carry educational programs and accept commercial advertising.

Radio set ownership is prevalent in Thailand. In 1975, an estimated 73.6% of the total number of households own radio sets, compared to only 10.8% television set owners.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Banks, "Thailand," 585; Bunbongkarn, 196; George Thomas Kurian, "Thailand," Encyclopedia of the Third World, 3rd ed. (New York: Facts on File, 1987), 1942.

<sup>105</sup> Kurian, 1942.

<sup>106</sup> National Statistical Office, Report on the Findings of the Survey on Radio and Television (Bangkok: National Statistical Office, 1975).

In 1987, the estimates were 7.8 million radio sets and 3.4 million television receivers.<sup>107</sup>

In 1975, Thailand produced 55 films and exhibited more than 250 imported movies. Most of these foreign films came from the United States and other Chinese-speaking countries.<sup>108</sup>

#### Comparisons

Similarities in each of the country's histories can be found in the ways their traditional societies used interpersonal forms of communication in all aspects of political, economic, and social exchange. Many of these indigenous forms of communication were phased out later on, either through direct intervention of Western colonial powers or indirect influences brought about by foreign trading. Some traditional modes of communication, however, were preserved by local inhabitants by retreating to remote areas to resist invasion.

In all of the countries, growth and development of mass media institutions have been influenced significantly by political factors such as centralized public administration and critical changes in the political climate. Decisions emanating from the political structures of these societies have largely shaped the nature, role, and functions of media

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<sup>107</sup> Banks, "Thailand," 585.

<sup>108</sup> Kurian, 1943.

in the countries. Although this phenomenon is common in the three countries, many differences exist in the intents and purposes of each of the political structures, as far as shaping media structures is concerned.

In Malaysia, the government orients its media institutions mainly toward fulfilling the goal of national integration. Due to the multi-racial nature of Malaysian society, the government has, through the years, strived for internal political and social stability by strictly regulating its mass media industry. As such, almost all of the broadcast facilities have been government-owned and controlled. The privately-owned press has also been subject to rigid censorship practices.

The Philippine media environment is also a product of past political control. From the time of colonial subjugation until the Marcos administration, most media institutions have been subjected to political pressures like direct ownership and censorship. Before martial law in 1972, mass media operation was dominated by private entrepreneurs and was free of restrictions. The present administration promises a return to this democratic climate. Such evidence shows how mass media structures reflect current political environments.

The Thai government has also recognized the importance of media in society, particularly in shaping public opinion and expressing critical observations. The Thai press,



although largely privately owned, has had its share of repressive experiences due to its popular readership. Broadcasting remains generally as a government enterprise with the military, a powerful faction in domestic politics, exerting a strong presence in the largest facilities. As a whole, the nature and development of mass media in Thailand have been significantly influenced by political structures which consider national political stability as one of their foremost concerns.

In varying degrees, media have also been influenced by economic and social factors. Economic factors basically touch on the opening up of the three countries to foreign trade as early as the 19th century. Trade relations, particularly with the West, encouraged these nations to import the modern communications technology that substantially altered their traditional communication patterns. This influx of modern communication resulted in an increasing dependence on foreign resources for the development of mass media facilities in their own countries. This economic dependence is also reflected in the structure of their current media institutions. Broadcast and print facilities are concentrated in the urban commercial areas and media content is heavily influenced by foreign cultures.

In terms of social factors, various differences among the countries exist. National religion plays major roles in all of the nations' cultural environments, although in

Malaysia, the Islamic faith exerts a strong presence. Malaysia's multi-lingual and multi-racial society has also been of critical concern in the area of mass media regulation. In the Philippines and Thailand, where societies are generally homogenous, such cultural integration problems are not as visible.

Varying degrees of cultural imperialism can be attributed to the different ways each of the countries tolerate foreign intrusion into their media institutions. Malaysia closely guards its broadcast and film industries against non-Malaysian elements. The Philippines, because of its long history of colonialism, is heavily saturated with American orientations in all of its media products. Thailand is also not an exception even though among the three countries, it is the only one that has never been formally colonized by any foreign power. Its indirect acceptance of foreign intrusion has also produced profound changes in society. Thailand, however, still retains much of its own traditional culture (like extensive use of the national language) while, at the same time, accepting some elements of foreign culture in its media.

## Chapter 5

### FINDINGS: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES

This section will compare and contrast the present national development goals and communication policies of each country. A discussion of some important issues concerning the effectiveness and future directions of communication policy planning in each country is also offered.

#### National Development Goals

The national development goals discussed here contain those goals which are explicitly stated by each country in government as well as academic and private research documents. Included in the discussion of development goals are national principles (which can be found in the countries' constitutions), economic and social plans, and regional activity, particularly with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).<sup>1</sup>

#### Malaysia

The riots that occurred in 1969 brought Malaysians face to face with their racial problems. To counteract social

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<sup>1</sup> Organized in 1967, ASEAN's members are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Recently, the country of Brunei became an additional member of the organization.

and political instability, a National Operations Council composed of 11 members from different racial groups, the military, and the government was created. Their main task was to reach a political consensus that would form the basic foundation for a new integrated government. Compromises among the interests of the represented groups became necessary, although the preservation of the fundamental civil liberties regarding choice of religion, free speech, property rights, assembly, and association remained intact.

As was expected, Islam was proclaimed the official religion of the Federation and respect for and loyalty to the nation, the king, the constitution, and every cultural group were stressed. What emerged from the works of this council was a new ideology, defined as a "basic approach towards future integration."<sup>2</sup>

The government called this the Five Principles of Malaysian Nationhood<sup>3</sup> which, at present, constitute the basic tenets guiding all Malaysian citizens. These principles also serve as the foundation for all government decrees, particularly, the constitution. In an effort to espouse national unity, the principles have been termed as "pillars of national philosophy and outlook" and have been regarded as "universal and acceptable to all citizens,

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<sup>2</sup> Vincent Lowe, "Malaysia," Dynamics of Nation-Building (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1984), 130.

<sup>3</sup> The local term is "Rukunegara."

regardless of ethnic origin or religious affiliation."<sup>4</sup> The five principles are:

1. Belief in God.
2. Loyalty to the king and country.
3. The supremacy of the constitution.
4. The rule of law.
5. Mutual respect and good social behavior.<sup>5</sup>

National development in Malaysia is highly prioritized. An Economic Planning Unit under the office of the Prime Minister is primarily responsible for formulating, evaluating, and implementing development plans. Acting as guideposts to this unit are six five-year plans which started in 1956 and carries with them the major goals of agricultural modernization and industrial development.<sup>6</sup>

With committees and councils that are composed of government officials and experts from the private sector, national development objectives are carried out systematically. Technical assistance, financing, and resource allocation are all geared toward meeting short- and long-term development goals. These goals include the

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<sup>4</sup> Gulrose Karim, Information Malaysia, 8th ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Berita, 1986), 71.

<sup>5</sup> Karim, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Fong Chan Onn, Technological Leap: Malaysian Industry in Transition (Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 2; Martin Rudner, Nationalism, Planning, and Economic Modernization in Malaysia: The Politics of Beginning Development (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975), 5.

appropriate distribution of natural, human, material, and economic resources in rural and urban centers, the elimination of poverty through social restructuring programs, the "rapid and orderly growth" of the industrial sector, and the improvement of public utilities, among others.<sup>7</sup>

The Economic Planning Unit is also guided by the New Economic Policy instituted in 1971. The policy's main aims are two-fold: the eradication of poverty regardless of race and the elimination of single race concentration in economic activities. In order to achieve these goals, the government has taken steps to develop the agricultural sector where productivity is low and workers are poor. Additionally, business and industrial sectors are being encouraged to promote equal employment opportunities toward Malays (since Chinese and foreigners dominate this field) and are provided incentives for growth.<sup>8</sup>

Analysts have reported the moderate success of Malaysia's economic policies. Balancing of national income distribution, adequate employment restructuring, and equitable nationalization of business ownership were evident in the 1970s. Worldwide recession and inflation in the

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<sup>7</sup> Karim, 228-243.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Wawn, The Economies of the ASEAN Countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 40-44.

1980s, however, pose serious threats to the Malaysian economy.<sup>9</sup>

Malaysian leaders have also emphasized recently the importance of preserving a national identity. High on their priority list is the need to strengthen the process of "national cultural formation." With traditional Malay and Islamic values as cultural bases, the government has taken steps to encourage people to "appreciate and value their traditional cultural heritage so as to maintain their cultural dignity."<sup>10</sup> At the same time, scholars are taking the view that while appreciation of the Malay heritage is important, the society is pressured to Westernize in order to be on equal footing with the other developing nations.<sup>11</sup> For Malaysians, this means accepting foreign intrusion and adopting contemporary Western values and norms while working for the improvement of their economic and social well-being.

The government, through its administrative agencies, has sought to counteract the dilemma by screening incoming

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<sup>9</sup> M. Semudram, "Economic Stabilization Policies in Malaysia," Economic Stabilization Policies in ASEAN Countries, ed. Pradumna B. Rana and Florian A. Albuero, ASEAN Economic Research Unit Field Report Series, no. 17 (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987), 100.

<sup>10</sup> Hashim Awang and Wan Abdul Kadir Yusof, "Cultural Aspects of the Information Revolution in Malaysia," The Passing of Remoteness?: Information Revolution in the Asia-Pacific, ed. Meheroo Jussawalla, Dan J. Wedemeyer, and Vijay Menon (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 147.

<sup>11</sup> Awang and Yusof, 139-140.

cultural products. Certain media content that do not conform to Malaysian values are not made available to the public. For example, the portrayals of extramarital affairs and sexual deviance are deleted from media materials.<sup>12</sup>

Religion has also played a major role in resisting cultural invasion from foreigners. Awang and Yusof agree that:

Recently, the phenomenon of Islamic revival among the Malays could perhaps strike a balance between the rapid socioeconomic development and the spiritual needs of the society. The Islamic revival is not only a national, but an international phenomenon which reflects the worldwide awareness among the Muslims of the need to re-strengthen their belief. Also in the light of cultural invasion, Islamic revival among the Malays functions as a force to check the rapid westernization process experienced lately among the urban and rural Malays.<sup>13</sup>

On the whole, Malaysia is in the process of transforming and re-orienting its development strategies in order to move away from traditional modernization frameworks. In colonial Malaysia, industrialization was limited to the urban areas, huge economic disparities existed between the various racial groups, and national consciousness was minimal. Currently, the shift towards careful policy planning, equal allocation of resources for urban as well as rural inhabitants, and national integration

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<sup>12</sup> Asmah Haji Omar, "Mass Communication and Its Effect on Education and Traditional Culture in Malaysia," Media Asia 12, no. 1 (1985): 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> Awang and Yusof, 148.



are evident. In addition, the country has also encouraged the growth of domestic industries that have become rich sources of revenue. As one economist states,

the Malaysian industrial sector is now in transition, from a foundation based on labour-intensive low technological processes to one based on capital-intensive and high technological activities.<sup>14</sup>

Malaysia, however, is not devoid of problems. The government has, through the years, operated in a tense environment where interests of its various racial groups have to be delicately balanced.<sup>15</sup> Poverty in the rural sector still exists and continues to exacerbate racial tensions.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, a number of studies have proposed various economic strategies that can help reduce the intensity of such problems.<sup>17</sup>

Malaysia has also moved rapidly from its traditional dependence on British trade to a policy of selective screening of foreign investments within the country. The

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<sup>14</sup> Onn, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Wawn, 69-70.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Brennan, "Class, Politics, and Race in Modern Malaysia," Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change, ed. Richard Higgott and Richard Robison (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 118-120; Ozay Mehmet, Development in Malaysia: Poverty, Wealth, and Trusteeship (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 4-6.

<sup>17</sup> For example: Mehmet; Onn; H. Osman-Rani, Toh Kin Woon, and Anuwar Ali, Technology and Skills in Malaysia (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986); Semudram; Dean Spinanger, Industrialization Policies and Regional Economic Development in Malaysia (Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986).

nation has also actively participated in regional cooperation among its ASEAN neighbors by venturing in collective industries, engaging in trade diversification agreements, and taking part in regional policy planning meetings. Such cooperation among the countries has encouraged Malaysia to share its resources among its neighbors while, at the same time, reduce its heavy dependence on the developed countries.<sup>18</sup>

### Philippines

Recent trends regarding the reorientation of Philippine national development policies are associated with the country's past and current struggles for real independence from its colonial masters. The constitution that was promulgated in 1935 and put into use after formal independence from the United States in 1946 was largely patterned after American democratic principles and machineries. Although it outlined fundamental political processes, broad civil liberties, and rehabilitative economic development priorities, the country was literally in turmoil up to the 1970s.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Donald K. Crone, The ASEAN States: Coping with Dependence (New York: Praeger, 1983), 186-195.

<sup>19</sup> Frank H. Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), 407-414; Benjamin N. Muego, Spectator Society: The Philippines Under Martial Rule, Monographs in International Studies, no. 77 (Athens: Ohio Univ. Center for International Studies, 1988), 52-53.

During the Marcos administration from 1965 to 1986, various laws and constitutional reforms were enacted to revolutionize the nation by restructuring the economy and propagating national consciousness. Irresponsible government management, however, prevented the proper implementation of these reforms.<sup>20</sup> When Aquino stepped into power, the country's poverty figures were so widespread, the unemployment rate was at its highest, and wealth distribution was lopsided. The repressive Marcos regime also encouraged the growth of popular resistance and political unrest in both the urban and rural areas. Further, economic development efforts that were initiated and supported by the World Bank since the 1970s also contributed to the worsening of the country's foreign debt situation and excessive reliance on foreign (mainly U.S.) capital and technology.<sup>21</sup>

Lately, the close participation of the World Bank in Philippine development has been subjected to scrutiny. Experts have suggested the necessity of correcting the World Bank's emphasis on export-oriented industrialization and its

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<sup>20</sup> Muego, 143-146; Gerardo P. Sicat, Economic Policy and Philippine Development (Quezon City: Univ. of the Phil. Press, 1972), 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> Yoshihara Kunio, Philippine Industrialization: Foreign and Domestic Capital (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1985), 2-3; Muego, 169-171.

authoritarian but ineffective control of policy formulation procedures.<sup>22</sup>

The newly-promulgated Constitution of 1986 outlines the return of the Philippines to more democratic principles under a less powerful executive branch and a bicameral congress. National development priorities are explicitly stated under a Declaration of Principles and State Policies that primarily calls for the pursuit of an independent foreign policy to protect national interests and the development of a self-reliant and independent economy. Additionally, the constitution declares that

the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.<sup>23</sup>

Other sections call for the support of the state in educational, scientific, cultural, and athletic endeavors for human development under nationalistic ideals. Agricultural development in the rural areas and agrarian reform are also prioritized.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Walden Bello, David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson, Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines (San Francisco: Inst. for Food and Development Policy, 1982), 197-206; Gerald Sussman, "Banking on Telecommunications: The World Bank in the Philippines," Journal of Communication 37, no. 2 (1987): 90-103.

<sup>23</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (Quezon City: National Government Center, 1986), 5.

<sup>24</sup> Constitution, 4-5.

Working as the primary government arm responsible for the planning and implementation of national development goals is the National Economic and Development Authority. The major responsibilities of this agency include the planning of economic policies geared toward the equitable distribution of opportunities and income, the promotion of national productivity, and the Filipinization of commercial enterprises. Industrialization has, once again, taken full priority. This time, though, the focus is on the development of the rural areas and the otherwise neglected agricultural sector.<sup>25</sup>

The presence of multinational corporations since the beginning of American colonial rule has been critical to Philippine economy. Although some economists view their domestic operations as ample sources of revenue for the country, many critics argue that the losses incurred in the process, in the form of economic and cultural dependency, are far greater than the presumed benefits offered by these enterprises. As one scholar says,

the liberal entry of multinational corporations (producing high quality products utilizing up-to-date technologies) has merely led to the creation of an elitist industrial class, juxtaposed with a far broader traditional sector subsisting at poverty level. The promise of massive job opportunities, sad to say, has never materialized.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Constitution, 42-47.

<sup>26</sup> Onn, 8.

The new administration has attempted to resolve this problem by imposing regulations that allow for 60 percent ownership of all commercial ventures. Alongside this are measures that seek to protect local enterprises from unfair foreign competition and trade practices, including the encouragement of utilizing local scientific and technical resources.<sup>27</sup>

As of this writing, it is still too early to assess the performance of the current administration. The national development policies that have been instituted lately clearly outline goals and priorities that are consonant with the people's aspirations (symbolized by the recently held popular ratification of the constitution) and the leadership's devotion to the promotion of democratic ideals. Critical in these times is the effective implementation of such policies and the continuance of long-term efforts in nation-building.

The shift from the traditional aspects of development to policies that are in line with goals of self-reliance, equality, and popular participation in political processes is evident in the Philippines today. Currently, many of these goals are aimed at reforming the political and economic structures of society. Other pertinent items include objectives that would foster the growth of local enterprises, the reliance on domestic manpower and natural

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<sup>27</sup> Constitution, 45; Sussman, 103.

resources, and the attainment of social justice through reforms in the educational and social welfare agencies. Private-sector involvement in policy-making is also being promoted in some social and economic institutions. The constitution itself mandates a majority involvement of private citizens in the governing body of the Central Bank (the government's central monetary authority).<sup>28</sup>

Regional cooperation, through the ASEAN, is also encouraged. From the time of ASEAN's inception, the Philippines has long been an active participant in economic cooperation ventures and cultural exchanges. Industrial projects sponsored by the ASEAN community of investors and planners along with bilateral trade agreements have generally contributed positive benefits to the Philippine economy.<sup>29</sup>

On the whole, the Philippines is in a transition process, with its development goals prioritized toward recovering from the political, economic, and social instability brought about by its history of colonialism and authoritarian rule. On the domestic scene, popular unrest caused by the rise of Communist insurgency during the time

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<sup>28</sup> Constitution, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Charles A. Buss, Cory Aquino and the People of the Philippines (Stanford: Stanford Alumni Association, 1987), 166-171; Marjorie L. Suriyamongkol, Politics of ASEAN Economic Co-operation: The Case of ASEAN Industrial Projects (Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 152-154.

of Marcos as well as poverty, unemployment, and poor business conditions are the primary targets of reform. On the international scene, the country's huge foreign debt (estimated at this time to be 28 billion dollars) and past world recessions continue to be stumbling blocks in the road to recovery.<sup>30</sup>

Generally, the government has gained the confidence of the people who are enjoying the fruits of democratic processes that for long have been denied them. On the rise, though, are critics who have now been given the chance to openly voice sentiments against the administration for some ineffective policies that hinder or slow down reforms.

Nevertheless, many observers share the view that these sharp criticisms are but symbols of what a democracy should be.<sup>31</sup> Critical at this period is how the Aquino government can manage to remain in power long enough to ameliorate current unstable conditions in the political arena and gain more popular support for the nation's developmental goals in the process.

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<sup>30</sup> Noel L. Lim, "Economic Stabilization Policies in the Philippines," Economic Stabilization Policies in ASEAN Countries, ed. Pradumna B. Rana and Florian A. Albuero, ASEAN Economic Research Unit Field Report Series, no. 17 (Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987), 119-121; "Philippines," Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia and Oceania, 7th ed. (New York: Worldmark Press, 1988), 306.

<sup>31</sup> Buss, 186-189.



## Thailand

The existence of the Kingdom of Thailand as a nation is predicated upon a national ideology that has guided its citizens since Chulalongkorn's reign in the 1860s. Basically, this ideology has been translated as "one nation, one religion (Buddhism), and one King" as principles of national consciousness that permeate the country's social, economic, and political systems. Accordingly,

most Thais see themselves as belonging to a Thai nation whose roots are based in the dominant Buddhist tradition and as [such are] united in their loyalty to the institution of the monarchy.<sup>32</sup>

In most of the constitutions that have been promulgated, these principles are evident and are reflected in the state's democratic regulations. The constitution that is presently in effect is an example.

As in other countries, Thailand's national development goals are broadly stated in its constitution but specified clearly in its economic development plans. From its beginnings as a nation, Thailand's government has been active in pursuing various economic priorities for its citizens. King Mongkut's reign in the 1850s opened the country to foreign trade, particularly with the British, and enabled the country to export rice and other products. Succeeding governments, however, did not encourage the

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<sup>32</sup> Charles F. Keyes, Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 203.

improvement and diversification of the agricultural industries.<sup>33</sup>

Not until the 1950s did Thailand pursue the improvement of rice production for profitable purposes. Later on in the decade, agriculture was sidetracked again with the emphasis of government policies on promoting private investments in the manufacturing and industrial sectors. Upon the recommendation of the World Bank,<sup>34</sup> the state limited its intervention in the private sector to promoting investment of foreign capital in domestic enterprises through tax credits and other financial incentives.<sup>35</sup> This action contributed to a marked imbalance between the non-agricultural trading areas and the neglected but profitable agricultural industries. Accordingly, the urban commercial centers became more developed than the rural areas.<sup>36</sup>

In an effort to correct these imbalances, Thailand has consistently launched national development plans and economic programs since the 1960s. Research, planning, and implementation of these policies are directly undertaken by the National Economic Development Board, an agency which is

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<sup>33</sup> Keyes, 44-46; David K. Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), 183-184.

<sup>34</sup> Also known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

<sup>35</sup> John L. S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 81-82.

<sup>36</sup> Keyes, 153-159.

directly supervised by the Prime Minister.<sup>37</sup> The earlier plans pursued policies of economic diversification through industrial and agricultural development.<sup>38</sup> Building of new roads, encouragement of land reform projects, and establishment of duty-free export processing zones were of high priority. The present development plan stresses the promotion of exports and stricter fiscal policies, among others.<sup>39</sup>

Increasing poverty, especially in the rural areas, is also a major concern in the country's development plans. Even though agriculture is regarded as the most important sector of the country and is the main source of livelihood in the rural areas, the economic policies that have been instituted target on developing the manufacturing sector that have benefitted the commercial centers. Because of these policies, capital investment in major industries have generated a large degree of economic growth in Thailand. On the other hand, the disparities in economic development priorities have caused the stagnation of the rural sector.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> George Thomas Kurian, "Thailand," Encyclopedia of the Third World, 3rd ed. (New York: Facts on File, 1987), 1928.

<sup>38</sup> Frank J. Moore, Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1974), 392.

<sup>39</sup> "Thailand," Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia and Oceania, 7th ed. (New York: Worldmark Press, 1988), 368-369.

<sup>40</sup> Keyes, 159; Wyatt, 290-297.

Much of the present growth of the Thai economy is attributed to the flow of huge investments from foreign countries. Tax incentives and guarantees of remittance of profits abroad granted by the Board of Investments to foreign corporations have increased trade relations between other countries. Presently, Japanese, American, and Taiwanese firms constitute the three largest investors in the country.<sup>41</sup>

Foreigners have played major roles in the Thai economic and military history. Before World War II, Great Britain was an important trading partner. Currently, Japan and the United States lead Thailand's list of not only the biggest investors but the widest sources of economic and military aid. Cooperation with its Asean neighbors has also resulted in increased partnerships and assistance in political, military, economic, and cultural matters.<sup>42</sup>

Aside from economic stability, the full attainment of a national identity that would foster national integration is one of the major concerns facing the Kingdom of Thailand today. Ethnic groups, such as those in the northern and northeastern parts of the country, have ways of life that are different from the rest of the Thais, making it difficult for them to be socially and politically integrated into the mainstream of Thai society. In an attempt to solve

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<sup>41</sup> "Thailand," 368.

<sup>42</sup> Keyes, 112-118; Kurian, 1932.

the problem of regionalism, government officials have recently reached out to the remote villages to provide language and religious education by instilling among the people a sense of loyalty to the nation while, at the same time, preserving their traditional beliefs.<sup>43</sup>

In the political structure, national integration as a goal concerns both the military leaders, who uphold the authoritarian system of government, and the civilian political groups, who are presently fighting for a more democratic form. Some of these so-called intellectual elite who have been repressed by the military government have retreated to the mountains and have turned Communist. This recent surge in Communist party membership has alarmed the state and has made anti-Communist efforts a major government activity. As a result, the government now focuses its efforts on preserving national security while using the still existing monarchy as a unifying force.<sup>44</sup>

Generally, Thailand's emphasis on refining its economic policies for the benefit of the whole country, in both the rural and urban areas, is a reflection of a shift in the traditional mode of modernization to an alternative pattern. Encouragement of self-reliance in the domestic scene,

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<sup>43</sup> Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Thailand," Dynamics of Nation-Building (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1984), 191-193.

<sup>44</sup> Bunbongkarn, 198; Wyatt, 300-303.

especially among the economic sectors, is prioritized.<sup>45</sup> However, it is not evident whether popular participation in determining national goals is emphasized. Moreover, the government's immense dependence on foreign capital and foreign-based economic needs continue to present problems.

In terms of regional cooperation with its ASEAN neighbors, Thailand has shown some active participation. Years before, the government was reluctant to pursue regional activities because of its pressing domestic security problems. Recently, however, this has changed. Included in its economic and social plans are the increase of relationships with the other Southeast Asian countries in terms of external and internal economic activities and greater participation in collective activities that would help reduce dependence on large countries.<sup>46</sup>

A major strategy has been to diversify the country's trade activities with other nations. One observer notes that

the diversification of economic relations has been given more priority in an effort to become more self-reliant and to keep "equidistance" among the major powers.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kevin J. Hewison, "The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand," Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change, ed. Richard Higgott and Richard Robison (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 273.

<sup>46</sup> Crone, 188.

<sup>47</sup> Crone, 114.

Thailand's national development goals have also reflected a great deal of integration of modern and traditional elements. Throughout its history, the Kingdom has combined traditional industries, like agriculture, with modern manufacturing-oriented investments to pursue economic activities.

In politics, the country has incorporated the elements of monarchical rule that is firmly rooted in ancient culture with a modern parliamentary system. Even with the changes in power structures, from military to civilian, the symbolic presence of the king has been preserved. Buddhism remains as a strong cultural fixture that has united the country through the years. Much concern, however, rests on the erosion of some traditional Buddhist ways of life brought about by Western influences.<sup>48</sup>

#### Comparisons

Reflected in all the countries' national development goals is the shift from the traditional approach of modernization to alternative approaches to development. Many changes are visible in each of the countries' development thrusts from those which relied earlier on modernization through technology importation and rapid industrialization to those which allow for more appropriate necessities.

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<sup>48</sup> Girling, 287-288.

Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have realized the failure of earlier efforts to be part of the "modernized" world. The Philippines and Thailand, for example, have fallen victims to the close intervention of foreign technocrats, in the form of lending institutions, in the conduct of their economic affairs. Research evidence has shown that these experiences have brought about widespread poverty and unequal wealth and resource distribution.

Malaysia's economic plans center on the eradication of poverty and the restructuring of the commercial environment to allow for the equal distribution of income to all members of its multi-racial society. The Philippines has also placed high priority on harnessing the potentials of its manufacturing and industrial sectors to speed up economic recovery amidst huge public debts. The nation's poor have also been targets of carefully-planned social welfare programs. Thailand's agricultural industries, which were neglected during previous administrations, are now facing major overhauls. Development of the rural areas has also been encouraged lately.

Planning and implementation of the countries' economic goals are highly systematized and centralized. In all of the nations, private sector participation in the formulation and evaluation of these plans have been accounted for. A major characteristic of such plans is their emphasis on



self-reliance as a long-term development goal. The presence of multinational corporations in their commercial environments has earned close scrutiny, resulting in recent efforts to nationalize important industries or, at least, obtain local majority share in their ownership and management.

Self-reliant efforts in economic affairs has also been on the top agenda of government planners in the ASEAN. To help counteract world trade imbalances, the countries' participation in this regional agency has been active and beneficial.

Besides economic priorities, but of equal importance to all the countries' national development goals, are their primary political and social provisions. Most of these objectives can be ascertained from their declaration of national principles or ideologies found in each of their constitutions. The fundamental laws of the land in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, clearly enunciate national philosophies that serve as guides or frameworks for social action. In Malaysia, it is the Rukunegara, a stipulation of national ideology that aspires for national integration in a country of mixed races. In the Philippines, the constitution is, in fact, a declaration of democratic principles that the society is expected to fulfill. In Thailand, it is the supreme law predicated on the principle of "one nation, one religion, and one King."

Much of the political activity in the three countries has been characterized as unstable, with shifts in power structures occurring every now and then. Social agitation and popular unrest have been experienced by all countries. To prevent such drastic and violent occurrences, governments of these nations have taken steps to stabilize their political environments and maintain democratic rule. While history may show differences in how the countries have dealt with such difficult situations, one similarity can be gleaned in the way these nations have managed to retain democratic ideals.

Currently, these countries continue to face problems of maintaining political stability with the mounting presence of Communists in various parts of Asia and with the ongoing quests for power and legitimacy in national leadership positions.

The Philippine government, being fresh from recent power take-overs from authoritarian to popular rule, is constantly faced with pressures from the new opposition which is currently demanding quicker reforms. Communist insurgency has also been on the rise. Thailand is also pressed with problems of Communist infiltration as its government pushes efforts at preserving national security. Its monarchy, however, has exerted a strong unifying presence. Malaysia, on the other hand, is concentrating on propagating a national identity as it balances the interests

of its racial groups. Racial integration is a top priority in its development goals.

#### Communication Policies

The communication policies described and explained in this section pertain to those policies that specifically guide the media for national development goals.

#### Malaysia

Present policies regarding communication are subsumed under a National Economic Policy created in 1971. The main objectives of this policy include the elimination of poverty by increasing employment opportunities for all races and the restructuring of society by rural modernization and urban commercial development. In the spirit of the Rukunegara, the policy incorporates some specific guidelines that touch on communication as a component to development goals. A portion of the Third Malaysia Plan includes the use of communication to:

(1) counter feelings that government restructuring goals were discriminatory rather than aimed at promoting genuine social justice; (2) encourage public participation and response to various plan objectives such as the development of a national integrated culture, the encouragement of Malay participation in business through the promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit in them; and, (3) gain popular loyalty against communist propaganda including measures involving marginal groups such as the Orang Asli, or aborigines in the mainstream of development."

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" Lowe, 135.

Press and broadcasting activity in Malaysia, from the time it was introduced by the British until the country's independence, was strictly government-controlled by the colonial powers.<sup>50</sup> In the 1960s, an Internal Security Act was legislated to allow detention without trial for journalists who attempt to disrupt the state security.<sup>51</sup>

Rigid controls by the government on media institutions and media content continue to exist. Printing presses and newspapers regularly follow strict licensing requirements. Majority Malaysian ownership of print media facilities has been set as one of the conditions for license renewals since 1974.

Broadcasting is monopolized by the government.<sup>52</sup> The Ministry of Information supervises the operations of three major television networks served by five regional studios with several transmitting stations around the country.<sup>53</sup> Government-owned Radio Malaysia operates six domestic networks and broadcasts in different languages. "Voice of Malaysia," an overseas broadcasting service launched in

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<sup>50</sup> Asiah Sarji, "The Historical Development of Broadcasting in Malaysia (1930-1957) and Its Social and Political Significance," Media Asia 9, no. 3 (1982): 152.

<sup>51</sup> Kevin Boyle, ed., Article 19: Information, Freedom and Censorship (New York: Times Books, 1988), 157.

<sup>52</sup> Although TV 3 is technically a privately-owned network, it is tightly monitored by the Ministry of Information.

<sup>53</sup> Lowe, 136.

1963, regularly relays Malaysian viewpoints and cultural interests.<sup>54</sup>

Advertising in all media is strictly regulated as well. Advertisements for liquor, tobacco, and foreign products, as well as scenes showing disco dancing and other suggestive actions, are all banned by an Advertising Code. On the other hand, Malaysian-made products and public service announcements such as those relating to the government's anti-drug campaign are encouraged.<sup>55</sup>

A planning and research division under the Ministry of Information serves as the central arm of the government in formulating and analyzing policy matters. Annually, this division produces research works that deal with the mass media in Malaysia, including reports on citizen feedback regarding general government policies and activities.<sup>56</sup>

A Psywar Division, also under the Ministry of Information, is assigned the task of utilizing and regulating the different mass media for specific information delivery. Its main objectives are:

1. to gain support and promote understanding of the government's actions so that [the citizens] will give their full cooperation;
2. to quash any allegations, spread among those who are easily influenced, about matters concerning culture, spiritual beliefs, economy, and politics;
3. to strengthen the spirit of the public against any

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<sup>54</sup> Karim, 357-358.

<sup>55</sup> Karim, 356.

<sup>56</sup> Karim, 356.

effort by the enemy to undermine it;  
 4. to foster and nurture confidence in the government;  
 5. to instill a sense of loyalty and love for the country; and,  
 6. to promote understanding and confidence in democracy as the best system of government.<sup>57</sup>

Along with the Psywar Division is the Department of Information that has now been called Information Services Malaysia. As in the other departments of the Ministry of Information, this government arm provides support to the attainment of national objectives by means of information campaigns and media assistance in socioeconomic development programs. Its main target audience has been the rural sector, where agricultural development and anti-Communist programs are of top priority.<sup>58</sup> In general, the basic function of this information service machinery

is to establish a two-way exchange of information between the government and the people, employing both mass communication techniques and inter-personal communication. This is achieved through sound and screen, the printed word, face-to-face communication, exhibitions, and stage shows. Through these and other media, the department seeks to explain government policies and actions, while public reactions to such endeavours are carefully noted and "feed-back" reports are conveyed to the agencies of the government concerned.<sup>59</sup>

The Department of Film is assigned the task of producing features, documentaries, and trailers that showcase government activities and programs. A research

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<sup>57</sup> Karim, 356-357.

<sup>58</sup> Dol Ramli, "Media for Development: How the Malaysian Machinery Works," Media Asia 5, no. 1 (1978): 12.

<sup>59</sup> Karim, 359.

library is attached to the Ministry as a primary resource center.

Private publishing has, of late, increased to fill the need for more newspapers and magazines written in different languages and catering to different cultural groups. Like broadcast facilities, newspapers, and other publications have met considerable encouragement from the government to be agents of national unity and integration.<sup>60</sup>

The government maintains no strict policy that touches on the activities of specific multinational corporations that deal with communication. However, a Foreign Investment Committee under the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's office generally oversees multinational investments within the country. This committee basically follows the guidelines stipulated in the New Economic Policy which has, as one of its objectives, the consolidation of at least 30 percent share ownership of every company by Malaysian nationals by 1990.<sup>61</sup>

### Philippines

The role of communication for national development is stated in broad terms by the Philippine constitution. A national policy on communication that is presented in this document declares that "the State recognizes the vital role

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<sup>60</sup> Mohammad Hamdan Adnan, "The Mass Media in Malaysia," Media Asia 12, no. 3 (1985): 162.

<sup>61</sup> Karim, 233.

of communication and information in nation-building."<sup>62</sup> In its General Provisions section, the constitution further recognizes the importance of the media and their potentials as agents for national development by asserting that

the State shall provide the policy environment for the full development of Filipino capability and the emergence of communication structures suitable to the needs and aspirations of the nation and the balanced flow of information into, out of, and across the country, in accordance with a policy that respects the freedom of speech and of the press.<sup>63</sup>

The policy that this constitution refers to can be gleaned from the efforts of the government-appointed Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) in outlining specifically the roles media are expected to play in society. Although primarily functioning as a media regulatory body, the Board is responsible for implementing general provisions of media use by private individuals. The promotion of national identity and consciousness, and the encouragement of a responsible broadcast and film industry are major concerns that have been articulated lately in the various circulars the Board has distributed.

The Board's regulatory functions include the review and classification of broadcast materials and feature or full length films (both local and foreign), the issuance of permits for film exhibition (for both commercial and non-

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<sup>62</sup> Constitution, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Constitution, 58.



commercial purposes), and the evaluation of print and broadcast advertisements.<sup>64</sup>

A more active participant in the media and development schemes of the country is the eight-year-old Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines, more commonly known as the KBP (acronym for "Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas"). Although the KBP is a trade organization, initial groundwork for its formulation in 1981 was laid down by a government body known as the Broadcast Media Council. Self-regulation is the association's guiding principle and is reflected in its performance through the years. The KBP follows codes of programming and operations that were formulated and implemented by broadcasters themselves. Since almost all broadcasters in the country are serious and active members of this association, the KBP has had considerable success in terms of guiding and regulating the broadcast industry for national interests.<sup>65</sup>

Among the KBP's main principles are the promotion of national unity and assistance in the nation's cultural, social, and economic growth. Various provisions call for the maintenance of high standards of professionalism in the

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<sup>64</sup> Philippines, Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, Circulars, Nos. 1-1-88, 1-2-88, 2-1-88, 2-2-88, 2-3-88, 2-4-88, 2-5-88, 2-6-88, 3-1-88, 3-2-88, 3-3-88, 4-1-88, 6-2-88, 11-1-88, 11-2-88, and 11-3-88 (Quezon City: MTRCB, 1988).

<sup>65</sup> The KBP Standards Authority Primer (Manila: KBP, 1984), 1-5.

broadcast industry and the enhancement of nationalistic values and local talents. Its Radio Code, for example, specifies a minimum time per hour that a station should allow for the broadcast of Filipino music. Its Advertising Standards Code stipulates the maximum number of commercials than can be broadcast for every hour.<sup>66</sup>

The concentration of media ownership by a few individuals and several transnational corporations during the Marcos era has been corrected by the present administration. The revised constitution states that

the ownership and management of mass media shall be limited to citizens of the Philippines, or to corporations, cooperatives or associations, wholly-owned and managed by such citizens. The Congress shall regulate or prohibit monopolies in commercial mass media when the public interest so requires. No combinations in restraint of trade or unfair competition therein shall be allowed.<sup>67</sup>

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution. Prior censorship has been abolished. The government only steps in if national and civil laws concerning the promotion of national security, public safety, or the protection of human rights are infringed. Similar to general policies concerning broadcast industries, however, the government generally encourages the press institutions to assist in national development programs.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "Radio Code of the KBP," Mimeograph, n.d.;  
"Television Code of the KBP," Mimeograph, n.d.

<sup>67</sup> Constitution, 58-59.

<sup>68</sup> "Philippines," 307-308.

Commercial media advertising and the operations of the local advertising industries that mostly have close ties with multinational corporations have also been given importance by the government. Broad regulations aimed at protecting consumers and promoting the general welfare are used to guide the nature and dissemination of advertising content. Advertising companies are also required by law to be at least 70 percent owned by Filipino citizens and fully managed by local entrepreneurs.<sup>69</sup>

#### Thailand

Presently, no overall communication policy for national development exists in Thailand. The government has no clear-cut plans on the particular roles mass media should play in the attainment of national objectives. The only specific media policies that the government has stressed pertain to the avoidance of any action by the mass media in destabilizing the political system of the nation. Such policies have been instituted to indirectly pursue the objectives of maintaining national security and political stability.

The private press systems, because of their vulnerability to insurgency and state disruption, have been the ones most subjected to these regulations. Civil laws prevent libelous attacks on any citizen, the government, and

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<sup>69</sup> Constitution, 59.

the royal family. Annual licensing requirements are also instituted. Specific government acts emphasize prohibitions rather than duties.<sup>70</sup>

In 1977, a government announcement prohibited newspapers from publishing stories and illustrations which attacked the monarchy, make accusations against Thailand or give a distorted, contemptuous, or insulting image of Thailand or of the Thai people, or which could arouse disrespect abroad for Thailand or of the Thai people; make accusations against the government or any official institutions, or present a distorted, contemptuous, or insulting image of them; propagate Communism; sow fear or unease among the population to be divisive, and which would have a harmful effect on peace, public order, or morality; are pornographic, obscene, or coarse, or which injure the morals and culture of the nations; are official secrets.<sup>71</sup>

The newly-revised 1978 constitution, which is currently in use, explicitly encourages press freedom although it still gives the government the right to close down a printing press when it feels justified in doing so. Moreover, the government is also free to require pre-censorship of press materials in times of crisis.<sup>72</sup>

Although press control can still be legally imposed according to this constitution, the government has, in practice, loosened its control to a large degree. In 1982,

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<sup>70</sup> Phisit Shawalahtaiwat, Law of Mass Communication in Thailand (Bangkok: Dogya, 1985), 42.

<sup>71</sup> John A. Lent, ed., Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1982), 365.

<sup>72</sup> Boonrak Boonyaketmala, "Thailand," Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems, ed. John A. Lent (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1982), 366.

for example, one newspaper reported a story about an assassination attempt on the Prime Minister. The Police Department demanded that the newspaper retract the story, but the editor was convinced of the report's accuracy. The newspaper company was able to publish the story in full without any action against it.<sup>73</sup>

Nevertheless, the government acknowledges the potentials of the mass media in effectively disseminating information and mobilizing the people for national integration. As such, the state has owned and controlled almost all radio and television facilities. The government arm that supervises the management and operation of these stations is the Radio and Television Committee which is chaired by the Prime Minister or his representative. In 1976, more than 50% of all radio and television stations were controlled by the military. Media content is basically entertainment in character. However, the Ministry of Education, through its broadcasting service, operates a television station that delivers educational programs for schools and the general public.<sup>74</sup>

Program content for radio and television are guided by specific responsibilities. Announcement Number 15, which was promulgated in 1976, requires each station to devote

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<sup>73</sup> John McBeth, "The Rough with the Smooth," Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 Jul. 1984: 36-38.

<sup>74</sup> "Thailand," 369.

suitable hours for news, entertainment, and educational programs as services to be rendered for the people. Some broadcasting stations are also allowed commercial activity, in the form of advertisements or business announcements, as sources of revenue.

Succeeding announcements emphasized the alignment of media programs with government principles. Programs should stimulate patriotism and respect for the state religion and the king. Additionally, such programs should not be morally offensive and unlawful. As in press guidelines, content that is Communist-oriented and rebellious in nature is prohibited. Entertainment programs should not be indecent and should highlight the preservation of traditional culture, norms, and values. The media are also encouraged to support government programs, particularly in the field of education.

Certain announcements also touch on advertising. Media materials from abroad are required to be translated into Thai. Moreover, advertising content must not use the king's name and should not showcase products that are detrimental to national culture.

The implementation of these guidelines is undertaken by a Committee of Radio/Television Administration under the Department of Public Relations. Headed by the Prime Minister, the Committee's membership list includes the heads of the transportation, communication, and police departments

and the representatives from the legislative, military, and administrative institutions of the government. Their roles consist of promulgating and implementing guidelines concerning the licensing, conduct, and technical requirements of the media facilities.<sup>75</sup>

With regards to multinational corporations which deal with communication, the Thai government maintains no specific policies. Generally, though, its Board Of Investments require at least 51 percent ownership of Thai nationals in any foreign business activity within the country.<sup>76</sup>

#### Comparisons

The clearest and most specific communication policies that relate to national development goals can be found in Malaysia. The roles that media should play as active participants in the attainment of national objectives are stipulated in the development plans that are distributed by the Malaysian government. Specific government agencies are also assigned tasks to monitor their implementation and evaluate their performance for future policy planners. Popular participation in policy-making, however, is not encouraged.

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<sup>75</sup> Shawalahtaiwat, 15-41; Boonlert Suphadilok, Law of Communication (Bangkok: Thammasat Univ. Press, 1984), 26-43.

<sup>76</sup> Franklin B. Weinstein, "Multinational Corporations and the Third World: The Case of Japan and Southeast Asia," International Organization 30, no. 3 (1976): 389.

The Malaysian government also maintains strict regulatory and censorship controls over all mass media institutions. Moreover, support for information campaigns and media assistance in socioeconomic development programs are made possible through government agencies.

The Philippines, on the other hand, has very broad provisions for the use of communication in national development programs. The only overall communication policy in this area appears as a subsection of the present constitution. In any case, such policies are in general terms and do not stipulate exactly the role of mass media in development.

Clearer policies, however, can be found in the works of a government agency that deals with the operation of the broadcast and film industries of the country. Although primarily a regulatory body concerned with the issuance of permits for public viewership of media materials, this agency has a primary objective of protecting national interests. A more active institution that has stimulated the promotion of nationalistic values in the broadcast industry is the Broadcasters' Association of the Philippines, a local trade and self-regulatory organization.

Similarly, Thailand has no overall communication policy for national development. Instead, the media are regulated and their actions are guided by strict public announcements that call for the avoidance of any action that can disrupt



national security. Several guidelines that have been issued generally emphasize the responsible use of the media by the public, the promotion of nationalistic or traditional ideals, and the support for government programs in education and anti-Communist efforts. Implementation of these guidelines is carried out by a media committee under the Prime Minister's office.

#### Effectiveness of Communication Policies

This section discusses evaluations and criticisms of communication policies brought out by academicians, experts, and local observers in the sample countries. Each country is discussed separately. Comparisons of the effectiveness of their communication policies are also offered at the end of the section.

#### Malaysia

The Malaysian government has sought to closely link policy planning with effective implementation by setting up the Implementation Coordination Unit administered by the Prime Minister's office. This unit has been largely responsible for seeing to it that special programs and projects specified by government policies in all areas of national economic and social development are achieved. In the unit's Communication Division, audiovisual documentation needs of the programs are serviced adequately.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Karim, 234-235.

Domestic radio and television broadcasting have all been geared toward assisting in the fulfillment of the nation's basic principles, as outlined in the Rukunegara.<sup>78</sup> Popular education, general information (news and public affairs), and entertainment programs have actively injected elements of unity, brotherhood, nationalism, and love of country. Such programs have also been responsible for stimulating "public interest and opinion in order to achieve changes in line with government policies."<sup>79</sup>

Traditional or folk media as well as other interpersonal channels such as public debates and cultural forums have also been found to be effective in disseminating information. The use of such media has particularly been effective in rural settings where audiences rely heavily on traditional modes of communication rather than the more modern amenities.<sup>80</sup>

As shown in Table 1, data provided by the Ministry of Information reflect significant increases, over a six-year period, in development-oriented television programs, such as information and education programs, news programs, and public service announcements. Radio broadcasts of announcements also increased significantly.

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<sup>78</sup> Omar, 18-20.

<sup>79</sup> Karim, 357.

<sup>80</sup> Ahmad Mustapha Hassan, "The Mass Media as an Agent of Change in Malaysia," Media Asia 10, no. 2 (1983): 77-78.

Table 1. Broadcasting Time by Type of Program

Program Type	Radio Time in %		Television Time in %	
	1977	1983	1977	1983
Information & Education	13.7	13.4	10.2	13.0
News	10.0	8.0	11.0	12.0
Religion	11.0	13.0	10.0	10.0
Drama	6.0	3.9	40.2	33.0
Children	-	-	-	14.0
Entertainment	55.0	44.4	21.3	6.0
Sports	-	-	3.0	3.5
Advertisements	2.3	2.6	4.2	5.5
Announcements, etc.	<u>2.1</u>	<u>14.3</u>	-	<u>3.0</u>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Weekly Broadcasting Time (in hours)	168.0	168.0	63.0	63.0

Source: Ministry of Information, Malaysia

However, despite the rigorous and sustained efforts of the government in tuning the mass media systems for the attainment of national development goals, a number of problems have confronted the various agencies working on this area. Ramli identifies concerns such as the communication gap between the government and the citizens, credibility of message facilitators and message content, insufficient research and planning, and lack of sufficient manpower resources. For example, media practitioners who have been engaged in extension services in the farms and other remote areas of the country have faced problems like lack of skills in communicating well with the farmers and poor coordination with the head offices.

Sometimes, valuable feedback information gathered in the field does not always reach the centre in time for plans and actions to be modified suitably. . . . Decisions made at the centre do not always disseminate fast enough to reach the grassroots for action. And even if they do, the implementation of the ground does not always accord with the facts as announced. . . . Shortage of skilled and experienced personnel . . . have sometimes hampered the work of effectively informing, educating, and motivating the rural audience. Rural inhabitants can be very sensitive about the kind of language used in communicating with them, about the conduct and behaviour and even dress worn by the communicator or extension service staff working in their midst.<sup>81</sup>

Another concern regarding the implementation of communication policies, particularly government censorship, has been raised recently. While the various mass media continue to be used by the government for information and public relations purposes, a few have observed a reluctance on the part of the bureaucracy to allow equal broadcast time for dissenting views.

Newspaper companies, although privately-owned, have been known to be controlled by the leading pro-government political parties. Constant pressures regarding annual licensing of media facilities are employed.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, reporters and editors who seek to express anti-government views are careful not to be branded as seditious or detained without trial.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ramli, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Adnan, 169.

<sup>83</sup> Brennan, 177.

## Philippines

A significant number of Filipino researchers, mainly coming from the academic sector, have expressed concern over the preponderant use of mass media solely for entertainment and the need to realign communication's potentials for assisting in the development process of the nation.<sup>84</sup> Up until the Marcos administration, Philippine mass media have been relatively lacking in direction as far as contributing to national development is concerned, save for the standardization of professionalism brought about by the Broadcasters' Association of the Philippines (KBP). Too much emphasis on the commercial aspects of broadcasting by both the private and the public sectors of the industry has lately been the target of much criticism. As one observer notes:

The past history of the broadcast industry in the Philippines is characterized by faltering steps, confusion, and no sense of direction. "To each his own" seemed to be the working philosophy of radio stations. As a result, competition became very keen; and always, the rich stations survived; while the poor ones were eliminated.<sup>85</sup>

As a result, even the government-owned broadcasting facilities that receive inadequate funding from the state

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<sup>84</sup> Nora C. Quebral, "The Role of Mass Media in the Philippines: A Reassessment," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 273-276.

<sup>85</sup> Ernesto I. Songco, "Broadcasting in the Philippines: Involvement in Development," Media Asia 5, no. 4 (1978): 218.

have turned into semi-commercial operations to obtain a slice of the revenue-rich potentials of domestic media enterprises. Until recently, entertainment programs (most of which are imported from the United States) have been preferred by most media programmers because of their high commercial value, as compared with educational and instructional programs.<sup>86</sup>

Aside from the over-commercialization of the mass media industries that hinder their use as facilitators of national development programs, other scholars point out more crucial factors that need to be considered. One of these, and probably the most important of all, is the apparent lack of specific policies concerning mass media use in national development. Critical writers note of the emphasis of past and present administrations in formulating communication policies that are too general, simplistic, and overly concerned with providing telecommunication infrastructures, such as broadcast transmitters and electrical receptors for the rural areas.<sup>87</sup> One communication professor observes that:

Communication as a broader social concern enters the picture only as part of the operational requirements of the different social development sectors; i.e., health

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<sup>86</sup> Orly S. Mercado and Elizabeth B. Buck, "Media Imperialism in Philippine Television," Media Asia 8, no. 2 (1981): 93-99.

<sup>87</sup> Florangel R. Braid, "Patterns of Information Technology Transfer in the Philippines," Media Asia 10, no. 3 (1983): 174; Mercado and Buck, 99.

has its health-information office, population has its information-education-communication (IEC) [machinery], education has its audio-visual services, etc.<sup>88</sup>

Interest in considering the efforts of academic institutions in formulating and evaluating development programs using communication has also been minimal. Experts advise that what can be provided by local institutions and research practitioners, who have done much of the ground-breaking effort in development communication research, has earned little consideration and encouragement.<sup>89</sup>

Another factor that can be attributed to the ineffective use of communication in development is the apparent lack of participation by the local private media in matters of national concern. Many researchers view this as the result of government hesitation in encouraging the participation of private citizens in development efforts.<sup>90</sup> The Aquino administration has recently sought to remedy this

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<sup>88</sup> Reynaldo V. Guioguo, "A Framework for a National Communication Policy in the Philippines," Media Asia 11, no. 3 (1984): 165.

<sup>89</sup> Reynaldo V. Guioguo, "Factors Related to Devcom Policies and Planning: Focus on the Philippine Experience," Media Asia 4, nos. 3 and 4 (1977): 97.

<sup>90</sup> Aurelio B. Calderon, "Media and the Development of a Filipino Social and Historical Consciousness," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 268-270; Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr., "Development Communication in an Urban Setting," Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 259-263; Guioguo, "Factors," 97.

problem by allowing academic and private sector involvement in policy-making institutions.<sup>91</sup>

Due, in part, to the negligence of previous administrations in utilizing the potentials of communication for development, mechanisms for evaluating policy effectiveness are nonexistent. The roles played by the transfer of communication technologies, like satellites, have been focused largely on merely providing services for the various institutional projects of the government. Studies on the impact of these technologies on the social and cultural environment as well as their effectiveness in fulfilling objectives have been rarely undertaken and remain largely unavailable. A communication expert observes that

experiments in the use of inter-active mechanisms such as audio cassettes, barangay<sup>92</sup> consultations, use of community organizations and smaller media like blackboard and wall newspapers, puppets, and folk theater are being done in pilot areas. These experiments could contribute to the planning of larger communication technology as long as there is a conscious intent to document "successes" in participatory communication . . . and to integrate these experiences in the reorientation and training programmes for various levels of communication and development personnel.<sup>93</sup>

Currently, no significant material has surfaced to measure the effectiveness of the recent media policies instituted by the present administration. Evaluation of

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<sup>91</sup> Tinna B. Mauricio, "Congress Moves to Regulate the Industry," The Philippine Starweek 2, no. 27 (1988): 12-15.

<sup>92</sup> smallest unit of political government

<sup>93</sup> Braid, 175.



such policies at the present, however, may appear to be premature and difficult to perform.

### Thailand

Regulatory policies concerning the content of press materials have resulted in self-censorship practices among journalists. In recent years, closure of printing presses, arrests of editors and reporters, and banning of books have been attempted to prevent the publication of materials that are offensive to the king and the government.<sup>94</sup> But even though the press is government controlled, a number of newspapers and magazines are active in exercising freedom of expression by printing articles that criticize the establishment. As such, many of these articles run counter to the government's political stabilization strategies.<sup>95</sup>

Due to the absence of specific guidelines for the promotion of national development objectives, the mass media have been reluctant to take important roles or commitments to encourage social development. Bunbongkarn, a political science professor in Thailand, observes that:

Improvement of the programmes to foster national culture and identity as well as to instill appropriate social values and morality among the public has been proposed but little has been done. [Although] all the radio and television stations are government owned, there has not been any serious effort on the part of the government to utilize these mass media for national development purposes except for the establishment of

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<sup>94</sup> Kurian, 1928.

<sup>95</sup> Bunbongkarn, 195.

the Open University of Sukhothai Thammathirat which is an effort to use the radio and television for the purpose of providing continuing education for the public.<sup>96</sup>

The Ministry of Health, however, reports a moderate success in its broadcast educational services. Its television programs in health care, family planning, and primary education have benefitted viewers who regularly tune in. For example, most of these viewers, who are from the rural sector, have now become aware of suitable health practices.<sup>97</sup>

However, the potential of radio as an agent of social development and national integration has not been fully utilized. Says one observer:

Although radio is popular in the villages, its influence has not been so great as to alter the traditional way of life. It has neither stimulated political consciousness among peasants, nor offered much scope for discussion. The radio programs emphasize entertainment more than education, which sometimes is very unattractive and poorly arranged.<sup>98</sup>

Generally, critics have observed that a problem more serious than the lack of media use in attaining social development goals is the negligence of the government in

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<sup>96</sup> Bunbongkarn, 195.

<sup>97</sup> Surapone Virulrak, "Mass Media, Tradition and Change: An Overview of Thailand," Media Asia 10, no. 2 (1983): 103.

<sup>98</sup> Sukanya Terawanij, "Communication and Institutional Change in Thailand," Institutional Exploration in Communication Technology, ed. Godwin C. Chu, Syed A. Rahim, and D. Lawrence Kincaid, Communication Monographs, no. 4 (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1978), 113.

harnessing the potentials of media facilities for economic development.

In Thailand, communication infrastructure has not always been developed to foster other development policies; for example, construction of roads in the Northeast region was not intended primarily to serve and encourage economic development in this part but to meet national security demands.<sup>99</sup>

### Comparisons

On the whole, communication policies in all of the countries suffer from ineffectiveness due to a number of factors. One is the improper implementation of such policies. Malaysia's clear-cut policies on the role of mass media in development leave little room for crucial planning and evaluation of existing programs. Feedback mechanisms that have been underutilized have resulted in poor communication relationships between the government and the masses. The same is true with the Philippines and Thailand. Because these countries do not have specific communication policies, implementation of even the general guidelines stipulated broadly in major laws is largely nonexistent.

Another factor that can account for the ineffectiveness of communication policies is that these countries have not fully realized the potentials of mass media for development purposes. Although various small-scale social programs using mass media techniques have been instituted in all the countries, experts lament the general hesitation of

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<sup>99</sup> Bunbongkarn, 194.

governments in using communication on a larger or national scale.

The governments of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand place too much emphasis on issuing and carrying out regulatory impositions and technical provisions, instead of finding ways in which media can be utilized for social and economic development.

Lastly, the lack of participation of the private sector in government efforts toward aligning and regulating the media for national development can be attributed to the general ineffectiveness of communication policies. Involvement of the citizens in communication policy-planning, implementation, and evaluation has not been apparent in any of the countries.

#### Future Directions

Generally, the media in Malaysia have been part of a continuing struggle towards national integration. The trend at present shows an increased use of the media by the government, through its major political groups, to foster strong democratic ideals of unity and participation among its citizens. In fulfilling its goals, the choice of the political system has been to regulate media form and content, with emphasis on achieving national development through racial integration and societal progress. Lowe observes that "the challenge for the future . . . lies in the media being calibrated and attuned to more clearly

defined roles as required by future political situations."<sup>100</sup>

In terms of its economy, experts note Malaysia's relative success in realizing its economic policy objectives. The attainment of economic stability has taken high priority since the 1970s, although worldwide recession in the 1980s has created some problems with regards to domestic and foreign trade.

Worldwide recession in 1981 coupled with fall in commodity prices and increase in external borrowing for public investment pose [economic] stabilization problems for the remainder of the 1980s.<sup>101</sup>

Malaysia has, indeed, been directly affected by forces outside its territory. As a nation that has been actively seeking economic and political independence, it has remained staunch in its desire to balance the selective penetration of these outside forces with measures that can help the economy and the country as a whole to be self-reliant.<sup>102</sup> Toward this end, the preservation of its traditional culture has taken high priority. The mass media have been instrumental in working to keep a delicate balance between accepting foreign intrusion while protecting tradition.<sup>103</sup>

For the future, technocrats foresee the continuance of the mass media as an important part of government machinery

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<sup>100</sup> Lowe, 140.

<sup>101</sup> Semudram, 100.

<sup>102</sup> Rudner, 75.

<sup>103</sup> Awang and Yusof, 149.

for the fulfillment of national objectives. Although many would agree that some government programs have been successfully undertaken with the aid of mass media, some critics still see the need for a more streamlined and democratic system. Among the problems identified are the lack of coordination between policy planners (the government) and target audiences (the public), over-centralized and bureaucratic communication systems, and repression of press freedom.<sup>104</sup> How the government will deal with these problems remains a big question for the future.

The Philippine situation is similar to Malaysia's, although its economic and political stability problems are more pronounced. The recent political changes that the country has gone through have made its citizens more active in terms of popular participation in political activities and more openly critical of national affairs. On the other hand, such conditions have made the current administration more open to instability brought about by pressures from various political factions vying for power. Numerous coup attempts have occurred from time to time. The liberalized press has recently gained wide recognition as an active participant in such political affairs. Now free of censorship, the press has taken a "watchdog" role by exposing public wrongdoing and has helped mold public opinion for more democratic political processes. The

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<sup>104</sup> Adnan, 169; Ramli, 13; Wawn, 70.

broadcast media, however, has taken a more commercial position although the number of public affairs programs have increased lately. Still, the government has yet to fully realize the potentials of the mass media for assisting in the fulfillment of national objectives for development.

In terms of the economy, the present administration is bent on resurrecting stability by encouraging private enterprise in the manufacturing and industrial sectors as it eases the strenuous effects of an enormous public debt situation. Still, the country is at the mercy of international economic conditions. Nationalization of domestic industries is actively pursued and the majority of the mass media industries are left in private control. The government has also taken crucial steps to ease its dependency problems by encouraging self-reliance and self-sufficiency in its overall economic schemes for both public and private enterprises.<sup>105</sup>

In attaining political and economic stability, the government has been reluctant to utilize the mass media. Critics have called for a more specific communication policy in this area so that the mass media can be attuned to the development of the nation. Many have also sought the necessity of encouraging private participation in the planning and implementation of communication policies. While the administration has answered this by including

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<sup>105</sup> Braid, 175; Mercado and Buck, 98-99.

portions of mass media roles in the constitution, some scholars argue that the provisions are too general. What they expect in the future are more detailed communication policies that can reflect the full utilization of mass media as vital instruments in the development processes of the country.<sup>106</sup>

Future directions for Thailand are also aimed at realizing the benefits of a clear, democratic, and effective communication policy for national development. As the present government concerns itself with stabilizing its economic and political structures, many critics argue for the inclusion of mass media participation in national affairs.

The privately-owned press has maintained a critical position in the democratic processes by being active in voicing public opinion and sentiments about political and social activities. The government has eased its once rigid censorship laws and now limits its participation in local press operations to the encouragement of promoting traditional culture and preserving national security. On the other hand, the administration has enforced strict control over broadcasting institutions, perhaps, as a measure to sustain political stability. This perceived notion of broadcasting as critical and influential instruments of change can, thus, be attuned to fulfilling

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<sup>106</sup> Braid, 172-173.



national goals. At the moment, this potential has not been fully realized due to the absence of effective communication policies.<sup>107</sup>

Thailand's economy has also been affected by international forces. Rapid increases in oil prices have brought about local inflation and trade imbalances. At the present, however, the economy is pursuing rigorous measures aimed at stabilizing the economy largely by exploiting its once-neglected natural resources. Urban and rural poverty are also prime considerations.<sup>108</sup>

As in other countries, mass media are not fully utilized as instruments for national development. This is reflected in the absence of communication policies in Thailand. The government basically concerns itself with regulating the industry for national security. Critics have expressed concern regarding such a situation by calling for a more comprehensive and democratic policy regarding the roles of communication in society. Many have decried the prevalence and unrestrained flow of foreign culture in media, especially in the urban areas.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the over-commercialization of the media industries has caused the erosion and neglect of traditional culture.<sup>110</sup> Thailand's

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<sup>107</sup> Bunbongkarn, 198-199; Virulrak, 105.

<sup>108</sup> Hewison, 286-287.

<sup>109</sup> Lim, 119-121.

<sup>110</sup> Virulrak, 197-199.

objectives of preserving national security, maintaining political and economic stability, and promoting national identity can, for the future, include the participation of the mass media for such efforts.

Overall, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand need to align their mass media institutions to assist in the national development process. They can do this by stipulating national communication policies that are specific and structured to meet local democratic needs.

Communication policy can play important roles in the development of these nations. On a larger context, this crucial role of communication can be reflected in the societal processes of change and growth. In the development process, these countries are currently involved in maintaining the delicate balance of independently setting national goals and co-existing with other nations in a rapidly expanding global community.

On the domestic scene, the goal is to continue with alternative paths to development by fostering socioeconomic equality and self-reliance while preserving national identities.

On the international scene, the future direction points to a more active and democratic participation in world affairs. Even within the countries themselves, governments are increasingly opting for more control of foreign-dominated industries that promote dependency. The presence

of multinational corporations as leading investors in the countries have caused a significant concern among economic planners. Most nations have begun to implement new laws that would help in the reduction of foreign dependence by nationalizing industries or, at least, allowing majority ownership by local citizens. At first, this strategy was found to be effective. In recent years, however, the rise of "dummy" owners have surfaced. A study of Japanese investment in Southeast Asia revealed that

majority ownership can be very misleading as an indicator of control. . . . There are, in fact, numerous ways in which the foreign partner in a joint venture can retain control even in the face of majority shareholding by local nationals. . . . The Japanese may simply share purchase shares in the name of the local partner. According to Japanese embassy sources, it is not uncommon for under-the-table money to be paid to local nationals for the use of their names.<sup>111</sup>

With these local and international factors in mind, it would be practical for Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand to explore more intensely the potentials of mass media as instruments of development. The realization of these potentials can be an important step to the attainment of democratic ideals. In effect, the formulation of communication policy for national development can provide a crucial element necessary for the fulfillment of these ideals.

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<sup>111</sup> Weinstein, 388-389.

## Chapter 6

### DISCUSSION

In order to examine the nature of communication policies and the roles they play in meeting national development objectives, this study proposed several undertakings. One was to explore the political, economic, and social factors that have influenced shifts in the roles of communication and in the development strategies of emerging countries. This exploration emphasized an understanding of past and current developments in each country. This study also detailed the present communication policies used in the countries and evaluated such policies according to their effectiveness. Future projections on policy-making were discussed as well.

Further, a comparative methodology was used to ascertain similarities and differences among Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, in terms of their history, their national development goals, and their utilization of communication policies for meeting desired objectives.

This chapter proposes to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 2. The major findings and implications of the comparative study, the significance and limitations of the research work, and some suggestions for future study on communication policy are discussed as follows.

### Implications

The implications of the findings in the study are discussed in the sequence of the research questions proposed.

Research Question No. 1: What are the political, social, and economic characteristics of these countries at present?

- a. What changes can be seen in each of the countries' history that are reflected in the changes of their development goals?
- b. What major similarities and differences in political, social, and economic characteristics do these countries have?

Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand are all developing countries in Southeast Asia. Functioning as independent nations with a high regard for the preservation of democratic systems, these countries share common attributes mainly because they are physically close to one another and have experienced similar historical conditions. In other specific areas, however, notable differences can be perceived as a result of each nation pursuing common democratic goals through different paths and various development strategies.

In the field of politics, for example, all three countries share common goals like preservation of democracy and maintenance of independent status. In terms of democratic models used, however, these nations are very different from one another. Malaysia employs a parliamentary form of democracy under a powerful constitutional monarch. Thailand has a similar

parliamentary form of government but a less powerful monarchical head. In the Philippines, the president shares power with the elected legislative and judicial entities of the government.

One of the more pressing national concerns in these countries is the maintenance of political stability. The impact of some crucial events in the past continues to be felt in many current political activities. The violent racial disturbances that occurred in Malaysia in 1969 remain constant reminders for the government to persist in striking a balance of political and economic powers among its multi-ethnic constituents. Thailand's series of military coups have been, for the present, halted by a strong and popular military leader who, at the same time, must be alert and ready for any possible take-over by another group. The same is true for the Philippines, whose president has luckily survived recent coup attempts, but still remains vulnerable to the various forms of political instability that may arise in the country at anytime.

In terms of social structures, similarities and differences also exist. Since Malaysia has the most majority and minority racial groups, a wide variety of languages, including English, is used. The Islamic faith exerts a strong presence in the society, although the presence of other religious groups is tolerated. In contrast, Filipinos generally belong to the same race that,

through the years, has been sprinkled with Spanish, Chinese, and American influences. The majority profess the Roman Catholic faith and speak mainly in English and in the national language. A majority of the Thai people also belong to one race, while the rest of the population come from Chinese, Malaysian, and other ethnic backgrounds. Buddhism is the nation's dominant religion and Thai, the national language, is the most widely used.

In terms of economy, all three nations operate on a free enterprise system with varying degrees of domestic and foreign trading. Generally, these countries have fairly stable economic systems that are significantly influenced by worldwide economic activities. Internal economic institutions try to weigh the impact of these outside forces against local development concerns with moderate success and, at times, with limited benefits.

On the whole, various economic development programs have been successful, specifically for Thailand and Malaysia. In the Philippines, the results of the economic schemes of the present government have yet to be evaluated. The concentration for the moment is to revive the nation's ailing economic conditions wrought by years of corruption and financial mismanagement during the previous administration. Regional cooperation among these countries has also resulted in the creation of productive trading environments.

Although agriculture is each country's major industrial force, most governments have concentrated on developing the manufacturing sector. While this emphasis has encouraged profitable foreign trading, many promising agricultural industries have remained underdeveloped and underutilized. Realizing this, the three countries have started efforts aimed at revitalizing the agriculture-based industries.

In addition, these countries have been subjected to very unstable economic periods caused by the oil price increases and the worldwide economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, these nations have had to face the economic burdens brought by their considerable dependence on foreign assistance schemes that have failed to "develop" their societies. Internal corruption, especially in the case of the Philippines, has further wielded powerful repercussions in the economic situations of these countries.

Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand share many common characteristics with respect to history and the influences brought about by political, social, and economic factors in national development.

Historically, common threads of colonial rule run within the fabric of past development and current conditions for these countries. Even Thailand, which has never been formally colonized, has had its share of foreign influences within its institutions. Western influences in the areas of government administration, economic affairs, and cultural



life are profound and have drastically changed each of the countries from their former indigenous states to what they are today. As such, patterns of Westernized cultural forms prevail in both the physical (industrial centers, manufacturing industries, modern technological facilities and equipment) and social (traditions, languages spoken, religion) elements of society.

The impact of Westernization is clearly seen with regards to communication. In the indigenous societies of the past, interpersonal forms of communication were dominant. With the opening up of these countries to foreign trade and direct colonization, "modern" forms of communication, using imported technology, were substituted. With technological importation also came the borrowing and, later on, the significant use of foreign media content in local communication endeavors.

These historical factors have influenced significantly the current conditions in each of the countries. The realization of the negative impacts of Westernization among the developing nations has allowed these emerging centers to carefully consider critical issues in present development concerns. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have recently attempted to strike a delicate balance between preserving traditional societal structures and adapting some Western influences to suit national priorities. In the sphere of political activity, Malaysia and Thailand have

tried to retain some indigenous political elements (like the Sultanate in Malaysia and the monarchy in Thailand) while borrowing the foreign concept of centralized public administration. In terms of economic structures, all the countries rely heavily on foreign trading through their manufacturing industries, while making an effort to revitalize their formerly-strong agricultural industries. Socially, national cultures are becoming increasingly Westernized, although the presence of a strong religious base (Islam in Malaysia and Buddhism in Thailand are considered traditional religions.) has minimized this to a certain degree.

Current concerns in the political, economic, and social activities of the countries are also reflected in the nature, roles, and functions of the media structures within these societies. The heavy dependence on outside sources for economic necessities is a factor that can be attributable to the substantial amount of imported media hardware and software present in all of the countries. Most types of media equipment are imported and a heavy percentage of foreign programs and foreign-influenced media products exist.

The current political and social contexts of each nation are also reflected in the ways their media systems are structured and operated. In Malaysia, for example, the principal problems associated with national integration

within a multi-racial society and the preservation of the tenets of their Islamic faith have resulted in strict controls over media institutions. Censorship of all media has been rigorously practiced, mainly as a tool for guarding against the entry of non-Malayan elements. This practice, however, has gained considerable attention from certain sectors of the society who advocate more freedom of expression and more lenient standards in accepting foreign media content.

In the Philippines, a recent shift to a more democratic political environment has eased media control that was exercised during past administrations. Further, privatization of the media industries has opened new channels for political dissenters who, in the past, were not free to express their opinions publicly. This liberated media environment has also created new opportunities for entrepreneurs to freely produce programs of their choice. Lately, however, concern has been raised regarding the media's responsibilities to the public. Moral degradation, blamed mostly on the dominance of foreign media content, is definitely an important issue in the Philippines, where religious figures (mostly from the Roman Catholic faith) have strong voices in the conduct of national affairs. Moreover, the government is wary about the potentials of media to worsen the relatively unstable political conditions of the country.

Thailand's media structures have also been notably reflective of political, economic, and social factors. Because of the country's need to preserve national security while, at the same time, creating an atmosphere of free expression, the government has allowed the existence of a liberal press (mostly privately-owned) and a controlled broadcasting industry (government-owned). This may be due either to the administration's realization of the more "powerful" potentials of broadcasting to "influence" the citizens, as compared to the press, or to a compromise position where government maintains "hands on" control of broadcasting as it leaves the press to themselves. With regards to foreign media content, Thailand's situation is relatively similar to that of the other countries. Media content is heavily saturated with imported elements and much social concern is directed at easing this problem.

Research Question No. 2: What, if any, are the national development goals of each country?

- a. How do these goals reflect a shift from the traditional approach of modernization to alternative approaches like equal distribution of socioeconomic benefits; popular participation in determining national goals; integration of modern and traditional social, political, and economic systems that are beneficial to the country; encouragement of self-reliance; and regional cooperation?
- b. What major similarities and differences in national goals can be found in the countries?

The national development goals of the three countries, as stipulated in their fundamental laws, constitutions, and

other official documents, generally refer to plans and priorities in the economic, political, and social areas.

Economic strategies, which are mainly discussed in separate government documents, focus on particular areas which need to be harnessed during a certain period of time in order to achieve a desired economic condition. In the Philippines, for example, the current economic plan is to provide incentives to the manufacturing and industrial sectors so that the weak and imbalanced foreign trading environment can be corrected. On the other hand, rural development is the primary objective in Thailand's present economic plans. Complementing such efforts is the revitalization of their agricultural industries which are mostly operated in the countryside.

The constitutions of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand clearly provide frameworks for national priorities in the political and social arenas of these countries. Malaysia is guided by a national ideology that calls for the integration of its various races into one unified country. The new constitution of the Philippines, for the first time, includes a declaration of democratic principles and common aspirations that form the basis of all political action. Thailand's supreme law also calls for unity under one head (the King) and one religion (Buddhism).

In all of these development plans, the shift from the traditional approach of modernization to alternative

approaches to development can be perceived. Equal distribution of socio-economic benefits is a top priority in the three nations' economic development plans. Huge economic gaps that have resulted in the concentration of development in the urban areas and in the neglect of the rural regions are now being corrected. Several attempts at providing assistance to the once-ignored agricultural enterprises are currently being made by the Thai government.

The Malaysian and Philippine governments have also encouraged private sector participation in the formulation and evaluation of their recent economic policies. In areas like technical assistance, field expertise, and policy evaluation, input of private citizens have been welcomed.

The integration of modern and traditional political, social, and economic systems in each of the countries has also been apparent in contemporary development strategies. The Thai and Malaysian governments have been most successful in preserving their traditional political institutions while allowing room for modern and centralized systems of public administration. The Philippines, however, is an exception, since its political institutions have largely been patterned after American models.

Within the three nations' economic development plans are also provisions for the promotion and support of local industries that rely on domestic or regional sources of raw materials and manpower. An important underlying theme in

these plans is the encouragement of self-reliance, particularly in the areas of local economic growth and trading among neighboring countries.

Of significant interest relating to these objectives is the past and current work being undertaken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since its formation in 1967, the three countries have vigorously participated in the support and development of ASEAN regional economic programs. Policies aimed at beneficial trade agreements, protection of common markets, financial support, sharing of expertise, and even lively cultural exchanges have met considerable success.

On the whole, these national development goals show a clear and significant shift from the more traditional but inappropriate models of development to alternative paths that the countries have themselves determined. Because such a shift has been implemented only recently, difficulties arise when questions regarding their true appropriateness and effectiveness are asked. On paper, the goals reflect worthy aspirations and solid intentions. The real test, however, is in the implementation of such goals and their performance over time.

In reality, these countries have to deal with various internal and external constraints that bear strongly on the ways which national development objectives are planned and pursued. Pressing problems of political stability, social

unrest, and internal security are domestic concerns that can impede growth. Of equal importance are the consequences brought about by changes in world economic activity. Here, the difficulty of achieving real self-reliance is confronted every time one of these countries deals with its foreign trade counterparts. Pressures brought about by the imbalanced world trade situation, domestic inflation, and international market disturbances are only a few of the many constraints these countries have to struggle with on a daily basis.

Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand are small emerging countries that are experiencing the same fate as most developing nations elsewhere. These are countries that are beginning to realize new and alternative models of growth which can somehow ease the burden of dependency encouraged during the past decades. While the most pressing issue they face at this time is how to ensure development without dependence, it is still the urgency of other internal and external pressures that continue to aggravate critical situations. Experts agree that what each country needs to do is to set long-term objectives complemented with realistic and practical short-term plans, with a large part of these plans emphasizing self-reliance to encourage the growth of local industries and the stabilization of their economies. Such advice, however, has been criticized by others as unrealistic because emerging countries are



constantly perplexed by current unfair practices in world trading and by their own foreign debts. In light of these issues, the national development goals of these countries need to be studied on the basis of serious constraints affecting their planning and implementation.

- Research Question No. 3: What communication policies have been created in each of the countries?
- a. How do these communication policies reflect national development goals?
  - b. How were these policies created?  
What goals, priorities, functions, and resources are stipulated in the policies?  
Do these policies include elements of public participation; guidelines on the importation of communication technology and content; alternative strategies for the encouragement of independence; self-sufficiency; the preservation and promotion of indigenous cultural forms; and regional cooperation?
  - c. How different or similar are the communication policies among the countries?

Of the three countries studied in this research work, Malaysia has the clearest and most specific communication policies. Both the Philippines and Thailand use very general provisions regarding communication policy oriented towards meeting national development goals.

Specific guidelines in Malaysia's current five-year plan call for communication as a component in national development objectives. Generally, these include the use of communication to assist government efforts in promoting social justice, in achieving national unity and harmony, and fighting Communist insurgency. All forms of media are strictly monitored by the government to guard against

political instability and erosion of traditional religious values which can cause rampant immorality and indecency in society.

In the Philippines, the role of communication in national development is broadly stated in its constitution. Media are recognized as important agents for national development. However, the existing government office that deals with media functions only as a regulatory agency. As a licensing office and a censorship or classification standards setter, this agency's concerns do not include programs for the use of media for development. A local trade organization exerts a more significant presence as another regulatory entity that focuses on the encouragement of national unity and participation in the country's cultural, social, and economic growth.

The Thai government maintains no clear-cut communication policy for national development and, thus, uses only some specific media policies for particular areas of concern. One of these concerns is the regulation of media institutions to prevent political and social instability. Although press freedom is generally protected, broadcast facilities are heavily guarded and strictly government owned and operated. Other laws broadly call for the media to support government programs in areas such as education and social welfare, to stimulate patriotism, and refrain from indecency and rebelliousness.

Overall, the general and specific communication policies of these countries were created in light of each country's existing political, social, and economic conditions. In Malaysia and Thailand, media are regarded as crucial to the maintenance of the nation's political and social stability. This is the reason all of their media establishments, with the exception of the press industry in Thailand, are heavily government controlled. Generally, most of the media policies that exist follow or are dictated by political guidelines. In most cases, the major priority is the maintenance of political stability and the synchronization of the media towards this end.

All of the policies studied lacked important elements like public participation in the formulation and evaluation of communication policies, guidelines on the importation of communication and technology, and the encouragement of self-sufficiency and regional cooperation. Malaysia's policies, however, do have strict censorship guidelines against foreign media content that are deemed immoral and run counter to traditional Muslim values. Thailand and the Philippines have policies on maintaining majority local ownership of media enterprises. All countries have general schemes for the preservation and promotion of their indigenous cultural forms.

The fact that these governments lack specific communication policies for national development reflects

inadequate understanding of the usefulness of the media in this area. Those countries, like Malaysia and the Philippines, that have policies which call for the media to assist in national development programs only do so in a very general manner. Specific guidelines on the conduct of media institutions in such affairs and on the implementation and evaluation of these policies do not exist. Media institutions can be aligned to assist in development strategies with important roles in the areas of information dissemination and feedback. Receiver-based information and education strategies can also be priorities within these policies. Unfortunately, this study did not find any of such elements.

Research Question No. 4: Based on historical accounts, how effective have these communication policies been and why?

The effectiveness of the communication policies in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand is difficult to ascertain in the light of inadequate research materials that deal with such evaluations. The Malaysian government, with its clear-cut policies regarding the use of media for national development concerns in the areas of unity, education, and social welfare, reports substantial success in the attainment of its programs. However, numerous critics have focused on the lack of the Malaysian government response to ineffective media strategies. For example, the lack of proper communication skills on the part of many

media personnel has resulted in the creation of communication gaps between the government and its citizens. Too much concern on strict censorship has also overshadowed the appropriate implementation of many media programs.

In the Philippines, where communication policies have been found to be very general and concentrated on the regulatory aspects of media operations, effectiveness is also hard to evaluate. The negligence of the previous administrations in properly utilizing the potentials of media for development has resulted in the absence of policies per se and their evaluation. Even with the present government, media are simply obliged to operate within broad democratic principles along with the preservation of national security and the promotion of local culture. The hesitancy of the government in using media for national development is also evident in its inadequate support for state-owned media institutions and its minimal encouragement of private-sector participation in development communication concerns.

The case of Thailand is similar to the Philippines. Mechanisms for measuring policy effectiveness are absent since no over-all communication policies for national development exist. Particular projects undertaken by the Ministry of Health, which utilizes a communication component for information dissemination, have earned moderate success. But in general, many critics agree that the government

should make a strong effort in harnessing the potentials of the media for the attainment of its social and economic development goals.

Research Question No. 5: What future directions does communication policy planning need to take in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand?

- a. How can communication policies be effective in attaining the national development objectives of these countries?
- b. What lessons can be learned from the use of media that can be oriented towards achieving democratic goals of other emerging countries?

Communication scholars who have positioned themselves in the forefront of numerous debates regarding Third World dependency and development stress the importance of studying specific media systems carefully. The recent body of work undertaken by these researchers and those who have participated in international forums confirms the critical nature of the roles media play within the context of such development concerns. These scholars have asserted that communication can be used as a tool for the effective and meaningful attainment of alternative national development strategies. This is the area where communication policies come into play. Media policies, if planned, formulated, and implemented well, can lead to more effective utilization of communication on a national level by complementing development plans as a whole.

The findings of this research reveal an inadequate application of policies that can effectively guide media to assist in attaining development goals. Even Malaysia, which

was found to have the clearest and most specific communication policies, suffers from weak and ineffectual media programs for development. The case of the Philippine and Thai situations, with their lack of particular development-oriented policies for media, is much more severe since the potentials of communication in this area are seriously underutilized.

This negligence on the part of the countries' governments in employing communication policies for national development can be best understood by examining the ways in which the larger contexts of politics, society, and economy impact on the media environment. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand are emerging countries whose political institutions are largely burdened by internal and external pressures. Complications arising from the incursion of Communism and from rebellious and dissatisfied forces within their societies have taken top priorities in political arenas.

Economically, these countries are also handicapped by forces within and outside their territories. Operating within Third World budgets, these nations are continuously struggling to build strong and stable economies that can compete with more powerful traders in the First and Second Worlds. Increasingly, the necessity of participating in global trade has also exposed these countries to disastrous repercussions, like recession and inflation, emanating from

the big nations. Further, the financial ruins brought about by previous and current foreign dependency situations have left indelible marks that may take years to rectify.

The effects of foreign dependency can be easily perceived in the cultural make-up of these countries. Decades of Western intrusion into the societies of Malaysia and the Philippines have profoundly altered traditional social systems and norms that look foreign these days. Even Thailand, which has never been formally colonized and continues to retain much of its native culture, borrows significantly from Western culture in terms of consumer necessities and entertainment fare.

These are the forces that Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have to contend with. While these countries have developed and are implementing new and alternative paths to national development, they have also neglected the creation of specific communication policies that can be important components of such development priorities. Limited budgets, the focus on more pressing political and social problems, and the lack of a basic understanding of the potentials of communication are only a few of the reasons for this neglect.

The same might be said of many other emerging countries which share their plight. The question now is, in the light of these various constraints and with the knowledge that communication can play crucial roles in national



development, how can these countries devise proper policies for media?

Primarily, the importance of media in society should be realized and better understood. As discussed in Chapter One, the media's power in effectively disseminating and sharing information on a large-scale basis can be harnessed for positive and democratic concerns. Even more so now, with the advent of new and sophisticated technology, media can play prominent roles in nation-building if they are used appropriately or within the context of a country's needs and resources. Each nation will then have to strike a balance between utilizing adequate media forms and affordable technology that can complement them.

Without media policy for development, actions taken by governments in pursuing national goals may have limited success. For example, serious efforts to curb foreign economic and cultural dependency can be hindered by a lack of policy on controlled media importation. The promotion and preservation of local culture cannot be possible without any specific code to guide the media. If media institutions can freely promote self-serving programs without regard for citizen concerns, many national development programs can be jeopardized.

In conjunction with the understanding of the potency of media in national development considerations, the necessary component of policy should be accorded its due importance.

Communication policies that will comply with the alternative paths to development should be clearly defined and postulated in specific legal documents, with a lucid description of the manners in which they would be interpreted, implemented, and evaluated. Mechanisms for private sector participation in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of such policies should be included to allow for the input of expert advice and citizen concerns.

Many emerging societies are currently grappling with issues about the dominance of foreign media content and technology-use in their media environments. Therefore, stipulations regarding the suitable control of importation of technology and media content should also be carefully considered by weighing these regulations against local resources while, at the same time, ensuring the protection of indigenous culture.

Media, through the proper execution of policies, can also promote independence and self-sufficiency if governments monitor and align informational and educational programs toward this end. Necessary in this endeavor is the understanding that such information strategies can only be effective if their objectives, concepts, and methods are receiver-based. The needs of the audience as they themselves have determined should be of foremost consideration to every media practitioner in this field.

Lastly, communication policies should encourage regional and international cooperation in the form of technical, manpower, and cultural exchanges for mutual advantage. Nations need not confront dependency problems by themselves. Suitable assistance from other cooperative nations can produce results that can ease burgeoning dependency conditions and create friendlier international relations.

Regional cooperation must be treated as an important component in determining future directions for media policy planning. In this area lies the key to a more sound and realistic approach that emerging countries can utilize for creating and implementing communication policies. Latin American nations have worked together for mutual benefit in areas such as economic assistance, trade agreements, cultural exchanges, as well as communication policy research and formulation. For the developing countries of Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) can be a most valuable source for assistance and cooperation in media policy matters as well.

Working as a group can prove to be a better alternative if crucial problems like budget and manpower constraints are too burdensome for any country to handle alone. Through the ASEAN, Southeast Asian nations can pool together the necessary financial, technical, and manpower resources needed for the establishment of a communication policy

council. This council can potentially undertake studies on the policy necessities of the different nations and assist in the planning, formulation, and implementation of such policies for each member nation. Such cooperation within the organization can prove to be very beneficial for each participating country.

The utility and practicality of the above recommendations can only be tested through hard work and appropriate implementation over time. Still, each country has to deal with a myriad of complex factors like their own political, social, and economic environments as well as conditions around the world, as they create and set into effect national communication policies. Just as public administrators need to work out alternative plans for their country's authentic development, media planners will also have to strive for better communication programs that respect their audience and complement national objectives. In doing so, nations will be able to realize how effective these communication policies are in terms of their crucial capacities as facilitators of true and democratic national development.

#### Significance of the Study

This study contributes to relevant literature lacking in communication policy research in general and to studies on the media environments of countries in Southeast Asia in particular. In order to better understand how various

factors affect the formulation of communication policies in emerging countries, a comparative assessment of three nations which share common historical backgrounds and present conditions is offered.

This work's focus on Southeast Asia also addresses important issues pertaining to development from their own perspectives and the roles of communication policy within their contexts. Overall, this preliminary review of communication policies in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand provides basic data that can be useful for further study in the same field.

#### Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is the considerable reliance on secondary data to answer all of its research questions. The financial constraints involved in gathering information on a first-hand basis and within the countries themselves have compelled this author to cull findings only from existing and available literature. As such, the research contains a substantial dose of generalizations and lacks critically-observed distinctions between philosophy and practice.

Another limitation is the apparent lack of a more appropriate and adequate measurement of communication policy "effectiveness" in each of the countries. This research work depended solely on critiques published in trade and academic journals. No specific criteria for measuring and

evaluating the effectiveness of communication policies were used.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

This research provided a basic review and assessment of communication policies in the context of three emerging countries in Southeast Asia. Further research in this field of interest can be undertaken by studying these and other individual emerging countries in detail. Field research that can adequately provide useful data into each country's political, social, economic, and media environments can account for better insights into the interplay of communication policy concerns and development issues.

In the assessment of communication policy effectiveness, future research can utilize stringent measures, first-hand observation, and in-depth interviews with policy planners and ordinary citizens. Data from such works can be useful in understanding important concerns in policy-making. Critical evaluations of current policies can also be done appropriately.

Further, researchers interested in communication policy issues can undertake comparative studies between developed and developing countries. Such works can yield insights into more streamlined policy-formulation and implementation for national development as both advanced and emerging nations learn from each other's experiences in this area of interest.

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