

“WAI” UNBALANCED? A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF
THE 2011 THAILAND GENERAL ELECTION IN THE BANGKOK POST
NEWSPAPER

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On July 3, 2011 Yingluck Chinnawat (alternatively spelled Shinawatra) was elected as the first female prime minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. This celebrated and historic day was preceded by more than a year of political turmoil within the country, especially in the nation's capital city of Bangkok.

Thailand, dubbed the Land of Smiles because of its pleasant, primarily Buddhist population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012), became enthralled in violent protests that turned deadly. During the three months from March to May in 2010, riotous demonstrations by Thailand's Red Shirts, a political pressure group calling for democracy in the form of a general election, were met with force by Thailand's military (Fuller, 2010). This clash resulted in 92 deaths, including civilians and troops, and left hundreds injured (S.M, 2011; Semple, 2010).

During this time, Thailand led global headlines as the struggle between political activists and Thai military forces turned from activism to devastation. News outlets from around the world thrust an unwanted spotlight on the bombings, street fights and bloodshed that took place in Bangkok (Mydans, 2010).

More than a year later, as political tensions quelled, general elections took place on July 3, 2011 between, largely, the two major political parties: the Democrat Party as the incumbent and the Pheu Thai Party as the challenger. Though there were nearly 40 political parties participating in the election, the Democrat and the Pheu Thai parties were

the two largest groups (Whelan & Lidauer, 2012). Prime Minister of Thailand since December 2008, Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democrat Party was the incumbent defeated by the Pheu Thai Party's Yingluck Chinnawat on July 3, 2011 (Whelan & Lidauer, 2012).

Given Thailand's 2010 deadly, political turmoil that widely was broadcast around the globe, one would suppose that this long-anticipated, close-race election would be covered by both Western and Eastern news outlets; however, this was not the case.

Background on Research

The researcher's initial intent for this study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the coverage of the Thailand general election between the *Bangkok Post* and *The Washington Post* newspapers. The researcher initially aimed to uncover discrepancies and similarities in the coverage of political parties and election coverage in cross-national comparisons, in an effort to build on a weak body of study. Stromback and Shehata noted in their 2007 study of British and Swedish election news coverage that "despite the significant accumulation over the past decades of research focusing on the media in the context of election campaigns, there is still a lack of comparative studies with reference to the election news coverage in different countries" (p. 798).

However, upon review of the newspapers collected for selected dates of analysis, the researcher found that *The Washington Post* ran too few stories related to the subject of this study. As the *American Journalism Review* shows from their 2010 report "Shrinking Foreign Coverage," foreign news in daily American newspapers dropped by 53 percent (p.19). And it appears *The Washington Post* also fell into this trend.

In a LexisNexis® Academic search, during the three months of the 2010 violent political protests, more than 35 articles appeared on the subject in *The Washington Post*. Given the volume of coverage during the protests, where participants primarily called for an election, one would anticipate coverage of the actual event – the official Thailand General Election – to be substantial as well. However, this was not the case and only two short articles appeared on the elections in *The Washington Post*.

Thus, as a result of the diminishing coverage of foreign news, realized by the mere two mentions of the 2011 Thailand General Election, the researcher omitted *The Washington Post* component of analysis and the study continued as a content analysis solely comprising election coverage in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper.

Bangkok Post Newspaper and English Language Use

The *Bangkok Post* newspaper was chosen for this research because all content in the newspaper is in English and it is considered a newspaper of record throughout Thailand.

The researcher had the opportunity to reside in Bangkok during the historic election process. As a graduate student following election coverage in the local media, the researcher was uniquely placed to observe and record this event through a content analysis of news items in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper.

The *Bangkok Post* is Thailand's oldest English-language newspaper (Read Bangkok Post, 2006). Founded and first published in 1946, by U.S. Navy Commander Alexandar MacDonald and his Thai colleagues, the *Bangkok Post* was the first English-

language newspaper in Thailand (Read Bangkok Post, 2006). At the time of study, the *Bangkok Post* published one printed edition per day, with a daily circulation of 44,754 (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2011). The paper's operations are headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand.

The *Bangkok Post* newspaper, as its official tagline suggests, gives readers “the world's window on Thailand” through local, national, regional and international coverage of business, culture and politics through a Thai lens. On the official Facebook fan site for the Bangkok Post, the ‘About’ section states that the paper “targets well-educated decision makers, including top executives and high-ranking government officials,” (2013). The demographics of the Bangkok Post readership show that the majority has household incomes in excess of 100,000 Thai baht a month, which at the time of study amounted to approximately 3,187 United States dollars (Bangkok Post, 2011; XE, 2013).

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian nation to never have been colonized by a Western power (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). According to Litchford (2011), Thailand avoided foreign reign due to the success of commerce and trade treaties with the United Kingdom in 1826 and the United States in 1833, thus leading to secure and strong diplomatic relationships. Thai people viewed the English language as a necessary skill to preserve ties to these powerful nations (Litchford, 2011). Though study of the English language was added to educational curriculum in Thailand in the mid-1800s, it wasn't until 1996 that it became compulsory for all children to learn the language (Litchford, 2011).

Litchford's (2011) research goes on to note that the English language failed to become popular outside of the academic and business environments in Thailand. This is

echoed by Molen (2011), who outlines the importance of English-language news outlets in her study of the 2008 United States presidential election coverage in the online edition of *The Korea Times*, and noted that English is studied by Korean students due to its application in business.

Overview of Thailand

The Kingdom of Thailand, located in Southeast Asia, shares a border with Burma, Malaysia, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). The landmass of the country is 510,890 square kilometers, which is "slightly more than twice the size of Wyoming," (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). The population of Thailand is estimated at 64 million people with approximately 9.3 million residing in the country's capital of Bangkok (United Nations Thailand, 2013).

Map of Thailand



Figure 1. Map of present-day Thailand and bordering countries

Source: Map of Thailand courtesy of the CIA World Factbook online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

Established officially in 1238 and known as Siam until 1939, Thailand’s current government operates as a constitutional monarchy and the reigning king has been “chief of state” since 1946 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). The 2011 election of Prime

Minister Yingluck Chinnawat is notable not only because she's Thailand's first female prime minister, but also because of her ties to the previous leader of the country.

Chinnawat is the sister of former Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat. He was ousted in a 2006 military coup, followed by years of political turmoil, protests, demonstrations and disputes between factions, that led to the deadly 2010 clash between security forces and the pro-Thaksin group, killing 92 people (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). The position of prime minister is typically held for four years and is limited to two terms (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013).

According to the Central Intelligence Agency's online World Factbook section on religion in Thailand, 94.6 percent of the population is Buddhist and 4.6 percent are Muslim, with less than one percent accounting for Christian and other (2013). The World Bank calculates gross domestic product for Thailand at 366 billion United States dollars and gross national per-capita income at 9,430 United States dollars (2012).

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, 94 percent of the adult population, defined as 15 years and older, is literate (2011). Voting in Thailand is compulsory, starting at 18 years of age, and there are more than 11 political parties (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013).

Media Landscape and Press Freedom

Thailand's media landscape consists of a mix of state-owned and privately owned enterprises where broadcast media including television and radio are all state-owned, and print media are all privately owned (Siriyuvasak, 2001). Despite the division of

ownership, all media fall under the policies of the 2007 Thai Constitution which states, as cited verbatim by Streckfuss (2011): "The King shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated. No person shall expose the King to any sort of accusation or action."

Furthermore, Thai Criminal Code elaborates in Article 112: "Whoever defames, insults or threatens the King, Queen, the Heir-apparent or the Regent, shall be punished with imprisonment of three to fifteen years" (2008). In an article on a lese-majeste case in Thailand, Jonathan Head of BBC News Bangkok (2008) reported that "nowhere is there a definition of what constitutes an insult to the monarchy" and Freedom House sharply states that Article 112 is a "devastating blow to freedom of expression" and that the Thai government uses this code to "curtail the space for diverse political opinions and freedom of expression online and offline" (2012). As many scholars and media observers have noted, this has a chilling effect on members of the press and on media coverage in Thailand.

Streckfuss (2011) asserts that the "operation of lese-majeste law in Thailand creates a black hole of silence in the center of the Thai body politic" where "political and social discourse is relegated to the fringes, whisperings and innuendo" (p. 96).

Thailand's freedom-of-the-press status was downgraded from a "partly free" rating in 2010 to "not free" rating in 2011 by the organization Freedom House (2011). This downslide was due to several factors including the country's restrictive lese-majeste laws and an increase in modern lese-majeste legal cases (Freedom House, 2011).

The information on Thailand's media landscape and freedom of press are included in this paper to provide the reader with a brief, general and broad overview of

the climate of media in the country. Importantly, it is noted that in this study the researcher did not analyze freedom or limitations of coverage due to media ownership nor due to lese-majeste policies.

Research Goals

The goals of this research were to determine whether there was a difference in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper's coverage of, one week before and one week after, the July 3, 2011 Election Day in Thailand, in terms of the following:

- amount of coverage of the Democrat Party and of the Pheu Thai Party;
- favorability of coverage of the Democrat Party and of the Pheu Thai Party;
- number of front page news items of the Democrat Party and of the Pheu Thai Party; and,
- the types of frames used in the news items regarding the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party.

Thesis Overview

This thesis is titled “Wai” Unbalanced: A Content Analysis of Media Coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election in the *Bangkok Post* Newspaper. “Wai” is a play on the word “why”, as they are pronounced the same. A “wai” is the traditional greeting in Thailand. As described by the Thailand Ministry of Culture’s publication, *Thai Culture*

Magazine, the wai is used to greet or bid farewell to another person, hands are pressed together in a prayer fashion in front of one's face accompanied by a head bow (2002).

This paper is organized into four chapters. Chapter I introduces the background and topic of study for this paper, which is a content analysis of the media coverage by the *Bangkok Post* newspaper of the 2011 Thailand General Election. This chapter also provides insight on the events leading to the 2011 election, an overview of the country of Thailand, information about the *Bangkok Post* newspaper, a brief description of the media landscape in Thailand, and outlines the goals of this study.

Chapter II reviews existing literature surrounding the topic of election coverage in newspapers and of framing theory in communication, provides the theoretical framework of the thesis, and outlines the research questions that guided the content analysis.

Chapter III outlines the methodology the researcher used for this study through an in-depth review of the five research questions.

Chapter IV presents the results of the study through graphic presentation and explanation in text. This chapter also provides a comprehensive conclusion of the paper, a discussion of its weaknesses, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

At the time of this study, no research on the media coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election had been published, neither from the perspective of English-language Thailand newspapers, nor from the perspective of Western newspapers. Therefore, the review of literature on the subject of framing of Thailand election coverage in the media returned several related areas of research, but no similar studies.

As previously mentioned, there appeared to be ample coverage of Thailand's 2010 military and civilian deadly clashes, and the many coups throughout recent history. These perhaps add to Chaudhary's (2001) theme in comparing *The Washington Post* and the *Daily Times of Nigeria* that negative news of developing countries is over-represented in Western media.

De Beer and Merrill (2004) point out that "Americans form impressions of distant places, issues, and events from their news media" (p. 151), and Tuchman (1978), as cited in de Beer and Merrill (2004, p. 151), "argued that journalists construct a 'window on the world.'"

Chang and Lee (1993) posit that the United States' withdrawal from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1985 over the movement towards the implementation of the New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO) contributed to the void of balanced news flow, including foreign reporting. NWICO was viewed as a threat to America's freedom of press and existing editorial newsroom structure. Therefore, media organizations

“rejected the idea of having an international body govern the news traffic between developed and developing countries and mostly resisted the demand for more use of news stories provided by foreign news agencies,” (Chang & Lee, 1993, p. 313).

Chaudhary (2001) noted that despite NWICO recommendations, scholars have historically reviewed “Western and Third World news separately” (p. 242), thus expanding the void in comparative research and, in turn, perpetuating the imbalance of information flow across the world.

Though the United States rejoined UNESCO in 2003 following the events of 9/11, returning at a time when “human rights and speech and press freedoms...have faded out of focus,” (Yushkiavitshus, 2003) with the goal of advancing press freedoms and information flow, it does not appear much progress has been made. The researcher questions the diligence of United States newsrooms, as precious few lines were devoted to the Thailand general election. As previously noted by the researcher, along with Stromback and Shehata (2007), Chaudhary (2001), and many other academics in the study of comparative communications, there is a much-needed review and analysis of cross-national research to further the improvement of global journalism and truly increase information flow.

Framing Theory

Framing theory is used by many social-science disciplines such as sociology and physiology as a mechanism to assess and understand the transfer of information between individuals or entities or groups (Entman, 1993). Entman (1993), one of the most cited

sources in this area of research, defines framing theory in the field of communication as a matter of “selection and salience,” and explains that “to frame is to *select* some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more *salient* in a communicating text” (p. 52). Entman (1993) further explains that frames are found in transfer of information by “the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture,” (p.52).

Though this study does not assess the effects of media coverage, to gain a whole understanding of framing theory it is important to note that framing theory allows for broad analysis of potential effects resulting from media coverage. Furthermore, framing theory suggests that media consumers apply this information to their own experiences (Baran & Davis, 2009). The analysis of effects of media coverage would be a natural extension beyond this study.

Media Frames

Over the decades, research in the field of mass communications has shown that frames in news coverage shape the way information is received by the reader (Baran & Davis, 2009). “Exposure to news coverage results in learning that is consistent with the frames that structure the coverage” and, in addition, “news coverage can strongly influence the way news readers or viewers make sense of news events and the major actors in the events” (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 322). Entman (1993) states that “communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgments in deciding what to say”, which guides the way the receiver thinks about the information (p. 52). This is particularly relevant to this study as the *Bangkok Post* newspaper is the communicator and the reader is the receiver. Therefore, this study, which analyzed the framing of news related to the Thailand General Election, adds to the understanding of the existence and presentation of frames in news coverage of political elections. This study is in line with Ryfe (2004), who stresses that framing analysts should consider the “close relationship between media frames and political culture,” (p. 26).

There are many types of media frames employed by media outlets and identified by media research scholars. In the widely cited 1991 book by Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible: How Television Frames Political Issues*, prominent news frames are identified as, thematic and episodic frames, meaning broader events versus snapshots, and tonal frames such as positive and negative tones. The use of these frames is analyzed in the research of Nitz et al. (2009) from which this study draws direction. Scheufele

(1999) notes the use of conflict frames, human-interest frames and consequence frames in modern media-frame research.

Cenite, Yee, Juan, Qin and Lin (2006) noted that framing “means that journalists prioritize certain elements of an event and use these elements to form the report, which may induce readers to interpret the event in a certain manner (Entman, 1993).” Scheufele (1999) goes a step further by noting that ideally a systematic process model is needed to strengthen framing theory research and suggests analyzing “frame building, frame setting, individual-level framing processes, and feedback from individual-level framing to media framing,” (p.118). Though this study only addresses a portion of that process, it nonetheless adds to the body of framing research in effort to build on the foundation of framing doctrine.

Research on Media Coverage of Elections and Framing

The assessment of political communication through content analysis has been an approach to methodological research in the communications field for nearly a century (Baran & Davis, 2009). Though conceptualized and promoted by thought leaders like Harold Lasswell and Paul Lazarsfeld in the early 20th century (Baran & Davis, 2009), the advancement of the science over several decades did not progress “in relation to other types of methodological approaches” (Janowitz, 1968).

There is a small body of research on the analysis of presidential or prime minister election coverage in both domestic and foreign newspaper. Although there is a larger quantity of research analyzing media coverage of United States presidential elections in

domestic and foreign newspapers, the absence of research on foreign election coverage in domestic newspapers is apparent. As noted by Nitz et al. (2009), “precious little research has been conducted on cross-national perspectives of elections” (p. 115).

Molen (2011) assessed coverage of the 2008 United States presidential campaign in the online edition of *The Korea Times* by analyzing the news outlet’s framing within relevant articles. Molen’s (2011) research of coverage of the campaign revealed that there was “significant framing bias” in how *The Korea Times* presented information on the two main candidates, Barak Obama and John McCain, according to what “would best represent South Korean interests,” (p. 73). Molen’s notes that the research contributes to Entman’s (2007) *Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power*, which states that favoring of groups or individuals influences the “balance of power” (Molen, 2011, p.69).

Adding to this collection of study, Faith, Teng and Detenber (2005) looked at a United States election, but in two foreign newspapers. Faith et al. (2005) selected existing media frames to conduct a content analysis on the coverage of the 2000 United States presidential election in two newspapers from different parts of the world: France’s *Le Monde* and Singapore’s *The Straits Times*. Their research assessed articles according to previously defined media-frame categories including: conflict frame, noting discourse between political parties or individuals; issue/policy frame, featuring advocacy-centered interests; human-interest frame, highlighting a personal or emotional story; and horse-race frame, setting a win-lose perspective (p. 448).

Faith et al. (2005) found that the two papers used different “dominant news frames to cover the same US” election (p. 462), but that both *Le Monde* and *The Straits Times* commonly used the horse-race frame noting that media are “obsessed with tracking the

winner and loser in campaign news” (p. 462).

Schuck, Vliegthart, Boomgaarden, Elenbaas, Azrout, van Spanje and de Vreese (2013) assessed the media framing of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections through news outlets in 27 European Union countries. Schuck et al. (2013) drew upon a massive collection of data from 58 television networks and 84 newspapers allowing them to conduct a content analysis of more than 50,000 stories (p. 14). Analyzing news items by the conflict frame and horse-race frame (and other frames), they found that “quality news outlets” employed the conflict frame more often than tabloid outlets and they found that as election dates approached, “use of the horse-race frame increased” (p. 22).

Strombak and Shehata in their 2007 research compared *Structural Biases in British and Swedish Election News Coverage*, where the different countries have different media models and political systems. They looked at media framing of news coverage in two newspapers and one tabloid in each country, in the three-weeks prior to the 2002 Swedish Election and the 2005 British Election (Strombak & Shehata, 2007). Explained by the differences in each country’s news and political systems, as outlined in their study, Strombak and Shehata (2007) found that there was no difference in the use of episodic and thematic frames, but there was a significant difference in the use of the conflict frames.

Cenite et al. (2006) conducted a framing analysis of the 2006 Singapore General Election news coverage in the Singapore-based English-language *Straits Times* newspaper. In their study of Singapore’s election coverage of the two major political parties, they considered the tone frame; positive and negative coverage; the game frame or horse-race frame, noting win-lose coverage; and the issue frame, highlight policy and

leadership (Cenite et al., 2006). Cenite et al. (2006) found that the reporting was “unbalanced” and “superficially emphasized the horse-race, even though there was little suspense about the outcome” (p. 291).

Similar to Cenite et al. (2008) and Nitz et al. (2009), this study focused neither on the audience consumption nor on the production of news content. The concentration was on the examination of *how* the 2011 Thailand General Election was covered in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper.

Significance of Research

As noted in many of the works cited for this study, more research is needed in the field of communication regarding framing of election coverage in news media, especially with regard to cross-national, regional and international analysis. As previously mentioned, very little, if any, research exists on the topic of media coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election and hence there is a need for such research to be conducted. According to database inquiries by the researcher, this study appears to be the among the first to examine the 2011 Thailand general election, through a subjective content analysis, via an English-language newspaper based in Bangkok, Thailand: the *Bangkok Post*.

Research Questions

Based on reviewed research and theory, the following are the research questions of this study.

- RQ1:** Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more news items focusing on the Democrat Party (incumbent) or on the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?
- RQ2:** Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) or of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?
- RQ3:** Did the *Bangkok Post* feature a higher percentage of favorable Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or of favorable Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?
- RQ4:** Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more front-page Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or front-page Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?
- RQ5:** What is the dominant type of frame in the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) and of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

Definition of Terms

Thailand General Election: Political process in the country of Thailand where the prime

minister (among other government representatives) are decided.

Election Day: July 3, 2011

Democrat Party: Political party in Thailand led by Abhisit Vejjajiva (male), Prime Minister of Thailand from December 17, 2008 to July 2, 2011, and referred to in this paper as the incumbent.

Pheu Thai Party: Political party in Thailand led by Yingluck Chinnawat (female), winner of the 2011 Thailand General Election and Prime Minister as of July 3, 2011, and referred to in this paper as the challenger.

News item(s): This term refers to articles, stories or photos assessed for this study in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper, as outlined in Chapter III, consisting of article with photo, article only or photo only.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted as a subjective content analysis where the researcher was the sole coder of all material and content. The study allows for a greater understanding of media coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper.

The Thailand General Election took place on July 3, 2011. The study analyzed two weeks of data in the hard copy, printed, daily editions of the *Bangkok Post*, spanning the time frame of June 26, 2011 through July 10, 2011; which covers one week prior to the Thailand General Election and one week after the Thailand General Election and excludes data from Election Day, July 3, 2011. In total, 14 issues of the *Bangkok Post* were examined.

All news items that ran in the printed editions of the *Bangkok Post*, collected by the researcher, were examined for this research. Only items printed in the main section, Section A, were included in this study. No other sections, such as “Lifestyle” or “Business”, were considered. In addition, articles and photos related to the Thailand General Election that were opinion, commentary, subjective analysis, op-ed (opposite the editorial), letters to the editor or advertisements were excluded from this analysis.

For the purposes of this study, a news item (as defined in Chapter II) includes the following: article with photo, article only and photo only.

All data including measurements, coding and calculations were recorded in a spreadsheet to allow for consistent concise comparative analysis, for assurance of accuracy and for the presentation of graphic data.

Below, the methodology used to analyze each research question is outlined in detail.

RQ1: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more news items focusing on the Democrat Party (incumbent) or on the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

Analysis of Research Question 1 was conducted by reviewing every article in the collected daily print edition of the *Bangkok Post* and by determining what was to be included as items related to the Thailand General Elections. This was done by reviewing each article or photo and searching for the following phrases, related phrases or combination of words: Thailand General Election, Democrat Party, Pheu Thai Party, general election, elections, vote, voting, political race, polls, political campaign, etc. All news items found to be focused on the Thailand General Election were then numbered and recorded.

News items related to the Thailand General Election that were only photos with captions were assessed based on the visual and the caption to determine if they were related to the Thailand General Election. For example, if the photo showed a person with a sign and the caption stated that the sign was of one of the candidates or political parties

then the piece was identified and included in the total count of news items related to the Thailand General Election.

Finally, the total number of news items related to the Thailand General Election that ran in the *Bangkok Post* was tallied. Articles were classified and counted according to category: article with photo, article only and photo only.

RQ2: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) or of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

Research Question 2 was carried out by reviewing each news item, as determined in Research Question 1 to be related to the Thailand General Election, in the daily editions of the *Bangkok Post* and then recording the length of each news item in column inches. The measurement of newspaper articles in column inches is the standard form and unit of measurement used when examining length of printed articles. The column-inch measurement was calculated by counting the number of columns of a news item, which equals the width of the article, and then multiplying that figure by the number of vertical inches as measured with a standard ruler.

This measurement was calculated for every news piece, as determined in Research Question 1 to be related to the Thailand General Election, including articles with photos, articles only and photos only.

RQ3: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature a higher percentage of favorable Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or of favorable Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?

Research Question 3 assessed favorability of news item content for the two major political parties in Thailand: the Democrat Party, which was the incumbent, and the Pheu Thai Party, the challenger.

Designed to capture the framing of tone of news items, the approach was set according to the rubric as outlined by the work of Nitz et al. (2009). Details of the methodology used for data collection for this study were adapted directly from their research. Each news item, as determined in Research Question 1 to be related to the Thailand General Election, was analyzed for this section of the study.

Selected news items “were coded for their favorability in three separate areas of headlines, overall article, and any accompanying visuals (photos, graphs)” (Nitz et al., 2009, p. 120). “Stories were coded as” favorable “if two-thirds or more of the story (headline, overall article, and accompanying visuals) referred to the candidate/party and/or their policies in a positive manner. Relatedly, stories were coded as” unfavorable “if two-thirds or more of the story made predominantly negative references. This follows Ottosen’s (2005) work, which argues that one actually can make four separate judgments about two candidates (pro or anti for each)” (Nitz et al., 2009, p. 120). If both parties were mentioned in the same news item equally, the news item was coded as neutral. Additionally, an unrelated category was included for those stories that mentioned the Thailand General Election, or a relevant term as previously outlined at the beginning of

Chapter III, but was not directly related to Research Question 3 because they did not include mention of the Democrat Party or the Pheu Thai Party.

Therefore an article could be coded as one of the following set labels: Democrat Favorable, Democrat Unfavorable, Pheu Thai Favorable, Pheu Thai Unfavorable, Neutral or Unrelated.

Articles that contained two pieces of analysis, the headline and the overall article (and no visual), were reviewed as a whole and coded per the set labels. Similarly, stand-alone photos with captions were reviewed in the same manner and coded per the set labels. Thus, all news items, related to the Thailand General Election, were coded and assigned a label.

RQ4: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more front-page Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or front-page Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?

Research Question 4 assessed placement of news item content in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper. The front pages of all 14 days, one week before and one week after Election Day, of the *Bangkok Post* were reviewed and only those news items mentioning or showing the Democrat Party or the Pheu Thai Party were counted and recorded. All other news items were excluded in this section of analysis.

RQ5: What is the dominant type of frame in the *Bangkok Post*'s coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) and of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

Research Question 5 examined the type of frame used in the *Bangkok Post*'s coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) and the Pheu Thai Party (challenger) before and after Election Day. News items were coded based on the methodology used by Nitz et al. (2009) where articles were assigned as thematic or episodic within partisan categories. Based on the rubric determined by Nitz et al. (2009, p. 119), articles were labeled as thematic when the content focused on voting information or instruction, historical election information, election poll data, general Party-related information or policy. Articles labeled as episodic focused on a specific event such as election violence, election scandal, voting disruption, or a specific Party-related occurrence.

Stand-alone photos with captions were coded based on the visual and the content in the caption. For all frame analysis, if a clear determination of thematic or episodic could not be made, a mixed label was assigned to the piece.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Through this content analysis, the researcher aimed to discover if there were differences in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper's coverage of Thailand's two major political parties, the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party, running in the historic 2011 General Election. Specifically, this study looked at data for five research questions comparing news items one week before and one week after the July 3, 2011 Election Day.

Data produced in the study was sourced from one coder, the researcher, to conduct a content analysis as established in in the Methodology section of Chapter III. In total, two weeks of the printed, daily edition of the *Bangkok Post* were analyzed for this study: one week before and one week following Election Day. Overall, 14 newspapers were examined. Results are outlined and explained below.

As outlined in Chapter III, news items were grouped into the following categories: photo only, where only a visual and a caption were presented; article only, where only a headline and story were presented; and article with photo where a visual, headline and story were presented.

Before reviewing the results of the five research questions, an overview of the number of news items included in this study will be discussed.

In total, there were 168 news items related to the Thailand General Election in the *Bangkok Post* for the 14 days of printed newspapers included in this analysis. This

averages 12 news items per daily edition of the newspaper.

To give an understanding of the quantity of news items that were considered and recorded for this study, Tables 1 and 2 were created. These tables show the total number of news items, displayed by news-item category, which met the requirements to be included in this study as defined in Chapter III. Table 1 shows the total numbers of news items by category before Election Day. Table 2 shows the numbers of news items by category after Election Day.

Table 1 Total News Items by Category Before Election Day

	Photo Only	Article Only	Article with Photo
Number	20	47	8
Total	75		

Table 2 Total News Items by Category After Election Day

	Photo Only	Article Only	Article with Photo
Number	23	48	22
Total	93		

Looking at the same data, the total number of news items included for this study, Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the news item categories by percentage of occurrence in the week before Election Day and in the week after Election Day, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates relative percentages of news item categories as printed in the *Bangkok Post* for the one week before Election Day, as examined for this study. Figure 3 illustrates relative percentages of news item categories as printed in the *Bangkok Post* for the one week after Election Day, as examined for this study.

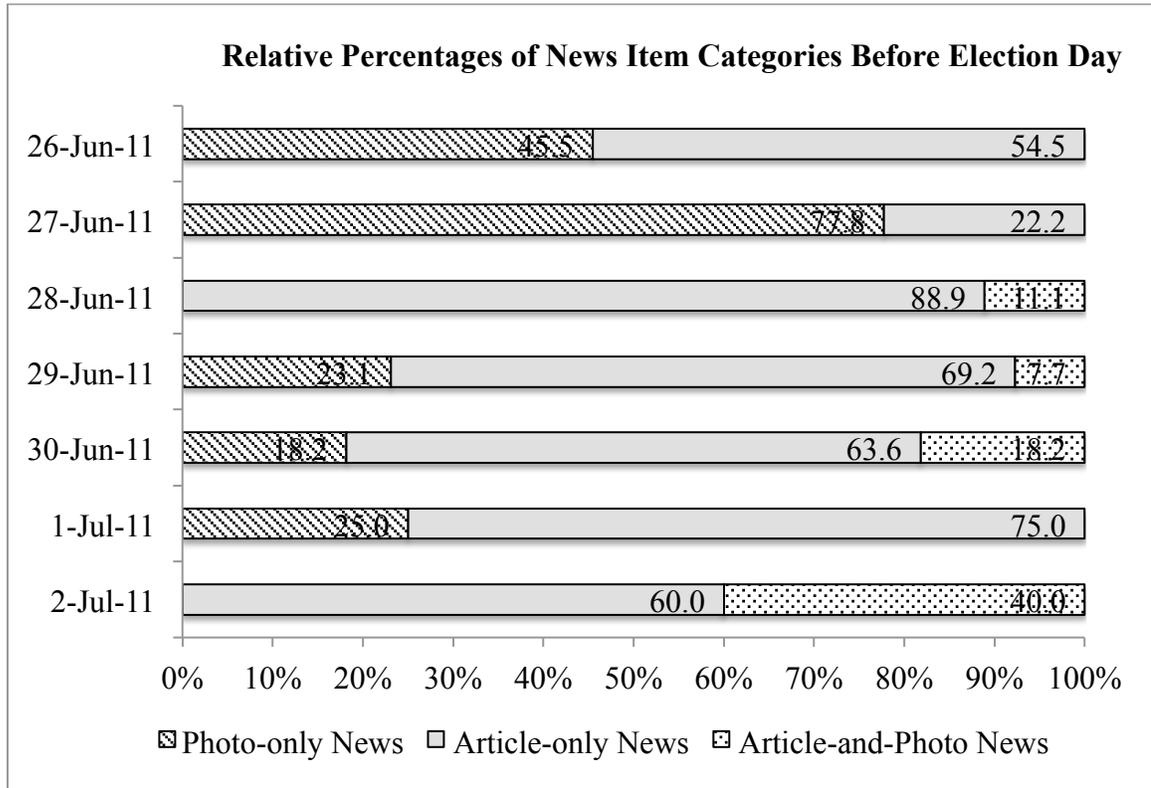


Figure 2. Relative percentages of news item categories before Election Day.

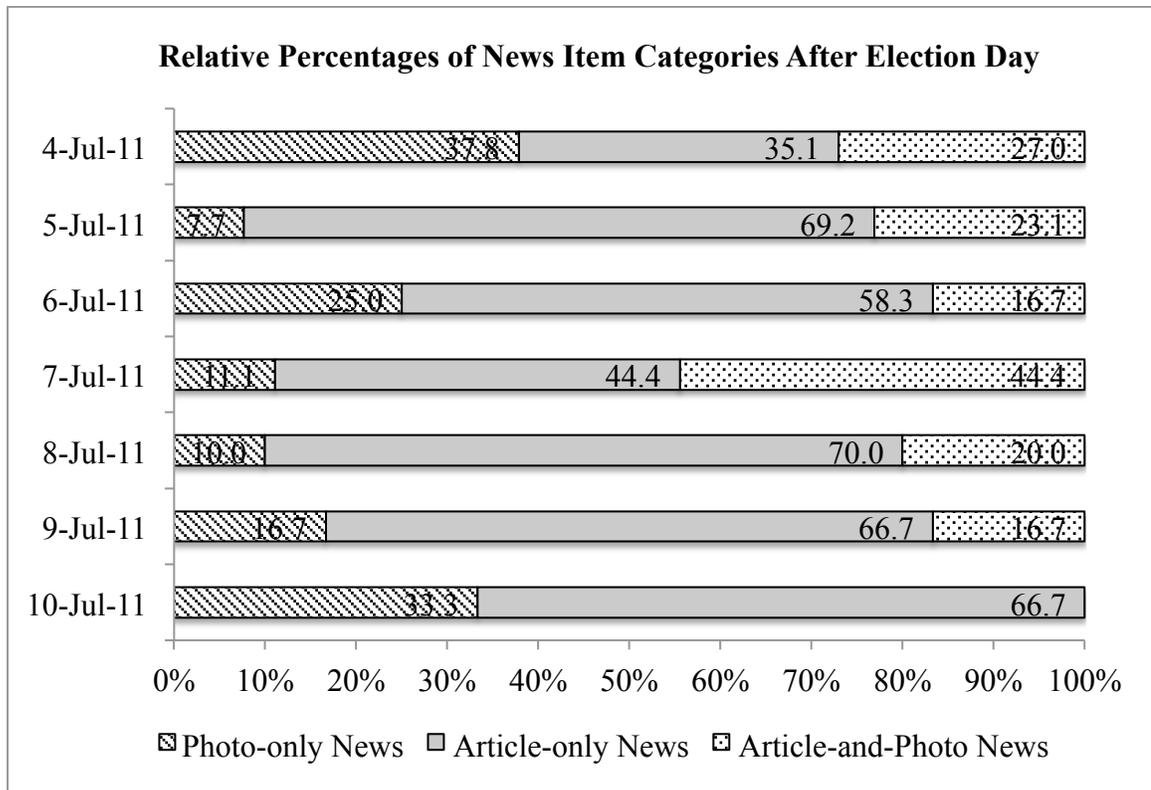


Figure 3. Relative percentages of news item categories after Election Day.

The numbers of news items by category and percentages of news-item categories are presented to give visual representation of the data included in this study for the five research questions.

In order to answer the five research questions in this study, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the data collected. Each research question is discussed according to the results of the corresponding analysis. In addition, the results are presented via graphic visuals to enhance understanding of outcomes.

RQ1: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more news items focusing on the Democrat Party (incumbent) or on the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

Research Question 1 aimed to examine the coverage by the *Bangkok Post* of each political party. The total numbers of news items included in this question were coded according to the methodology outlined in Chapter III. This question only considered those news items coded as Democrat Party or Pheu Thai Party. Any news items coded as Neutral or Unrelated, as outlined in Chapter III, were not included in the results of Research Question 1.

As displayed in Table 3, in the week before Election Day, the *Bangkok Post* featured eight news items focused on the Democrat Party and 19 news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party. This averages to 1.14 news items per day devoted to the Democrat Party and 2.71 news items per day devoted to the Pheu Thai Party. Thus, the coverage of the Pheu Thai Party was more than double the amount of coverage devoted to the Democrat Party.

Table 3 Total News Items by Party Before and After Election Day

	Democrat Party	Pheu Thai Party
News Items Before Election Day	8	19
News Items After Election Day	10	45
Total	18	64

Table 3 also shows that in the week after Election Day, the *Bangkok Post* featured 10 news items focused on the Democrat Party and 45 news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party. This averages 1.42 news items per day devoted to the Democrat Party and 6.42 news items per day devoted to the Pheu Thai Party. Thus, the coverage of the Pheu Thai Party was more than four times the coverage of the Democrat Party. Answering Research Question 1, the *Bangkok Post* featured more Pheu Thai Party news items, both before and after Election Day.

For broader understanding of total news items included in this entire study, as related to Thailand General Elections, Figures 4 and 5 were created. These figures include all news items coded by Democrat Party, Pheu Thai Party, Neutral or Unrelated according to the methodology outlined in Chapter III. These figures illustrate a comprehensive picture of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Elections.

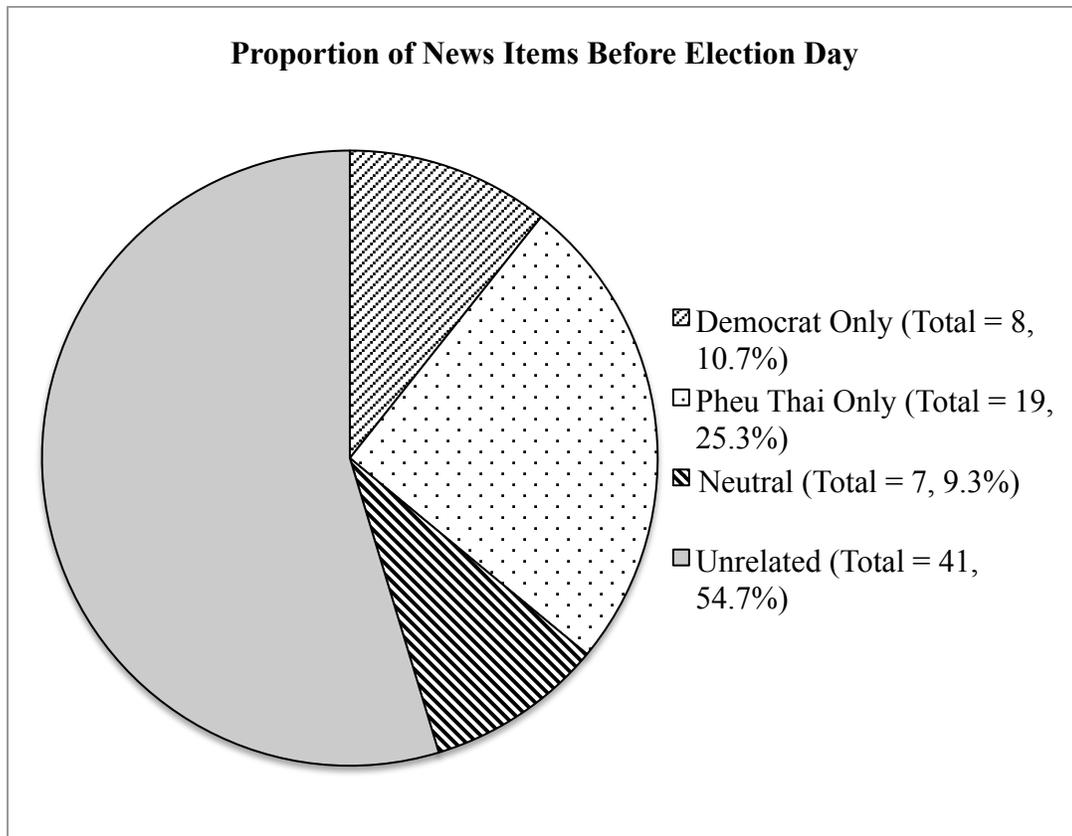


Figure 4. Proportion of total news items before Election Day.

As presented in Figure 4, one can see that more than 50 percent of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election featured news items that were not partisan-focused. This figure also shows that out of the total coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election before Election Day, 10.7 percent was devoted to the Democrat Party and 25.3 percent was devoted to the Pheu Thai Party. Thus, one fourth of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the election before official Election Day was given to the Pheu Thai Party.

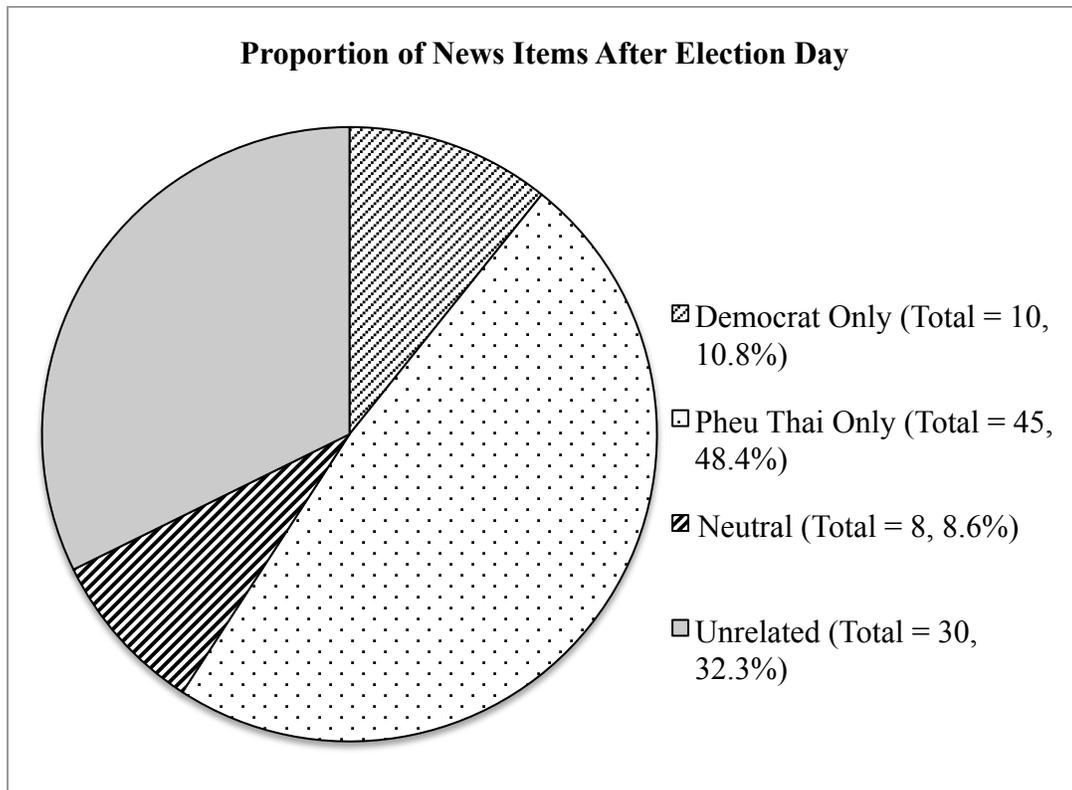


Figure 5. Proportion of total news items after Election Day.

As presented in Figure 5, one can see that after Election Day, 38 percent of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election featured news items that were not partisan-focused. This figure also shows that out of the total coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election after Election Day, 10.8 percent was devoted to the Democrat Party and 48.4 percent was devoted to the Pheu Thai Party. As shown in the percentages of coverage before and after Election Day, nearly the same coverage was given to the Democrat Party before and after. Thus, nearly half of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the election after official Election Day was given to the winner of the 2011 Thailand General Election, the Pheu Thai Party.

RQ2: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) or of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

As explained in detail in the Methodology section in Chapter III, to answer Research Question 2, the researcher recorded the length of each coded news item related to the 2011 Thailand General Election according to the column-inch measurement. Those news items coded as either Democrat Party or Pheu Thai Party were calculated. Figure 6 illustrates the daily length of news items by political party in the week before Election Day.

Appendix A provides an example of a news item, photo and caption, where the formula to calculate column inches can be seen. The placement of this photo and caption, in between two columns of text and above four columns of texts allows for an understanding of the column-inch measurement. This news item that appeared in the June 30, 2011 edition of the *Bangkok Post* measured 16.4 column inches.

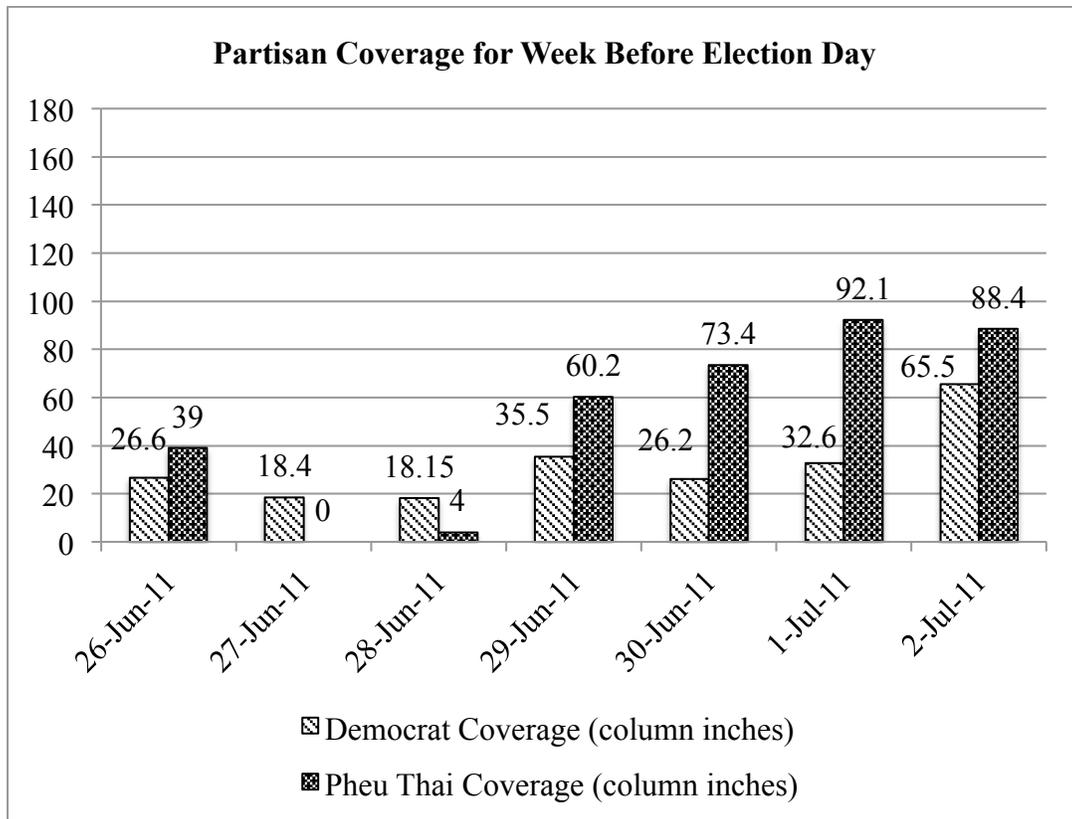


Figure 6. Partisan coverage for week before Election Day.

In the week before Election Day, using the numbers in Figure 6, the average daily column inches devoted to the Democrat Party was 31.85 column inches. The average daily column inches devoted to the Pheu Thai Party was 51.01 column inches.

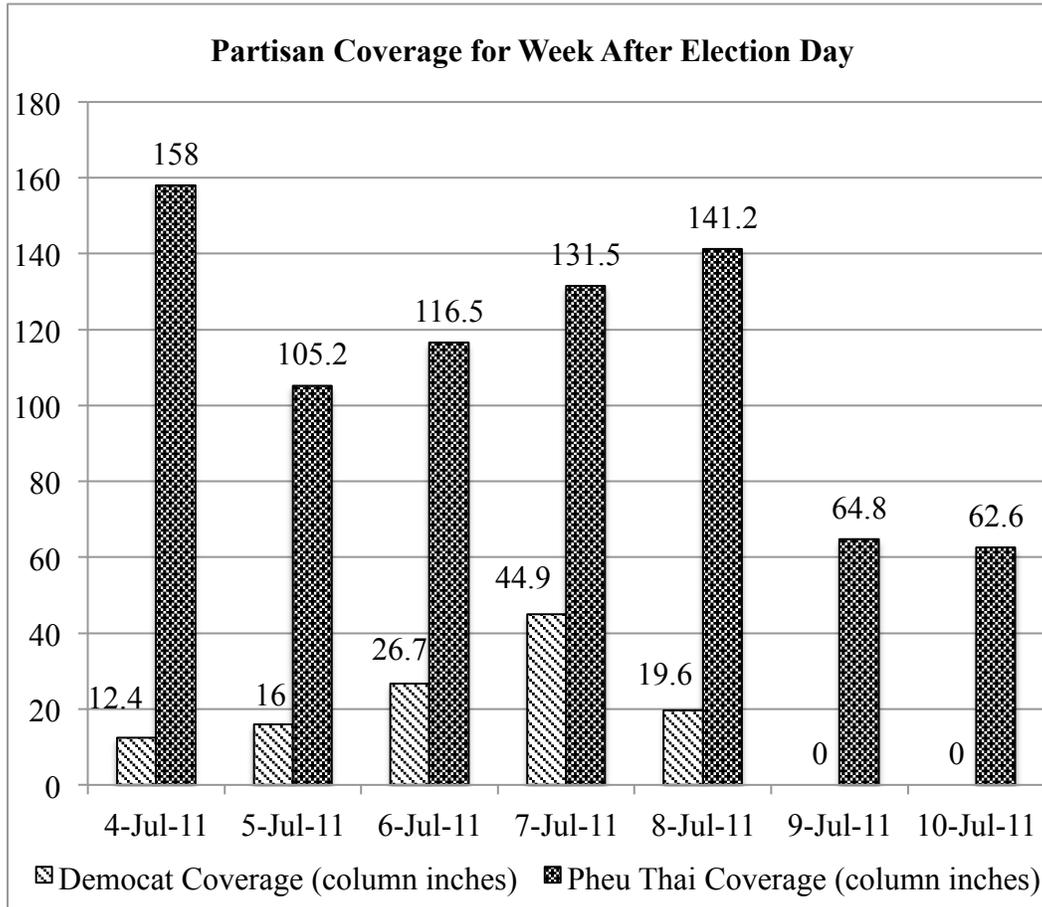


Figure 7. Partisan coverage for week after Election Day.

Figure 7 illustrates the daily length of news items by political party in the week after Election Day. Using the numbers in Figure 7, the average daily column inches devoted to the Democrat Party in the week after Election Day was 17.08 column inches. Similarly, the average daily column inches devoted to the Pheu Thai Party in the week after Election Day was 111.4 column inches.

Table 4 shows the total length of coverage per week, by party. Looking at the numbers in Table 4, in the week before Election Day, the *Bangkok Post* featured 222.95 column inches of coverage of the Democrat Party and 357.1 column inches of coverage

of the Pheu Thai Party. Thus before Election Day, the Pheu Thai Party received more coverage in the newspaper.

Table 4 Total Column Inches by Party Before and After Election Day

	Democrat Party	Pheu Thai Party
Column Inches Week Before Election Day	222.95	357.1
Column Inches Week After Election Day	119.6	779.8
Total	342.55	1,136.9

After Election Day, Table 4 shows that the *Bangkok Post* featured 119.6 column inches of coverage of the Democrat Party and 779.8 column inches of coverage of the Pheu Thai Party. Thus, after Election Day, the Pheu Thai Party received nearly four times the amount of coverage as the Democrat Party. Answering Research Question 2, the *Bangkok Post* clearly featured more coverage, as measured in column inches, of the Pheu Thai Party, both before and after Election Day.

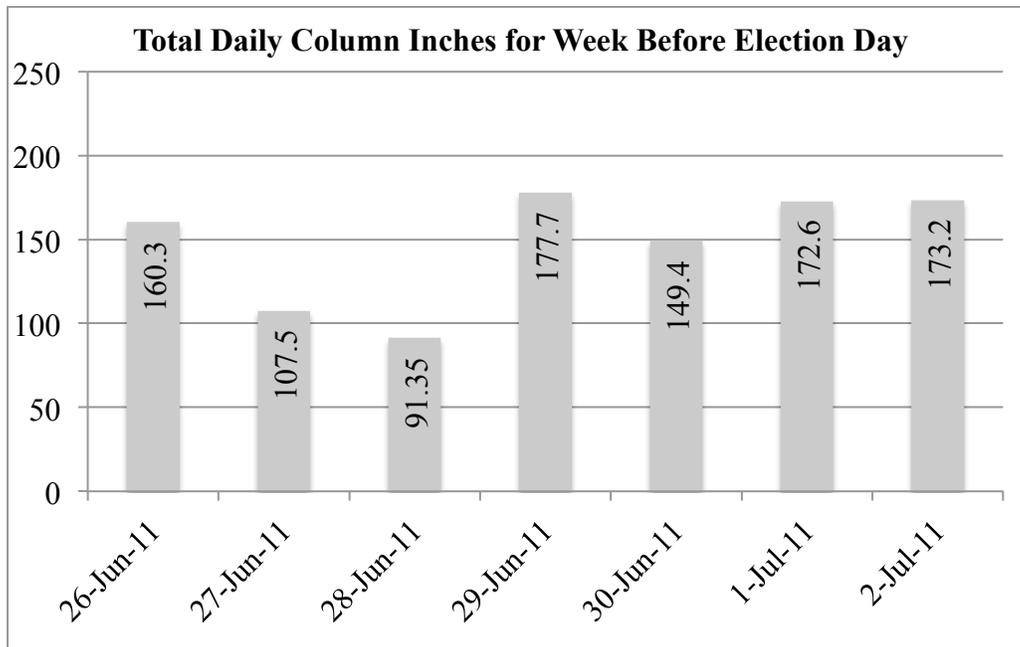


Figure 8. Total daily lengths of news items, in column inches, for week before Election Day.

For broader understanding of total length of news items included in this entire study, as related to Thailand General Elections, Figures 8 and 9 were created. Reviewing Figure 8, in the week before Election Day, 1,032.05 column inches were devoted to the 2011 Thailand General Election. The numbers in Table 4 and Figure 8 provide a breakdown of the 1,032.05 total length of coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election in the week before Election Day. Those show that 452 column inches were devoted to the 2011 Thailand General Election and 580.05 were devoted to the political parties in the week before Election Day.

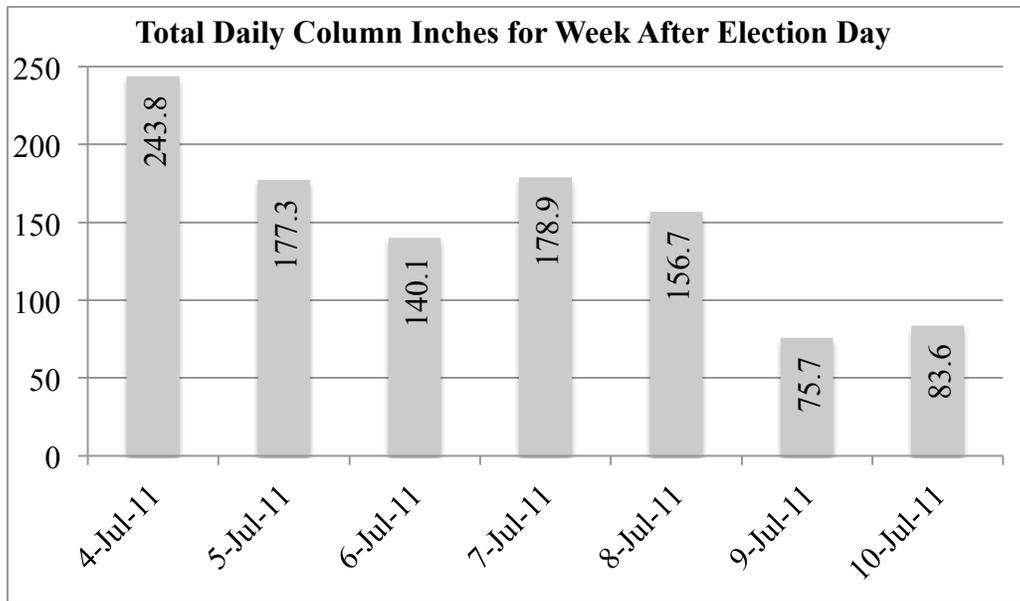


Figure 9. Total daily lengths of news items, in column inches, for week after Election Day.

Additionally, for broader understanding of the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election, further calculations are explained. Figure 9 shows that in the week after Election Day, 1,056.1 column inches were devoted to coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election. Figures 8 and 9 show that the coverage devoted to the 2011 Thailand General Election in the weeks before and after Election Day was 1,032.05 column inches and 1,056.1 column inches, respectively.

The average daily length of news items related to the 2011 Thailand General Election in the *Bangkok Post* before and after Election Day was 147.4 column inches and 150.87 column inches, respectively.

Table 4 and Figure 9 provide a breakdown of the 1,056.1 total length of coverage of 2011 Thailand General Election in the week after Election Day. Those show that 156.7 column inches were devoted to the 2011 Thailand General Election and 899.4 column inches were devoted to the two political parties.

RQ3: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature a higher percentage of favorable Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or of favorable Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?

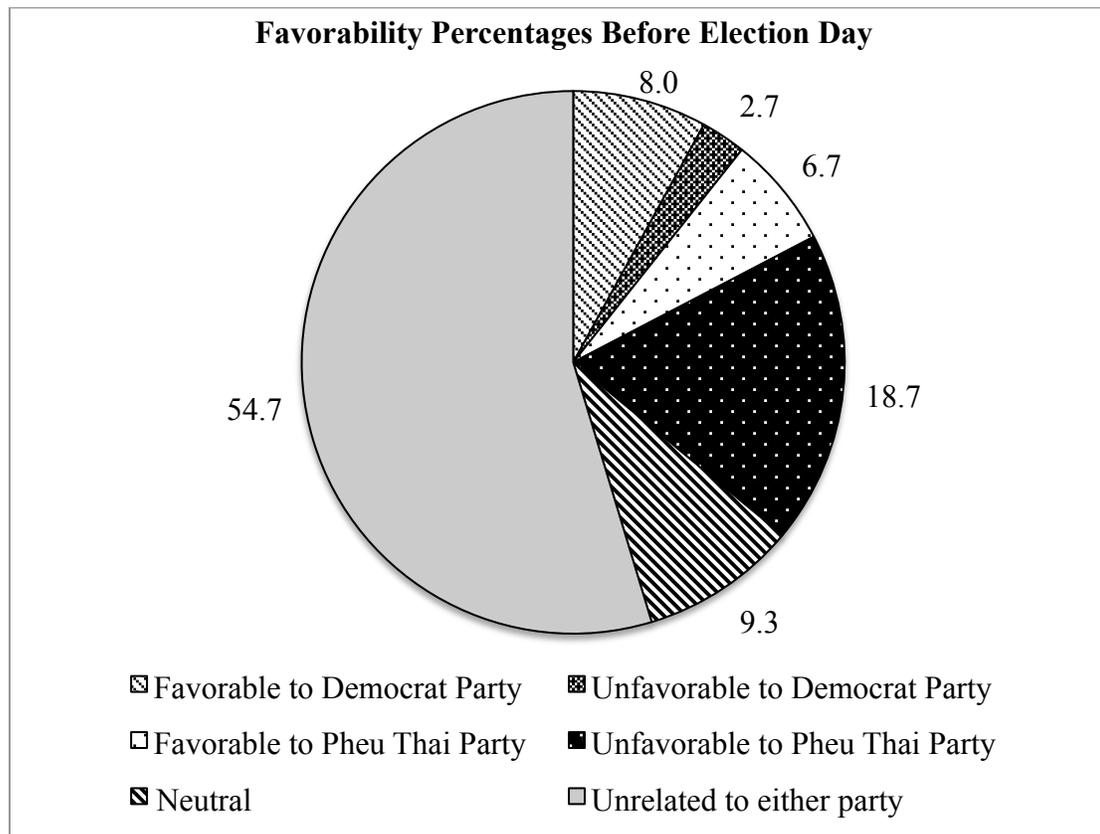


Figure 10. Relative favorability percentages of articles to each political party for the week before Election Day.

As detailed in the Methodology section in Chapter III, to answer Research Question 3 the researcher assessed each news item related to the 2011 Thailand General Election item as favorable, unfavorable, neutral or unrelated. For broader understanding of coding for all news items, Figures 10 and 11 were created.

Table 5 Number of Favorable News Items by Party Before and After Election Day

	Democrat Party	Pheu Thai Party
Favorable Week Before Election Day	6	5
Favorable Week After Election Day	4	30
Total	10	35

Table 5 shows that, in the week before Election Day, the Democrat Party had six favorable news items and the Pheu Thai Party had five favorable news items. Figure 10 shows that in the week before Election Day, looking at the total coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election, the Democrat Party received 8% favorable coverage and the Pheu Thai Party received 6.7% favorable coverage. Thus, answering Research Question 3 the Democrat Party received more favorable coverage than the Pheu Thai Party in the week before Election Day, though not largely.

Appendix B provides an example of a Democrat-favorable news item that appeared in the June 28, 2011 edition of the Bangkok Post newspaper before Election Day. This news item titled “Abhisit tries to connect with Pheu Thai bastions,” features a photo of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Democrat Party incumbent candidate, walking with a monk in a traditional saffron robe along with a story below it.

In the week after Election Day, Table 5 shows that the Democrat Party had four favorable news items and the Pheu Thai Party had 30 favorable news items. Figure 10 shows that in the week after Election Day, looking at the total coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election, the Democrat Party received 4.3% favorable coverage and the Pheu Thai Party received 32.3% favorable coverage. Thus, answering Research Question

3, the Pheu Thai Party received more favorable coverage than the Democrat Party in the week after Election Day.

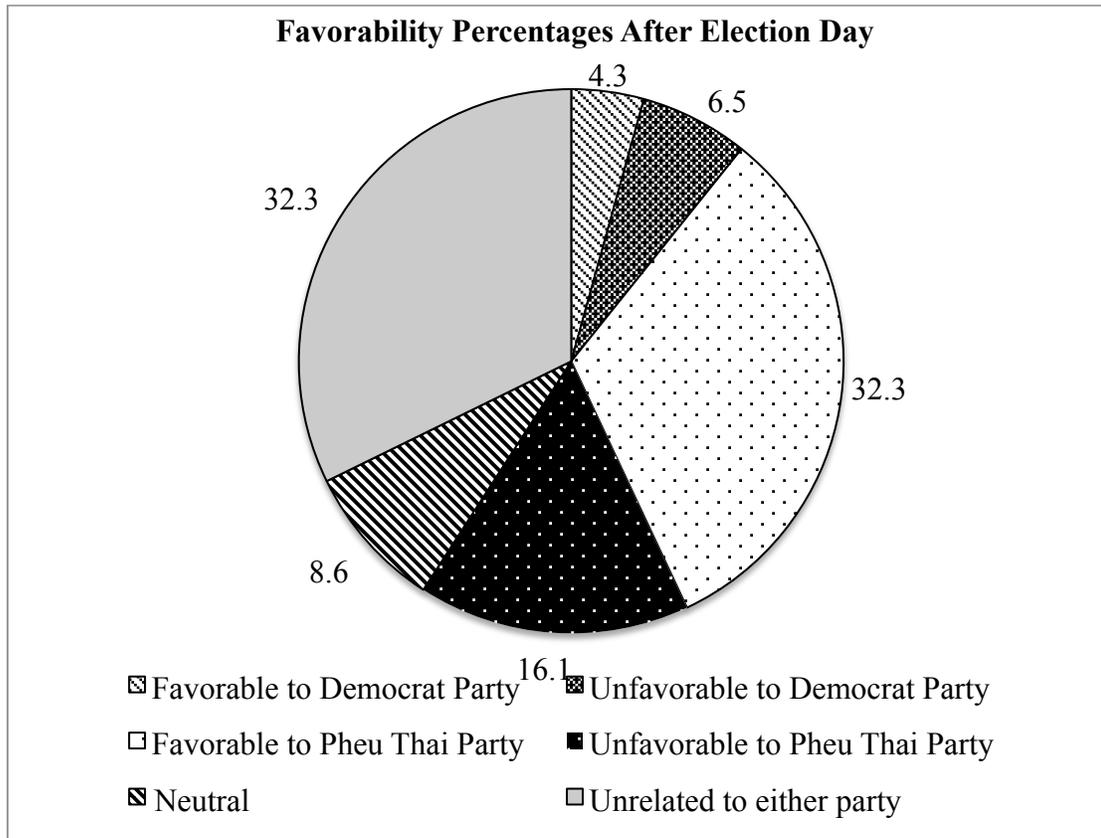


Figure 11. Relative favorability percentages of articles to each political party for the week after Election Day.

RQ4: Did the *Bangkok Post* feature more front-page Democrat Party (incumbent) news items or front-page Pheu Thai Party (challenger) news items, before and after Election Day?

As explained in detail the Methodology section in Chapter III, to answer Research Question 4 the researcher assessed and recorded each news item related to the 2011

Thailand General Election that appeared on the front page of the daily edition of the *Bangkok Post*, in the week before and the week after Election Day.

Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the front-page news items that appeared in the *Bangkok Post* before and after Election Day, respectively. As shown in Figure 12, there were no front-page news items solely devoted to either the Democrat Party or the Pheu Thai Party. However, the researcher found and as illustrated in Figure 12, that there were three news items that featured both political parties on the front page of the *Bangkok Post* in the week before Election Day. Appendix C gives an example of a front-page featuring both the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party. This news item on the front page of the July 2, 2011 edition of the *Bangkok Post*, the day before Election Day, features equally-sized photos of both parties speaking to crowds in the rain along with equally-sized stories below each photo.

Thus, answering Research Question 4, in the week before Election Day the *Bangkok Post* did not feature one political party more than the other on the front page of the paper. Rather, the front page of the *Bangkok Post* featured the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party equally in the week before Election Day.

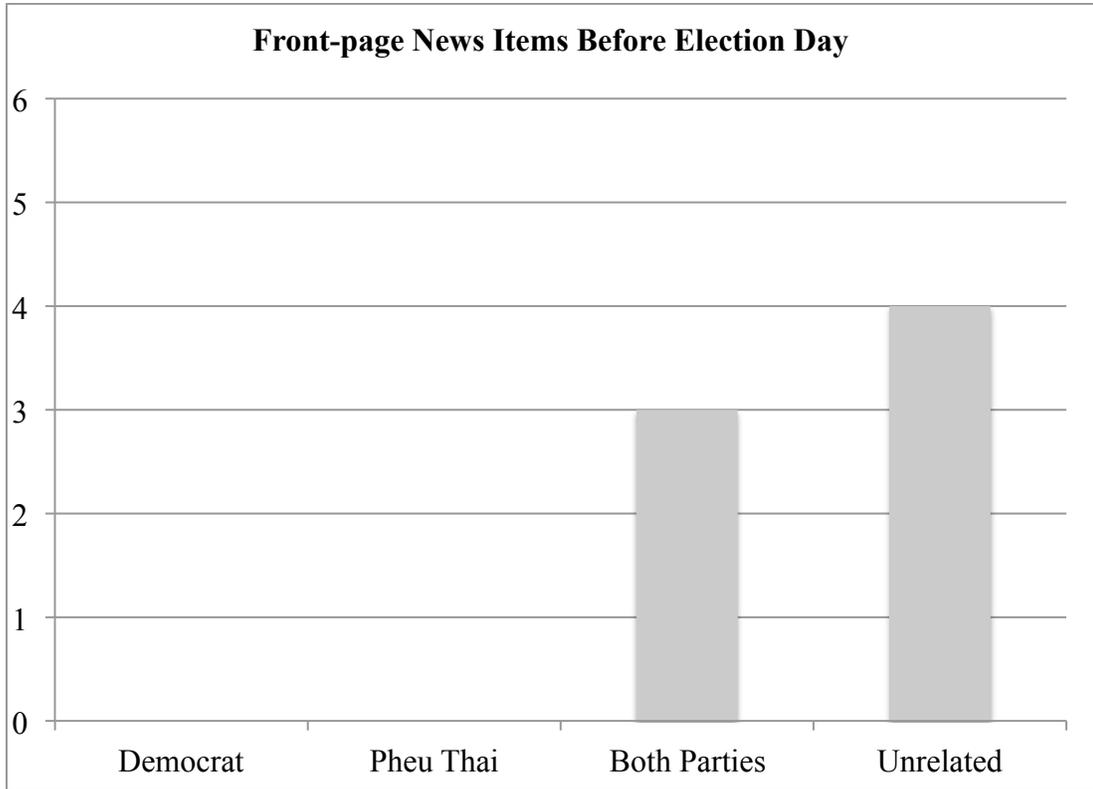


Figure 12. Total number of front-page articles, by party, before Election Day.

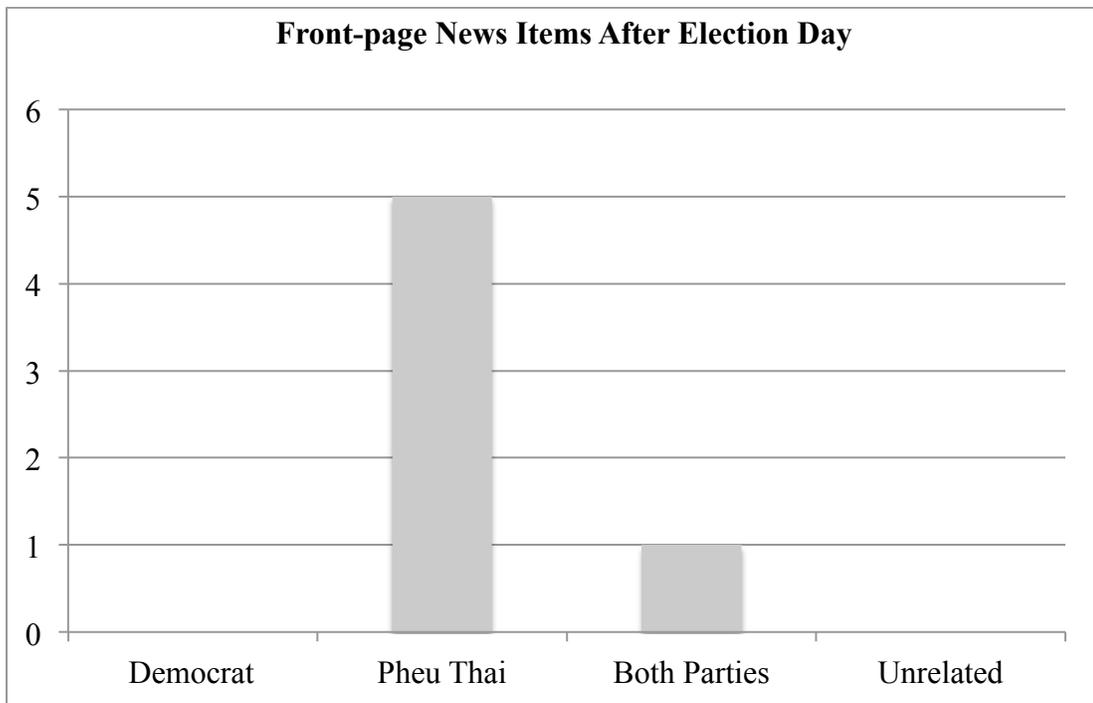


Figure 13. Total number of front-page articles, by party, after Election Day.

After Election Day, as shown in Figure 13, there were five front-page news items solely devoted to the Pheu Thai Party. Appendix D gives an example of one of the five articles featuring the Pheu Thai Party after Election Day. This news item titled “History in the making”, which appeared on the front page of the July 4, 2011 edition of the *Bangkok Post*, the day after Election Day, features a photo of newly elected Prime Minister Yingluck Chinnawat surrounded by a crowd of reporters and photographers.

Thus, answering Research Question 4, in the week after Election Day the *Bangkok Post* featured more front-page news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party.

RQ5: What is the dominant type of frame in the *Bangkok Post*'s coverage of the Democrat Party (incumbent) and of the Pheu Thai Party (challenger), before and after Election Day?

As outlined in the Methodology section in Chapter III, to answer Research Question 4 the researcher assessed, recorded, and coded each news item focused on the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party according to the defined parameters of thematic frame or episodic frame.

Appendix E shows an example of a thematic-frame news item featuring the Democrat Party. In this news item, titled “Democrats well ahead in six southern provinces,” the article is thematic, features general party-related information and outlines the results of a voting survey conducted in the south of Thailand.

Appendix F shows an example of an episodic-frame news item featuring the Pheu Thai Party. The news item, titled “Moves are already afoot to bring back Thaksin,” features a specific Party-related occurrence, highlights a plan, publicly viewed as controversial and scandalous, to provide amnesty for coup-ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat, Yingluck Chinnawat’s brother.

Only news items coded as partisan were included as data in analysis of this research question. Those news items that were unrelated to the Democrat Party or to the Pheu Thai Party, and those news items that featured both parties were excluded from the data as the researcher only aimed to present findings that strictly compared framing by political party, before and after Election Day. Figure 14 and 15 illustrate the findings of this portion of the study.

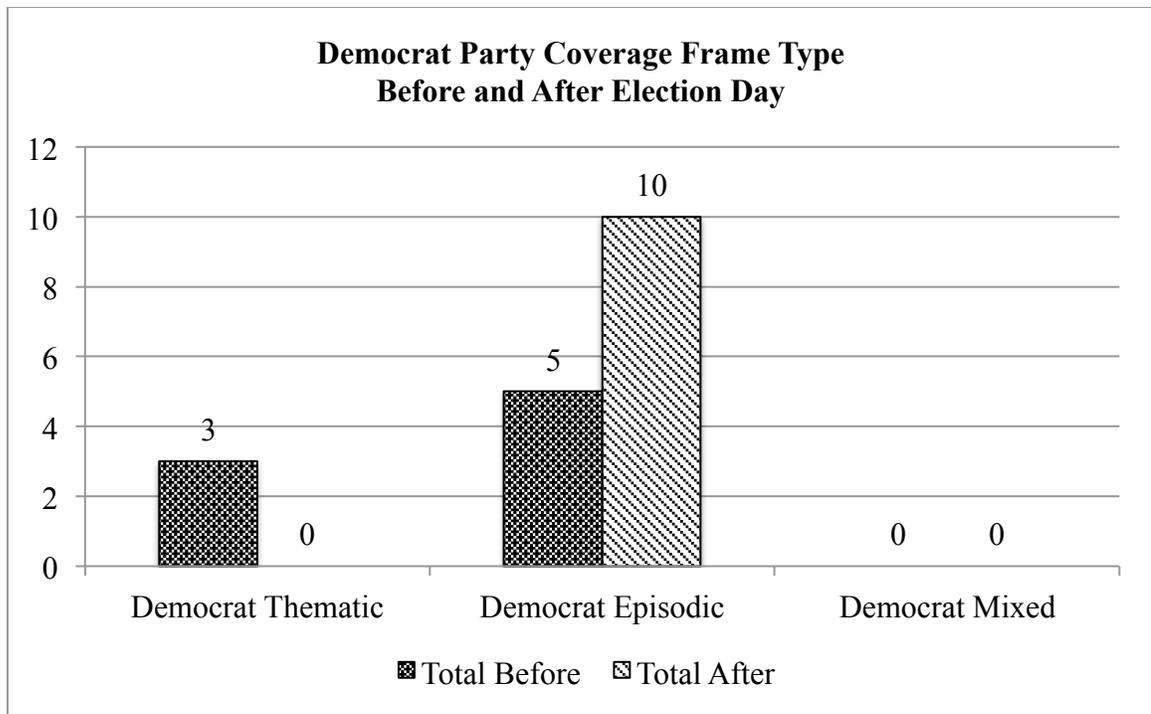


Figure 14. Democrat Party coverage frame types before and after Election Day.

Figure 14 shows that, before Election Day, there were five news items focused on the Democrat Party coded as episodic and three news items coded as thematic. The figure shows that, after Election Day, there were zero thematic news items and 10 episodic news items focused on the Democrat Party. Thus, answering Research Question 5, Figure 14 shows that both before and after Election Day, the dominant frame used by the *Bangkok Post* in coverage of the Democrat Party was the episodic frame.

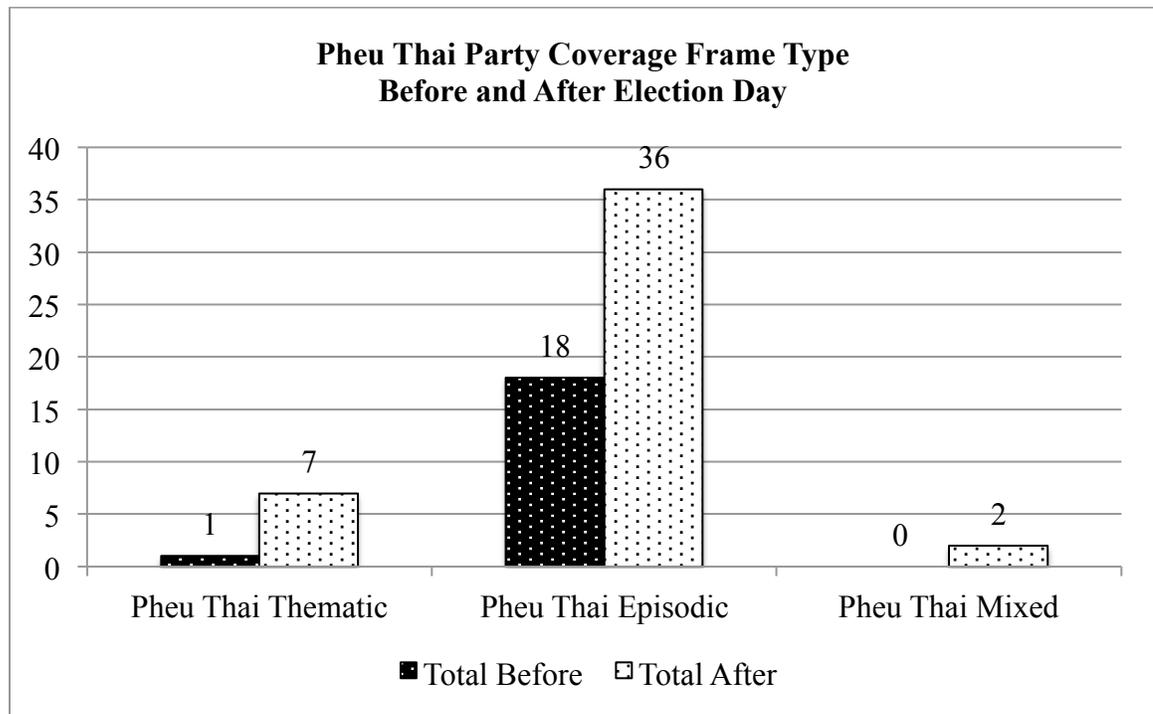


Figure 15. Pheu Thai Party coverage frame types before and after Election Day.

Looking at news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party, Figure 15 shows that, before Election Day, there was one thematic-frame news item and 18 episodic-frame news items. Figure 15 shows that, after Election Day, there were seven thematic-frame news items and 36 episodic-frame news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party. Thus,

answering Research Question 5, Figure 15 shows that both before and after Election Day, the dominant frame used by the *Bangkok Post* in coverage of the Pheu Thai Party was the episodic frame.

Conclusion

Addressing the title of this paper, “Wai” Unbalanced: A Content Analysis of Media Coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election in the *Bangkok Post* Newspaper, the researcher finds that the coverage of the two major political parties in the 2011 Thailand General Election by the *Bangkok Post* newspaper, overall, appears unbalanced.

Considering the sheer number of news items devoted to the Democrat Party and the Pheu Thai Party, it is clear that the *Bangkok Post* featured a greater number of news items focused on the Pheu Thai Party and they allocated far more precious column inches to Pheu Thai Party coverage.

Looking at tone of the coverage, according to favorability, before Election Day the Democrat party was given slightly more favorable coverage than the Pheu Thai Party. This perhaps covertly catered to the “elite” business readership they claim to have, because the Democrat Party is viewed as the party for elites. However, following the outcome of the historic Election Day, it appears that the *Bangkok Post* aligned itself with the majority of the population of Thailand, the non-*Bangkok-Post*-reading working class, by featuring far more favorable Pheu Thai Party news items.

The outcome of the study of frames used by the *Bangkok Post* is overall inline with existing research. The overwhelming majority of framing research found that election

coverage is largely framed as episodic as the news items are presented like scandalous and sensational horse races.

The researcher hopes that this study, seemingly the only study of its kind assessing the *Bangkok Post's* coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election, contributes to the body of communications research of coverage of political elections. As many scholars have noted the lack of research on international coverage of elections in other countries, the researcher hopes that this study will encourage more research in this specific field. The researcher is fortunate to have been in Thailand during this historic event. It allowed for a deeper understanding of the significance of the election and would encourage future research to be done in country, when possible, to experience a greater appreciation for the political situation, the coverage, the data and the results.

Furthermore, the Asia region is of geo-political importance to the United States as noted by the common use of the term “Asia pivot” in terms of future interests. This study aims to contribute to understanding of the Asia region by Americans and those interested in the developing Asian nations.

Weaknesses of Research

The researcher recognizes the weaknesses and limitations of this study. Primarily, this study is a subjective content analysis where the researcher acted as the sole coding source for all data.

The researcher also acknowledges that the initial aim of the study was to conduct a cross-national comparison of news coverage of the 2011 Thailand General Election.

However, this was realized as impossible because of the lack of coverage in the *The Washington Post*. The researcher could have considered an additional non-Thai news source, such as a newspaper out of the United Kingdom or an Asia-regional newspaper.

Furthermore, the researcher recognizes the limitations of collecting data from hard-copy, printed newspapers.

The researcher also acknowledges the limitations of studying the 2011 Thailand General Election through an English-language news source. It provides information aimed at a primary consumer: the educated, affluent reader in Bangkok, Thailand.

Recommendations

The researcher notes that the historic 2011 Thailand General Elections should have received more than two small news items of coverage in *The Washington Post*, seemingly at the center of the political universe, considering the 35 news items the paper ran on the violent, deadly protests that led to the election. Additionally, the election of the first-ever female prime minister should have been deemed news-worthy to *The Washington Post*, considering that in Thailand women only began participating in national-level politics in 1949 (Mukda-anan et al., 2006). As of 2006, only 11 percent of local and national political positions were held by females (Mukda-anan et al., 2006).

It is recommended that future research include a cross-national comparison of coverage of foreign elections by factoring a respected U.S. newspaper like *The New York Times*. In addition, it would be worth comparing the findings of this study to another

national news paper such as Thailand's only other English-language newspaper *The Nation*.

It is also recommended that research be conducted to determine if there are Thai-language studies examining coverage of the election by Thai-language news sources. There are many Thai-language news sources in Thailand and many outstanding universities and research institutes, so further exploration into existing research on the 2011 Thailand General Election is due.

APPENDIX A

June 30, 2011 Bangkok Post example of column inch measurement

Thai doctor there'll doctor House

PTU ✓ ⊕

...ral doctor running for ...ana Party remains a ... of the Pheu Thai Party for a clean sweep of the day.

... a former director of who has also won an ... anding rural doctor, is ... a run for its money in ... comprising Fang and

... hances look strong in ... constituencies, but in ... the doctor's popularity ... hai's candidate, former ... Prasit Wuthinanchai, ...

... constituency's residents ... red flags and put up ... of their houses declaring ... Pheu Thai candidates ... at Dr Krai is their man ... in, a noodle vendor who ... flag on her noodle cart ... te on the party list for ... ill cast her constituency ... vote for Dr Krai.

... "He has done a ... lot for the commu ... nity since he was a ... hospital director," ... she said.

... Chumjai Saeng ... gkaew, 81, said she

Natthawong Sodsri

AEKARACH SATTABUR

Red shirt leader Natthawong Sodsri lashed out at election Sodsri Satayatum for his jailed Pheu Thai party Jatuporn Prompan would become an MP if he fails on Sunday.

The Criminal Court rejected a petition to Jatuporn's lawyer, Winyat who requested the No 8 F list candidate be given to be from prison to vote.

Ms Sodsri said Mr Jatuporn's party members did not let him vote as it stated that any future to cast a vote in the election.

Yesterday, Mr Jatuporn was reportedly detained at the Bai Prisons, met his legal team and another request with his release before the election.

Mr Natthawong said his second application to be that Mr Jatuporn would end in court to gain the election as an MP again.

He urged Ms Sodsri to her personal opinions because the Election Commission has no authority to decide.

"The EC should maintain the law," he added. Mr Jatuporn was charged with terrorism in the last year's protests by the government for democracy against the military.

Meanwhile Yingluck's

X marks the spot

Students from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's district make a cross yesterday in an auditorium at the Bangkok Youth Centre as part of the BMA's campaign to educate people on how to cast their ballots correctly.

CHANAT KATANYU

Democrats look to end strong

DF

people begin to see the real alternative."

Polls show the Democrats trailing Pheu Thai, led by Yingluck Shinawatra, the youngest sister of exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Parties linked to billionaire Thaksin have won at least 49% of parliamentary seats in the past four elections dating back to 2001, only to have the last three years overturned through court rulings.

A coup had been discussed during her conversation with the US ambassador. A coup was a big issue because the election is near and discussing such a topic would affect confidence in the country, he said.

Ms Yingluck on Tuesday admitted the US envoy expressed concern about the potential for a coup in Thailand during a private talk on Monday. She

of a coup, saying there were no reasons to fear that the military would stage a putsch.

Mr Chuan said the question of a coup should not have been raised as the country is heading for an election.

He said by principle a party that had the most seats should have the right to form a government. It is tradition, not a rule, that the party which musters

3 DAYS TO ELECTION 2011

Abhisit says Yingluck's novelty wearing off

APPENDIX B

June 28, 2011 *Bangkok Post* example of favorable Democrat Party news item



Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva follows Phraraj Ratanakawi, the ecclesiastical provincial governor of Yasothon, on an alms-collecting round during election campaigning yesterday.

Abhisit tries to connect in Pheu Thai bastions

MANOP THIP-OSOD

Since the Democrat Party headed off on the campaign trail, the public has seen its leader Abhisit Vejjajiva do a lot of unusual things.

While in a field, he sat down to chat with villagers, he attended morning alms with residents and also took part in a life-prolonging ritual to ward off evil.

Yesterday, in the northeastern province of Yasothon he took the role of a temple boy carrying food for a monk during the morning alms-collecting round.

All of this political marketing is part of the party's strategy to woo votes, especially in the North and Northeast, which are the strongholds of the Democrats' arch rival, Pheu Thai.

These two regions have remained a thorn in the Democrats' side and usually kept a poll victory out of their reach.

The prime minister looked quite awkward in the early stages of the campaign. But as it has continued, he seems to have been getting the hang of it.

As Mr Abhisit is engaged in political marketing, the party's chief adviser Chuan Leekpai is taking a more tradi-

tional approach without the fanfare.

The former premier has been quietly paying visits to voters in the Northeast. He pulled some surprises by dropping by pro-red shirt communities to exchange opinions with Pheu Thai supporters.

Mr Chuan is a strong believer that northeastern voters will not slam the door in the party's face and has tried to point this out to Democrat candidates.

According to Mr Chuan, what divides Democrats and grass roots people is how the party treats them. Several issues have been left unexplained and this has created the gulf in understanding.

July 2, 2011 *Bangkok Post* example of front-page coverage of both parties

Bangkok

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Pheu Thai Party's top list candidate Yingluck Shinawatra is surrounded by key supporters of the party and red shirt leaders as she makes her last election speech in driving rain at the Rajamangala Stadium in Bangkok yesterday.



Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva is given roses by supporters before he addresses the party's final campaign rally at the Royal Plaza yesterday.

THE LAST BATTLE

1 DAY TO ELECTION 2011

By SUPOJ WANCHARON

The Pheu Thai party ended its election campaign yesterday with a pledge to give more funds, more money and a free hand to the Abhisit government appointed youth panel chair for Kanit na Nakorn if it wins the election.

Pheu Thai's top candidate Yingluck Shinawatra stressed that fostering national reconciliation was instrumental in bringing the country forward and the party would ensure that the Kanit committee could fulfill its task.

"During the last five years, the country has been in reverse mode. So the most important way to push it forward is to foster reconciliation," she told a cheering crowd at Rajamangala stadium.

She said that under a Pheu Thai-led government, the panel would pursue its work in pushing last year's political violence without any interference and with more resources at its disposal.

"She said the party would gather public law specialists in its drive for legal reforms to build 'trust and confidence' in the eyes of the international community.

In delivering her campaign speech, Ms. Yingluck concentrated on "2020 Vision" — the party's ambitious plan for the next nine years.

Ms. Yingluck promised to work to build social security and economic stability if the party is given the mandate to form a government.

Yingluck focuses on national reconciliation and her party's vision to push the country forward while Abhisit keeps hammering away at Thaksin's sway over Pheu Thai

Scrapping the oil fund to lower fuel prices. This would bring down the price of premium by 7.5 baht a litre, regular petrol price by 6.7 baht and diesel price by 2.2 baht, she told supporters.

The party also promises additional subsidies to help individuals pay for health care and the return of the rice mortgage scheme.

The minimum wage must be raised

accused of having bad intentions for the nation and the (monarchy) and I can confirm it's not true," she said.

As Ms. Yingluck focused on the Pheu Thai's 2020 Vision policies, party-list candidate Natthawut Sakul attacked the Democrat Party and Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's handling of the red shirt demonstrations last April and May.

Mr. Abhisit said that Thais should help demote Thaksin Shinawatra's position from the country. "I'd like to tell him that the real poison that is killing Thai society now is the poison in the heart of the prime minister who does not care about the massive deaths of the people in the political violence last year."

Mr. Natthawut urged the people to vote for Pheu Thai in tomorrow's poll to "definitely poison the military coup and the invisible power."

"Pheu Thai's victory is the people's victory," he said.

Pheu Thai's final campaign rally was hampered with heavy rain, which briefly halted the activities on stage. But many supporters refused to leave, huddling under their umbrellas and remaining at the foot of the stage.

In another development, the Appeal Court yesterday denied a bail request for red shirt leader and Pheu Thai candidate Ja-nguen Prompan who is highly unlikely to be released to cast his vote on election day. He is being detained on charges of terrorism at Bangkok's In-mand Prison in connection with last year's red shirt protests.

In its ruling, the Appeal Court said there were no new grounds to reconsider the lower court's decision not to temporarily release him.

By MANOP THIP-OSOD

The Democrat Party yesterday launched its final campaign rally at the Royal Plaza, taking aim at its perennial foe Thaksin Shinawatra.

The Democrats slammed what it claimed was Pheu Thai's policy to clear the name of deposed prime minister Thaksin and give him back the 46 billion baht seized from him.

The campaign was organised under the slogan "The Future of Thailand Under the Same Sky" and the broadcast of the rally was also relayed to nine major provinces — Chiang Mai, Sakonkhai, Ubon Ratchathani, Udorn Thani, Rayong, Phetchaburi, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Narathiwat.

Prime Minister and Democrat leader Abhisit Vejjajiva appeared on stage to address a large gathering of supporters yesterday evening in the driving rain.

Before his address, video footage was played featuring Mr. Abhisit leaving that his duties as prime minister are about to end but those of the general public are about to begin, a reference to people's duty to vote tomorrow.

After the video, Mr. Abhisit said he did not accept the view that Thai people are divided.

"Actually, Thai live under the same sky. We don't feel there is a divide. Thai people don't want any division," Mr. Abhisit said.

He said he had spent more than 40 days travelling to meet people across the country and had become aware of people's hardships, their different needs, their desire to live better lives and enjoy security in their lives as well.

That people want higher incomes and quality education for their children, he said.

Mr. Abhisit said his government had worked hard to tackle these issues for the past two years and the government has fulfilled its promise of pushing for free education.

The government never ignores the elderly as attested to by its elderly pension payments scheme.

made it clear two years ago they would bring Thaksin back home and their agenda, which is guided by Pheu Thai, remains unchanged today.

"One policy never changes. That is Thaksin thinks, Pheu Thai acts," Mr. Abhisit said.

Mr. Abhisit said he would not stop criticising Pheu Thai for wanting to help Thaksin until Thaksin stops pulling the strings for the party.

"My duty is to point out the facts. I will stop talking when Thaksin stops thinking," Mr. Abhisit said.

Mr. Abhisit also slammed Pheu Thai for allegedly seeking to return the 46 billion baht to Thaksin.

This is not a political party's vision for the sake of the country and the people, Mr. Abhisit said.

The 46 billion baht can be spent to cover elderly pension payments, the medical costs of millions of people and the education fees for children, Mr. Abhisit said.

He said that it is wrong to put only one individual's importance above all the people of the country.

The bosses of the Democrats are the people nationwide, not the one in Dubai, Mr. Abhisit said.

He said the voters must think for themselves in the election tomorrow if they want to reward people who have sown division in the country.

If they want the country to move forward, the Democrats must be their choice, Mr. Abhisit said.

“My duty is to point out the facts. I will stop talking when Thaksin stops thinking”.

ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA
DEMOCRAT LEADER

Speaking on the merits of the government's crop price guarantee scheme, Mr. Abhisit said most farmers have had a sense of insecurity and injustice for a long time, but with the scheme in place, they will no longer suffer losses.

Mr. Abhisit said that the country has to move forward and Thai people have to decide to choose between the Democrats and the Pheu Thai Party.

Mr. Abhisit claimed that the red shirts

More on elections: Pages 3-4
Editorial: Page 8
Paths to prosperity: Page B1

APPENDIX D

July 4, 2011 *Bangkok Post* example of front-page coverage of Pheu Thai Party

The image shows the front page of the Bangkok Post newspaper. At the top, there are several advertisements: a travel ad for hotels, a medical ad for kidney transplants, and a small ad for a Thai private kidney transplant institute. The newspaper's masthead "Bangkok Post" is prominently displayed in a large, stylized font. Below the masthead, the date "MONDAY, JULY 4, 2011" and the price "30 BAH" are visible. The main headline is "Yingluck Shinawatra" in a large, black serif font, followed by "HISTORY IN THE MAKING" in a very large, bold, red sans-serif font. A sub-headline reads: "A 'red tide' swept Thailand yesterday and drove the Democrat Party and its coalition partners from power. In their place steps the woman who is on the verge of becoming Thailand's first female prime minister." Below this, a table lists the election results for four parties: Pheu Thai (262 seats), Democrats (160 seats), Bhumjaithai (34 seats), and Chartthaipattana (19 seats). A blue box on the right side of the table indicates "Special election coverage on Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 16". The main image is a photograph of Yingluck Shinawatra, the Pheu Thai Party's top candidate, surrounded by a dense crowd of reporters and photographers with cameras and microphones. Handwritten purple annotations "D" and "PTK" are visible on the left side of the page.

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Yingluck Shinawatra

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

A 'red tide' swept Thailand yesterday and drove the Democrat Party and its coalition partners from power. In their place steps the woman who is on the verge of becoming Thailand's first female prime minister.

262 PHEU THAI	160 DEMOCRATS	34 BHUMJAITHAI	19 CHARTTHAIPATTANA	Special election coverage on Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 16
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APPENDIX E

June 26, 2011 *Bangkok Post* example of thematic-frame Democrat Party news item

Democrats well ahead in six southern provinces

► **SONGKHLA** : A survey by Hat Yai University has put the Democrat Party comfortably ahead of the Pheu Thai Party in six provinces in the lower South.

The survey suggests the Democrats are likely to win 22 out of 24 constituency seats, leaving one each to the Pheu Thai Party and the Matubhum Party.

Pheu Thai stands to win in Narathiwat's Constituency 2, while the Matubhum Party seemed to be leading in Constituency 3 of the same province.

On the party list system, the survey suggested the Democrat Party would finish first, with support from 52.5% of voters. Pheu Thai received 18.5%.

According to the survey, at least 200,000 voters in the six provinces were likely to agree with the "vote no" campaign to register their disaffection with all candidates and parties.

The survey focused on Songkhla, Satun, Phatthalung, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces. A total of 1,201 people were interviewed between Monday and Thursday.

About 68.2% of respondents said they wanted the Democrat Party to form a coalition government, against 31.8% who wanted Pheu Thai to form it.

Meanwhile, a separate survey from security authorities covering the same six provinces showed that the Democrat Party might not be able to retain its monopoly in certain provinces.

Twenty four House seats from the constituency system would be shared among the Democrat, Matubhum, Pheu Thai and Chartthaipattana parties.

According to the survey, the four parties would each win one of the four seats in Narathiwat province.

APPENDIX F

July 5, 2011 *Bangkok Post* example of episodic-frame Pheu Thai Party news item



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