CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The research methodology used is based on qualitative analysis, wherein conceptual frameworks are used to frame research and text analysis is used to extract ideas. The sample size is 96 days of "The Nation", and the sampling dates straddled the period just after the Tak Bai incident to the Boxing Day tsunami. The selected newspaper articles include headlines, local/regional news, editorials, and opinion columns by both in-house journalists and external contributors. There was an average of 2.6 articles per day written about the conflict in the deep South.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Frameworks by the following 3 academicians had been used to guide this research :-

    (a) Johan Galtung;

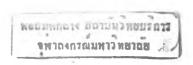   (b) John Burton's; and

    (c) Arjun Appadurai's.

Specifically, Galtung's research on meanings and concepts of peace and war; Burton's research on unmet human needs being the root causes of social conflict; and Appadurai's concept on the "de-territorialization" of the human imagination had been used. In addition, TRANSCEND's principles of good "peace"

<u>journalism</u> had also been helpful for this research. Previous understanding of the conflict, as documented in <u>Thai literature</u> by Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Surin Pitsuwan, Che Man etc. have provided useful and important socio-historical context to my content analysis.

All of the above were used to produce <u>themes</u> for my research. Broadly, three major themes had been identified through reviewing the literature of these renowned scholars and these are summarized as :-

(a) <u>structural violence</u>. Structural violence is institutionalized violence caused by political oppression through government policies and overt violence committed by state apparatus like the military, intelligence and police force; economic exploitation; disregard and disrespect for human rights etc.

(b) <u>cultural violence</u>. Cultural violence impinges on the individual's symbolic sphere of existence – his religion, culture and art. This class of violence includes avoidable insults; distortions of culture, cultural alienation or 'exclusion'. As the aggrieved individual is psychologically insulted or hurt or ignored for a sustained period and for which peaceful means hold no promise, he turns to violence.

(c) At the <u>human</u> level, conflict and violence result from unmet human needs pertaining to safety; "belonginginess"; self-esteem/recognition; personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security; freedom; distributive justice and participation in

society or state. These unmet human needs straddle both structural and cultural violence.

(d) <u>Globalization of radicalization of Islam</u> in the world. This includes the spread of Islamic extremism to Southeast Asia.

With regards to "peace" journalistic methodology, Galtung's theory on "clinical dissection" of conflict is used. Like health medicine, peace journalism adopts a clinical approach. It dissects the confrontation into its many facets – the peace actors; violence actors; historical records of the patients; the prognosis and the therapy.

In <u>prognosis</u>, the peace journalist analyzes and reports where the confrontation is going; what might next happen; the possible outcomes of the state's initiatives. He can even forewarn about an escalation of the confrontation and in what areas the state should be greater prepared for it.

In <u>diagnosis</u>, the peace journalist examines the historical records of the patient, reports on the dialogue amongst actors; determines the root causes so as to prescribe the therapy.

In <u>therapy</u>, the emphasis is on remedies and prevention. The emphasis is once again that the absence of violent does not denote positive peace. Positive peace requires justice, economic equity and social equality.

"The Nation"'s contributions against these ideal standards are analyzed in this thesis. A review of its shortfall against the theoretical ideals is also given.

3.3 Text Analysis

Having produced the themes for my qualitative research, the following techniques were applied to probe the issue:

    3.3.1 Data reduction techniques such as word repetitions and Key-word-in-context (KWIC). For each major theme, key words were identified (such as "justice/injustice"; separatists; agitators; Thai-ness; oppression; neglect) so as to discover patterns of ideas surrounding the theme. KWIC (extracting some 20 words before and after the keyword) was used to extract meanings. These two techniques enabled me to reduce the voluminous reports to key ideas.

    (b) Pawing or "Cut & Paste" – repetitively reading or 'eyeballing' the data. This sounds unscientific but turned out to be highly productive and effective. Careful reading and re-reading yielded useful information that would answer my research questions.

    (c) Relationship Analysis was used to determine the co-relation between "themes" and "violent conflict' and also between "themes".

3.4 Relationship Analysis

In textual analysis, Kathleen Carley (Carley 1993) suggested that the researcher can simply note that two concepts are related. Alternatively, a researcher might choose to elaborate on the relationship including its strength, direction and meaning. The former approach is appropriate when research is exploratory.

For <u>strength</u>, the issue is whether the relationship is (a) implied in the text (b) stated explicitly, or (c) emphasized. Strength can also be the count of the number of times the two concepts are proximal within the text.

For <u>direction</u>, the issue is whether the first concept is seen to have some 'prior' relationship to the second concept. For example : "a implies b"; "a comes before b".

For <u>meaning</u>, there is no overarching set of meanings that is valuable across all research questions. The researcher can develop relationships based on the sociological environment of the research area. For example, "normal" versus "after prompting" relationships can be developed. For this research, "definitive" and "logical" relationships will be used. Details of these are set out in Chapter 5.