

Cold War Modernism and Women's Representation in Anti-Communist Seriphap Magazine คตินิยมสมัยใหม่ในยุคสงครามเย็นและการเป็นตัวแทนของสตรี ในนิตยสารต่อต้านคอมมิวนิสต์ เสรีภาพ

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Received 22-05-2024**Revised** 06-08-2024**Accepted** 12-08-2024**Doi:** 10.69598/artssu.2024.3465.**Keywords:** cultural war, Cold War, cosmopolitan feminism, modern ideologies, print media, Seriphap, anti-communism**คำสำคัญ:** สงครามทางวัฒนธรรม, สงครามเย็น, สตรีนิยมสากล, คตินิยมสมัยใหม่, สื่อสิ่งพิมพ์, เสรีภาพ, การต่อต้านลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์**Abstract**

Objectives: This research explored the various issues of the American-sponsored Seriphap magazine (Free World), published between 1953 and 1963, focusing on how it presented women as the agents of modern ideologies and cosmopolitan feminism in the Cold War era. This research aimed to uncover the changes of cosmopolitan feminism and its influence on the representation of women in Thailand that contradicted the perceived image of those women in the competing communist regime.

Methods: This research employs historical and documentary research methodologies, analyzing primary sources, secondary sources, and relevant internet sources. Using content and visual analytical methods, the results are presented through a comprehensive descriptive analysis.

Results: In 1953, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was founded with its centers located around the world to implement the cultural war strategies during the Cold War. The overseas offices of the USIA carried out a mission to control the encroachment of communism through the production and distribution of pro-American propaganda materials. With its close proximity to Vietnam, Thailand played a crucial role to the American consolidation of power in Southeast Asia during the post-colonial period. As a result, American-sponsored films, magazines, and anti-communist materials were widely distributed in the country. From the study of the selected issues of Seriphap magazine, the researcher observed the captivating employment of women's representations with the agenda to promote Free World ideas. 1. The magazine demonstrates the role models of cosmopolitanism through the selected stories of inspiring American and Asian women by showcasing them as selfless heroines, as opposed to the communist villains. 2. The effort of the United States to disseminate its cultural products served as an agenda for the magazine to employ women as their agents of modernity. 3. The magazine adopts the discourse of universal rights to convince local readers that Thai women have better opportunities and freedom than those women in the communist camp. Through these results, women's representations were seen to have served various purposes, from being the agents of cosmopolitanism, American modernity, to even the idols of traditions and cultural values.

Application of this study: This study provides an opportunity to examine the product of the American culture during the Cold War and the impact on women's representations in an Asian context. In addition, the study fills the gap in the Cold War history with its new perspective, which also contributes to the field of Southeast Asian post-colonial women studies.

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์: การวิจัยนี้สำรวจประเด็นต่าง ๆ ที่ปรากฏในนิตยสารเสรีภาพซึ่งได้รับการสนับสนุนจากสหรัฐอเมริกาให้ตีพิมพ์ระหว่างปี 1953-1963 โดยมุ่งเน้นนำเสนอภาพสตรีในฐานะตัวแทนของคตินิยมสมัยใหม่และสตรีนิยมสากลในยุคสงครามเย็น การวิจัยนี้ยังนำเสนอการเปลี่ยนแปลงของสตรีนิยมสากลและอิทธิพลต่อการเป็นตัวแทนของสตรีในประเทศไทยที่ได้แก่ภาพลักษณ์สตรีในระบอบคอมมิวนิสต์

วิธีการศึกษา: การวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการวิจัยทางประวัติศาสตร์และการวิจัยเอกสารจากแหล่งข้อมูลปฐมภูมิ แหล่งข้อมูลทุติยภูมิ รวมถึงแหล่งข้อมูลอินเทอร์เน็ตที่เกี่ยวข้อง โดยมุ่งเน้นการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาและภาพที่ปรากฏ ผลการศึกษาได้รับการนำเสนอผ่านการพรรณนาเชิงวิเคราะห์

ผลการศึกษา: ปี 1953 สำนักงานข่าวสารอเมริกัน (USIA) ถูกก่อตั้งขึ้น โดยมีศูนย์กลางอยู่ทั่วโลกเพื่อดำเนินการตามกลยุทธ์สงครามทางวัฒนธรรมในช่วงสงครามเย็น สำนักงานในต่างประเทศของ USIA ดำเนินการกิจในการควบคุมการขยายตัวของลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ผ่านการผลิตและจำหน่ายสื่อโฆษณาชวนเชื่อที่สนับสนุนสหรัฐอเมริกา อย่างไรก็ตาม ประเทศไทยมี

บทบาทสำคัญในการเสริมสร้างอำนาจของสหรัฐอเมริกาในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้หลังยุคอาณานิคม เนื่องจากความใกล้ชิดกับเวียดนาม ส่งผลให้ภาพยนตร์ นิตยสาร และสื่อต่อต้านลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ที่ได้รับการสนับสนุนจากสหรัฐอเมริกาจำนวนมากได้รับการเผยแพร่ภายในประเทศ จากการศึกษาถึงประเด็นต่าง ๆ ที่ปรากฏในนิตยสารเสรีภาพ ผู้วิจัยสังเกตถึงการใช้สตรีเป็นตัวแทนการส่งเสริมแนวคิดเรื่องโลกเสรี 1. นิตยสารดังกล่าวแสดงให้เห็นถึงแบบอย่างของความเป็นสากลผ่านเรื่องราวที่ถูกคิดสรรของผู้หญิงอเมริกันและเอเชียที่สร้างแรงบันดาลใจ โดยนำเสนอภาพของพวกเธอในฐานะวีรสตรีผู้เสียสละเมื่อเทียบกับผู้ร้ายของลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ 2. ความพยายามของสหรัฐอเมริกาในการขยายผลทางวัฒนธรรมของตนผ่านนิตยสารที่ใช้ผู้หญิงเป็นตัวแทนของความทันสมัย 3. นิตยสารนำวาทกรรมเรื่องสิทธิสากลมาชักชวนให้ผู้หญิงไทยตระหนักถึงโอกาสและเสรีภาพที่ดีกว่าผู้หญิงในค่ายคอมมิวนิสต์ จากการดำเนินการดังกล่าว สตรีเป็นตัวแทนและมีบทบาทต่าง ๆ ทั้งตัวแทนของแนวคิดสากลนิยม ความทันสมัยของอเมริกา ไปจนถึงแบบอย่างของคุณค่าทางประเพณีและวัฒนธรรม

การประยุกต์ใช้: การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้เปิดโอกาสให้สำรวจผลของวัฒนธรรมอเมริกันในช่วงสงครามเย็นและผลกระทบที่มีต่อการเป็นตัวแทนของสตรีในบริบทของเอเชีย การศึกษานี้เติมเต็มช่องว่างในประวัติศาสตร์สงครามเย็นซึ่งจะช่วยเสริมการศึกษาของสตรีในยุคหลังอาณานิคมในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้อีกด้วย

Introduction

In 1954, Thai readers witnessed for the first time the localized version of American-sponsored *Free World* magazine published by the name *Seriphap*. The magazine featured the advancement of the free world countries or those anti-communist countries through infrastructure developments, education, social and cultural freedom and the liberalization of women in which it illustrated the new roles of women that had previously not been seen in local magazines before. In contrast to the communist camp, *Seriphap* presented women in the sophisticated characters of the cosmopolitan women and agents of the Free World. This study examines how American 'Cultural Cold War' used women's representations as tools to promote their Cold War agenda.

As the Cold War escalated in Asia in the early 1950s, President Truman urged for more American commitment in Asia. As the result of the communist encroachment in the region, Thailand received 10 million dollars of US military assistance as part of the 75-million-dollar fund for the general area of China (Chinwanno, 2021). As relations strengthened through the military aid that flooded into the country, American support was also prominent in the field of Thai cultural policy from the early 1950s. The effort of Americanisation was promoted through the film industry, as explored by Rachel Harrison, who suggested that many Thai films shown throughout 1950s shared similar plots to Hollywood anti-communist films (Day & Liem, 2018). The work also outlined the escalation of American anti-communist paranoia throughout the 1960s with more American-funded Thai language movies that were targeting people in rural areas. In addition to films, the US approved 400,000 dollars to support the Thai Fair of 1954 with film screenings, fashion shows and exhibitions of American products (Phillips, 2015). All of these demonstrate that a cultural policy that employed modernity as a tool played a crucial role in America's psychological warfare in Thailand. Situated next to the former French Indochina that was defeated by the Vietnamese nationalists, Thailand became an area of American concern over the ideological spread of communism. The decolonization movement in the region became crucial to the American position in the continuation of its containment policy in Asia (Sykes, 2019).

The American mission in disseminating its anti-communist propaganda was apparent through the mass production and circulation of the print media. Under the USIS, American-sponsored propaganda materials were popularised throughout the country in the form of handbooks, posters, and magazines (Collett, 1972). Among these propaganda materials, *Free World* magazine was one of the propaganda materials, which was first distributed to an audience of non-communist Asia in 1951 with the Regional Production Centre (RPC) in Manila, the Philippines (Sykes, 2019). As the magazine was first translated from the mastercopy in English, Thailand adopted the local name of the magazine, *Seriphap*.

While the anti-communist element of the magazine has been central to the arguments in previous studies, the representation of women had never been mentioned before (Chaiching, 2009; Namwong, 2020). From the 1950s, *Seriphap* magazine challenged traditional images and representations of Thai women and presented them in the complete new light in order to challenge the proletarian concept of Communist women. The representation of women became the tool that the magazine employed to convey its key propaganda messages to its audience.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the changing cosmopolitan feminism and its influence on the representation of Thai women in *Seriphap* magazine.
2. To highlight the emerging representation of female agents of modernity that emerged alongside the American propaganda of the Free World during the Cold War.
3. To examine the promotion of the internationalist discourse of universal rights that elevated the image of Thai women in *Seriphap* magazine.

Psychological Warfare, Cold War Modernism, and Cosmopolitanism in Thailand

In order to understand the role of *Seriphap* magazine as part of the American Cold War cultural campaign, three related concepts of psychological warfare, Cold War Modernism, and cosmopolitanism need to be explored. The period chosen for this study, between 1954 and 1964, highlights the employment of American psychological warfare that was first adopted under the presidency of Harry S. Truman (1945-1953) and took effect in Asia more directly during Dwight Eisenhower's administration (Rider, 2016). The phrase "psychological operations" first appeared in the National Security Council (NSC), released in 1947, with the concern of the advance of communism in Europe. By 1948, it had become the tool to promote American culture and ideologies to combat communist encroachment worldwide (Rider, 2016). Southeast Asia was placed under the spotlight of the Cold War in the 1950s with the victory of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu. General Plaek Phibunsongkhram, the Thai Prime Minister, who was an anti-communist himself, allied the country in the capitalist camp and started receiving funds from the United States. At least 10 million dollars was given for military assistance against communist insurgencies (Sykes, 2019). As the diplomatic ties were strengthened through the military aids, the American support was also prominent in the promotion of propaganda materials against communism. "In Thailand, the psychological offensive initiated by USIA and operated through the Thai Government was further developed to reach officials and educators...", stated in the NSC report on the USIA Program in 1955 (cited in Syke, 2019). According to the statement by NSC, USIA was already performing the task to promote a psychologically offensive program by the mid 1950s. This timeline is relevant to the emergence of American-sponsored printed materials, such as *Seriphap* magazine, which is the focus of this study.

Cold War Modernism

Cultural freedom served as a foundation of Cold War Modernism. Barnhisel (2015) suggests that the concept of freedom was used extensively by the American agencies during the beginning of the Cold War to define *modernism*. The Lockean liberal concept served as a framework that described the modern kind of individual freedom that people could

enjoy in the Free World (Barnhisel, 2015). The key element in American writings in the 1940s and 1950s, for example, was based on the promotion of the freedom of speech in which writers and artists were not controlled by the state, in contrast to those in the communist camp. This aspect also is reflected in the work of USIA in their promotion of Cold War modernism. In *Seriphap*, most of its content was narrated around the mentioned interpretation of freedom shared by every free person and nation. Using freedom as a foundation of Cold War modernism, common themes can be drawn from the archived issues of *Seriphap* printed between 1954 and 1964, which include the promotion of political rights, the creative innovation and advancement of the Free World, and the cultural heritage of American allied countries. The first articles of each issue often feature the political situations of both Free World and communist countries. In the 12th issue, the problem of refugees from the north communist Vietnam was highlighted (Seriphap, 12(1956)). The 23rd issue also discussed the enthusiasm of the American citizens during their national election (Seriphap, 24(1957)). Under this theme, the contrast between the Free World and communist world was purposely illustrated in order to emphasise the lack of freedom in the communist camp. The second theme that the magazine showcases is the creative innovations and advancement of the United States and their allies. Examples of articles include the growing film industry in the Philippines, the advancement of Thai education, and the University of Vietnam (Seriphap, 24(1957); 25(1958); 33(1958)). Under this theme, female representations were largely used to demonstrate the freedom they have in the Free World. The example of new career opportunities for women will be explored later in the study. The last theme concentrates on the preservation of cultural heritage with a focus on Southeast Asian allies. Many traditional festivals and arts were highlighted in the magazine including, Visak Day festival, Vietnamese 'Tết' festival, and Indian traditional dramatic arts (Seriphap, 12(1956); 24(1957); 33(1958)). The employment of female representations suits this theme. Many female figures are portrayed as agents of cultural practices and traditions. This point will be elaborated later in the analysis of this article.

Cosmopolitanism

Cold War modernism and cosmopolitanism are somewhat closely related in the context of the superpowers' competition in the 1950s. As Cold War modernism employed the concept of freedom to unite people, cosmopolitanism emphasised that "all humans are connected in a universal moral order" (Rosamond & Kronsell, 2018). What was the moral order, as according to the United States in the 1950s? The answer lies in the concept of liberty and individual freedom. The United States had begun the moral reform of American citizens since Truman's administration (Oakes, 1993). The reform was based on the idea that Communism threatened the nation's security. From domestic reforms, Truman elevated this policy onto the global agenda by making anti-communist sentiment a cosmopolitan norm.

The intended promotion of cosmopolitanism somewhat coincided with Thailand's position during the leadership of General Sarit Thanarat. The country had adopted direct American influence when Sarit seized control of the government in 1958. Upon Sarit's takeover, he immediately received the American award of 20 million dollars for economic development (Day & Liem, 2018). The period that followed led to tremendous economic growth and the rise of western lifestyles. The "internationalization of the Thai state", as Matthew Phillip acclaimed, was the key foundation to Sarit's regime (2015). He launched the Industrial Investment Promotion Act and allowed more foreign investment, especially from the United States. The result was significant economic growth at an annual average of 7.3 percent between 1962 and 1968 (Phillip, 2015, p. 172). This gave rise to people's exposure to the ideas of capitalism and eventually they underwent the moral reform that the United States planned for them, which was the idea that in the Free World everyone and every nation is assumed to share the same rights and freedom.

Research Methods

1. Source Materials

Seriphap is the literal translation of the term Free World, which is defined by Merriam Webster as “the part of the world where democracy and capitalism or moderate socialism rather than totalitarian or Communist political and economic systems prevail” (2024). From this definition, the mission of the magazine to serve as a mouthpiece of the United States has already been portrayed. USIS, which is the agency that sponsored *Seriphap* magazine, had 196 information centres in 53 countries around the world, where they built libraries, reading rooms and translated books and printed materials into the local languages (Collett, 1972). In Asia, USIS Libraries could be found in several regions, for example, there were ten American Libraries in the East Asia, three in the Southeast Asia, three in South Asia and three in the Middle East (Anderton, 1967). In 1954, the Eisenhower's government approved 1.5 million dollars for USIS in Thailand with the purpose of propaganda making and distribution to stop the Communist encroachment (Chaiching, 2009). The so-called American Buildings (*Sala American*) were established in major cities across the country by 1954, which included Bangkok, Chiangmai, Lampang, Nakhon Ratchasima, Udonthani, Ubonratchathani, and Songkhla (*Sala American*, 1957).

2. The Operation of *Seriphap* Magazine

The early issues from 1951 to 1953 of *Seriphap* published in Thailand were known by the name *Chaolok Seri* (Citizens of the Free World), which were translated directly from the master copy in English by the local USIS staff in Thailand (Namwong, 2020; Sykes, 2019). During the first years of the magazine, a Thai translator, Narong Chanpen, was recorded to be the editor in chief. “I am in charge of everything, from translating, conducting interviews, writing articles, taking photographs, and designing the art work of the magazine”, Narong explained (cited in Namwong, 2020). This statement demonstrates that the content of the early years of the magazine was solely dependent on the English version of the magazine and it also did not get sufficient support from the USIS. Nevertheless, from 1954 the magazine started to involve more local staff in the production with the aim of improving the target of the local audience. Whereas the previous issues had been written mainly by the assembled staff of the editorial office in Manila, the issues from 1954 onwards contained articles that were written by the local staff of the USIS of each country in Asia. In the case of Thailand, the first localised version of *Free World* was published by the name *Seriphap*. The first editor, Narong, emphasised that from 1954 *Seriphap* transformed its content to better fit the audience's interests (Namwong, 2020). This statement was further proved when the editor released an invitation in 1954 to the audience to contribute their own articles for publications. Nonetheless, the names of the Thai authors were never revealed in the articles that have been surveyed. Despite this unclear information about the operation of *Seriphap*, the first issue of 1954 was published with an estimated number as high as 125,000 copies. These copies were strategically distributed in urban and provincial areas, particularly in community centres, temples, and schools (Namwong, 2020). This fact supports that the magazine targeted an audience from every part of Thailand with no restrictions on age or gender backgrounds. In other words, everyone could read *Seriphap* magazine.

3. The Selection of Materials

Seriphap magazine's first issue was published in 1954 and discontinued in 1998. Most of the issues are well preserved by the private archive, *Thonchabap*, located in Bangkok, Thailand. The number of the issues published can vary widely in each year, for example, 3 issues were published in the first year of the publication; 7 issues in 1955 and 1956; and 18 issues in 1958 (Namwong, 2020). In this first decade of the publication, from 1954 to 1964, is the period that this study focuses on due to the intensity of the Cold War in Asia and the challenging situation that Thailand was

facing, especially as a result of the psychological warfare. In the conduct of this article, 26 hardcopies of the issues of *Seriphap* published between 1954 and 1964 were explored and the focus of this study is centred around the magazine's representations of women. The articles from each issue that featured the topic of women's progress with the combined interviews of women in Thailand and American Asian counterparts were retrieved and examined. The images analyzed were from the articles and those that featured as the covers of many issues. With this analytical framework, the combination of cosmopolitanism and Cold War modernism have been cohesively characterized in the magazine.

The examination of available issues of the *Seriphap* magazine, particularly those that were published during the Eisenhower's administration (1953-1961) and Kennedy's (1961-1963), demonstrates the significant involvement of the representations of women as being the agents of the cosmopolitan Free World. In this article, there are three types of female representative agencies that will be discussed:

a. First, women that were employed by the magazine as role models of the Free World propaganda, whom this research regards as agents of cosmopolitanism. These figures include a significant number of wives of pro-American politicians in Thailand and American Southeast Asian allies.

b. Second, the representation of women as a driving force in promoting Cold War modernism in the forms of American-sponsored training and development in the region. Many articles in *Seriphap* covered special projects and activities that were part of American Containment Policy, such as the workshops organised by the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and American Peace Corps.

c. Third, the representation of women as agents of employment rights. The efforts to use the concept of women's empowerment to promote American Free World and its universal rights was one of the popular methods that the magazine used. Various careers and employment opportunities were illustrated to include women for the first time.

Results and Discussion

The examination of the selected issues of the *Seriphap* magazine demonstrates the significant involvement of the representations of women as being the agents of the cosmopolitan Free World. The magazine heavily used the female figures to deliver these stories. In order to explore this aspect of the magazine, a visual and textual framework for qualitative research is applied. First, images and articles are closely studied and grouped under different codes. Then, the structural analysis of the content is carried out to search for themes and relationships between images and texts (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This process requires a close observation of how the magazine organized its text structure, the types of informative text structures, and its use of repetition. With this analytical framework, the research finds out that the combination of cosmopolitanism and Cold War modernism has been cohesively characterised in the magazine. In this part, various types of female representative agencies will be discussed.

1. Agents of the Cosmopolitan Free World

The changing cosmopolitan feminism and its influence on the representation of Thai women in *Seriphap* magazine demonstrates that changing cosmopolitan feminism and its influence on the representation of women in Thailand can be observed throughout the magazine.

Images of inspiring American and Asian women can be seen throughout the collected issues of *Seriphap*. Given that *Seriphap* was an American-sponsored magazine, the female figures that were chosen to represent as agents of cosmopolitanism were from countries and territories that were allies to the U.S. during the Cold War such as South Vietnam, South Korea, and Hong Kong. One would imagine that the suitable agents of cosmopolitanism would be

American women, but this was not the case in *Seriphap* magazine. In fact, Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Satrichannam Khong Lok, 1959) and Althea Gibson, the world's first ranked women's tennis player in 1957 (Rachini Haeng Khot Thennit, 1958), were two of few American women who were represented in this light. As Mrs. Roosevelt was praised to be the liberal role model for her work with the United Nations Commission of Human Rights, the article "Tennis Queen's Story" also highlighted Gibson for her hard work and motivation. Both were the great qualities of women that were promoted in the Free World propaganda. Nevertheless, the magazine might have believed that local agencies could be more inspiring than American ones. The magazine, instead, started to employ stories of women in the region. Dorothy Lee of Hong Kong was one of the early Asian women whose story was highlighted in the early issue of *Seriphap*. In the column 'Asia's Leading Women', the story of the highly educated (with the degree from the University of London) woman who dedicated her life to help children in poverty defines a new expectation of the Free World's role-model to the audience (Satrichannam Khong Echia, 1956). The intention of the magazine to publish the story of Dorothy Lee demonstrates that women, although from the non-western world, could embrace the universal moral order that discussed earlier. The article showcased that she understood the concept of liberty and individual freedom by helping out others who might be in need. Well-respected modern women were not only those who became successful but also those who worked selflessly to help others. This highlights the underlined motive of most American-sponsored publications during the Cold War that often portrayed the United States as a selfless hero, as opposed to the communist villain. The compassion and dedication shown through the femininity of the chosen role-model served as a contrast to the socialist feminism of the communist camp, which empowers women to emulate themselves to men and condemn the sexual division of labor introduced by capitalism (Chapter et al., 1972).

With the American position in Indochina, South Vietnamese figures were also used several times by the magazine to construct the image of cosmopolitan women. Madame Ngay (Satri Khong Asia, 1957), a woman who ran an orphanage, made her way to South Vietnam after the communist takeover to seek refuge for herself and 200 children. As she chose to abandon her hometown in the north to seek freedom in South Vietnam, she became the role model of cosmopolitanism. Madame Ngay's nurturing quality is also highly acclaimed by the article, which stated, 'The decision was made by Madame Ngay herself to deliver 'her children' to the Free World' (Satri Khong Asia, 1957). Even though the North Vietnamese government persuaded her to stay in the north by giving her a position in the communist party, Madame Ngay still refused the offer. Her story illustrated, by the magazine, her bravery and intolerance she had toward the communists. These qualities made her a suitable cosmopolitan local-role model who upheld the universal standard of morality promoted through the Free World propaganda. With her will to help the children, she chose the risky option. This aspect illustrates the compassion and determination that would not be seen in socialist women, who would be portrayed as working class and liberated from all kinds of oppression. In contrast to the socialist women, the role-models of cosmopolitanism who *Seriphap* magazine chose to represent were all influential public figures who were not necessarily from noble backgrounds but from pivotal roles in the society that fit the principles of liberty and individual freedom.

This research result demonstrates that changing cosmopolitan feminism and its influence on the representation of women in Thailand can be observed throughout the selected issues. A study on cosmopolitanism during the Cold War explored by Christina Klein notes that the work of Koreans and Americans in modernising the country contributed to the remaking of Korean society, especially in the status of women (Klein, 2020). The author used the term 'cosmopolitan feminism' to explain the social modernity that impacted the Korean women to emancipate themselves from traditional roles influenced by Confucianism (Klein, 2020). One aspect that was outstanding in Klein's work was the feminist framework that accompanied the cultural formation and modernisation. She argued that Cold War cosmopolitanism in one way or another intersected with Korean women's lives, which emancipated them from their traditional identities and familial

roles. While East Asian women found themselves in the struggle of cosmopolitan feminism against the Confucian patriarchal traditions, Thai women also suffered greatly from longheld Buddhist traditions of male dominance and polygamy. The social expectations placed Thai women to the role of mother and wife and education was reserved mainly for men. This framework serves as an inspiration of this paper to explore the representations of women as agencies of Cold War cosmopolitanism in the Thai context. In the early publications of the 1950s, stories of women in the region were featured in the magazine with the objective to promote the idea of individual freedom. The meaning of femininity that was previously tied to the concept of the homemaker was challenged by the new concept of modern women who fight for their own freedom and others.

2. Agents of Cold War Modernism

As the USIS propaganda aimed to win 'Thai hearts and minds', women were once again used as agents of American interpretation of freedom that served as a foundation of Cold War Modernism. With the goal to promote freedom as the only way for nations to defend themselves from communist encroachment, the magazine employed women to be the agents of this mission. Evidence can be seen from initiatives and special projects that were designed to bridge the region to the free Capitalist West by showcasing women getting involved in the American-sponsored activities. These agents were both American and Thai women who performed the roles of cultural ambassadors. The first women that will be explored are the American women who came to the region to work as teachers and medical professionals. Miss Florence Chu, a graduate from the University of California, was praised as a dedicated and loving American teacher in Cambodia in 1957 (Mit Chu Phu Ari, 1957). The article in *Seriphap* reports that Miss Chu had to commute twice a week to the remotely located government agricultural college to teach English to a group of forty enthusiastic Cambodian students. 'It brings a great pleasure to be able to teach such active students who progressed so much in a short period of time' Miss Chu spoke with joy (Mit Chu Phu Ari, 1957).

This story gave the audience a message that Miss Chu brought education and promises of progress to Cambodians. This mission distinguished itself from the traditional expansionist approach of the former European colonizers in the way that American teachers were presented to be welcomed by the local people. Apart from teaching, another profession that was popularly featured in the magazine was medical personnel. Anne Flanagan and Judy Klemm were two American medical technologists who were working at Khonkaen Hospital in the northeast of Thailand (Chokdi Thi Dai Ma Thai, 1962). They were also part of the first group of Peace Corps volunteers who arrived in Thailand in 1961 (Chokdi Thi Dai Ma Thai, 1962). The article of *Seriphap* told the audience about these two Americans who were willing to work hard to help improve the conditions of the remote and poorly equipped hospital. The interview with Miss Flanagan and Miss Klemm revealed that Peace Corps volunteers received limited stipend that was only enough to cover the basic expenses (Chokdi Thi Dai Ma Thai, 1962). Without special privileges, they were working and living like other Thai colleagues with the purpose to encourage the cultural understanding between Thais and Americans. The two mentioned articles shared the same message to the audience that progress will be brought to their homeland by the United States. In addition, an article about the work conditions of American labourers with the emphasis on the employment of women in factories also illustrates a modern image. According to the article "The Labour Force" published in 1961, 23 million female labourers in the United States were in more than 400 occupations (Phalang-ngan nai chamnuan kammakon, 1961). Stories of women in different professions as well as the equality between women and men in their rights of employment were then used in promoting the modern image.

American women were not the only agents of the Free World. Thai women also took the opportunities from the American-sponsored projects to perform these tasks themselves. The United States introduced several special projects

to Asian allies throughout the 1950s and the 1960s. Many Thai women had the chance to take part in regional and international activities that were sponsored by the United States for the first time. *Seriphap* magazine celebrated these women by publishing a number of articles that showcased their successes. One of the articles featured Miss Sahatthaya Hongsakun, a young woman who represented Thailand in the youth exchange program organised by the New York Herald Tribune (Sao thai khao ruam chumnum, 1961). This was an exchange program in which youth representatives from 34 countries were invited to attend a three-week educational training in order to learn American culture with local host families (Sao thai khao ruam chumnum, 1961). The article highlighted Sahatthaya's experiences in the United States with vivid images of her performing Thai dance, speaking in front of a crowd, and having lunch with American friends. With this message, the article transformed Sahatthaya into another agent of Cold War modernism to the readers by showing to the audience that the United States was the place of ultimate freedom, respect, and hospitality for Asian women (USAID History, 2010). Apart from the mentioned exchange program, ICA also organised the development workshop for Asian woman delegates in Manila, the Philippines. Miss Kamonsi Na Songkhla, a student at a teaching college, was acclaimed by an article in *Seriphap* as a delegate of Thailand in this international event (Naksueksa chak prathet tangtang, 1960). In addition to these mentioned agents, Thai students abroad were also featured with great achievements, for example, Miss Wanli Posanachinda (a Thai student in the United States) was praised to have won an academic excellence award at Simmons College, Massachusetts (Chaothai phu pai yuean saharat, 1958). All the aforementioned evidence demonstrates that the promotion of Cold War modernism was not entirely the task of American women, but also local Thai women. How these women opened up themselves to new opportunities and skills would benefit directly to the integrity of the nation, especially when Thailand was in close proximity to communist encroachment. The assistance of the United States was portrayed by the magazine as a tool of defence against communism.

This research result discovers that women's representation in *Seriphap* magazine served as agents of Cold War modernism based on the American concept of the Free World. The United States continued to support Thailand through both sentimental (culture) and material (economic, political, and military power) pathways (Klein, 2020). As according to Cold War Orientalism, the US applied the principle of international integration in the way they expanded their Free World propaganda in Asia. Contrary to the conventional expansionist approach, the ties between the US and non-communist countries were built based on the strategy of 'creating opportunities for people to feel that they are taking an active part in building a viable social and political order' (Klein, 2020). Hence, modernity was the main tool for this promotion within the sentimental pathway that focused on cultural promotion along with the economic, political, and military aid. Women became the subjects of this promotion, as can be seen from the aforementioned result.

3. Agents of Employment Rights

The evidence of the western feminist framework that was influential in American society can be observed in *Seriphap* magazines distributed in Thailand in that period. The efforts to use the concept of women's empowerment to promote the American Free World and its universal rights was one of the popular methods that the magazine used.

The first aspect to be explored here is the promotion of women in diverse occupations. While Thai women's expected roles were previously confined within the domestic sphere, *Seriphap* illustrated the diversity of new emerging careers that women were taking part in. The first Thai women who were acclaimed by their career success were the three air force base nurses in Japan. Miss Sinuan Thatthieng, Boonserm Wongmonkon and Miss Thongluan Wongwitsawa demonstrated their roles in helping American wounded soldiers at the overseas air force base during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 (Nang Phayaban Akat, 1956). The article showcased their opportunities to work in challenging situations, for example, helping patients while in the air (Nang Phayaban Akat, 1956). Furthermore, another Thai

researcher, Miss Preeya Chantharawekin reported on her experience working at Purdue University as part of the ICA exchange program (Khanathi Dichan Pamnak Yu Nai Saharat Amerika, 1959). The photograph in the article also showed her working alongside men and other American fellows. The two mentioned articles serve to inspire the Thai audience with the diverse career opportunities that women can take.

The career enhancement of women in *Seriphap* magazine became more of a focus of the later issues in the 1960s. As Thai Airways began operating in 1960, the magazine highlighted a new attractive career opportunity as flight attendants for Thai women in its cover of the 82nd issue (figure 3). Among the four beautiful Asian women, the story of one Thai lady, Miss Phitchaya Thipphayarat, was highlighted in the issue (Sawatdeeka, 1962). She was a graduate of Political Science from Chulalongkorn University, who served as a crew member of flight TG600 that departed from Bangkok to Tokyo via Hong Kong. The article illustrates the job to be exciting and required high skills as it describes the qualifications of the applicants to be between 20 and 28 years of age and to be fluent in English and two other languages. As according to the statistics provided by the article, only 20 out of 250 applicants were qualified for the job. After the first screening, flight attendant trainees would have to attend 240 hours of intensive training where they would encounter different challenging circumstances such as screaming babies, sick passengers, and untrained animals on board. Apart from these challenges, the job was advertised to be attractive due to the travel opportunities and one of the highest salary packages available for women at the time. In addition to the mentioned opportunities, another career that celebrated by *Seriphap* magazine was that of a news anchor. Miss Sachi Watthanathira was the news anchor of the government television Channel Five who appeared to proudly present herself to a nationwide audience (Phuprakatying Khong Thorathat Chong Ha, 1962).

Another excellent example of the localised women who stepped into the male dominated jobs is seen in the article about the first policewomen in Thailand. The 85th issue of *Seriphap* acclaimed the recently appointed Thai policewomen. The first batch of 25 policewomen completed their intensive six-month training course and started working for the first time in metropolitan Bangkok in 1962 (Thamrouat-ying, 1962). The article reports that these first policewomen had to go through a very competitive selection process. From the first round of screening, only 114 out of 267 applicants passed the written examination and only 25 remained after the interview and physical training (Thamrouat-ying, 1962). Not only did applicants face a tough selection process that they had to pass, but the training course was also intense. They had to learn about law enforcement, interrogation techniques, crime prevention and suppression, and self-defence (Thamrouat-ying, 1962). All of them had been skills previously reserved for men, and women had opportunities to acquire them for the first time. The representations of policewomen in this article were proudly illustrated with the unconventional activities including gun shooting and horse-riding. The content of this newly available occupation for women was progressive as well as inspiring for the readers of *Seriphap* in the 1960s, when this issue was published. In addition to the story of policewomen in Thailand, similar reports on women in the navy and police forces were featured in the magazine in the 94th and 95th issues, respectively. From the aforementioned evidence, the magazine's method in representing the female agents has significantly transformed under the influence of Western feminist movement previously discussed. While the earlier issues focused on the portrayal of American and local prominent women as role-models of the Free World, by 1960, the magazine presented feminist-based content with more emphasis on the promotion of employment rights.

This final result reveals that the promotion of employment rights was used as one of the common themes in *Seriphap* magazine in the late 1950s, which tended to focus on the counterattacks on criticisms on capitalism made by the communists. In the article, 'Class-less Capitalism', another piece of propaganda of equal opportunities that Capitalism offered to American people is illustrated. One piece of evidence is the image of high school girls who were working on a chemical experiment in the laboratory (Latthi Naithun Thi Mai Baeng Chan, 1958). The intention to use the women's

representation in this article reflects the cosmopolitan feminist agenda of the magazine to promote the emancipation of women from social barriers, whether they were the traditional patriarchal barriers or economic ones. Betty Friedan was one of the leading feminist theorists who argued against 'the true feminine fulfilment' where women's accomplishment was assumed from her role as a housewife and a mother. She called this 'the mystique of feminine fulfilment', which emerged by the late 1950s and transformed working women (from the wartime period) into 'suburban housewives' (Friedan, 1963). This work sparked the movement across the United States that was sometimes labelled as the second wave of feminism with its focus on middle class women's rights in the workplace (Henderson, 2007).

The aforementioned phenomenon brings the biggest challenge to *Seriphap*, which was to promote the idea of woman's emancipation without disrupting the local cultural values and maintain the myth of traditional freedom. As Communism upheld the value of a proletarian society and the promotion of an atheist state, American agencies ensured that the three pillars of the Thai society, nation (*chat*), Buddhism (*satsana*), and monarchy (*phramahakasat*), were strengthened as part of a psychological strategy they planned to use against Communist China in Southeast Asia. Nattapoll Chaiching states that the American aims in disseminating the threat of Communist encroachment would simply destroy the 'monarchy', 'tradition', and 'sovereignty' of Thai people (Chaiching, 2009). The USIS officers in Thailand took the direct responsibility to perform this task through the publications of their propaganda materials. One of the main objectives that was reflected in *Seriphap* magazine was to ensure that its content focused on the good preservation of cultural values, traditions, and Thai solidarity, as opposed to Communism that was painted as an oppressive and an atheist regime. As a result of this, image representations of local women observed in the magazines were targeted at upholding these values. Although *Seriphap* never proclaimed itself as women's magazine, notable female figures across Asia were regularly selected to be on the cover pages of the magazine. Their representations informed the audience of how USIS agenda has evolved along the development of the Cold War in the region. The observation of the covers published prior to the 1960 demonstrates the coherent objective to the American position.



Figure 1 Miss Lee Kim Hui From Saigon Is Worshipping a Local God With the Special Type of Large Spiral Shaped Incense, Which Can Be Found Only in Vietnam
(Source: Thonchabap Private Archive)



Figure 2 Miss Phuangphet Thanasirankhun, a Teacher From Udon Thani, Is Making an Offering and Paying Her Respects to a Spirit House, Which Is a Traditional Shelter for Local Spiritual Guardians That Can Be Seen Throughout Thailand

(Source: Thonchabap Private Archive)

The cover of the 28th issue of 1958 is Miss Lee Kim Hui, a Vietnamese lady whose photograph was taken while she was praying at a local Buddhist temple in Saigon, South Vietnam (Na Pok, 1958). The fact that she was beautifully dressed in her traditional costume [*áo dài*] demonstrates the emphasis on the cultural value that the magazine used as its approach to local readers. Her gesture, the background, and the description also illustrate the aim to preserve the religious traditions. Both Thailand and Vietnam share common Buddhist traditions and Thai readers can easily relate to the image. Another cover in the following issue 29th of the same year portrays a similar image of Miss Phuangphet Thanasirankhun, a Thai woman who appeared to be worshipping a spirit house that is seen in her background (Na Pok, 1958). Miss Phuangphet wore an adapted traditional dress made of Thai silk. She had her palms together in the gesture of praying, this time, to the guardian spirits that Thais commonly believe in. Both covers used two women from two countries but aimed at sending the same message to the audience. *Seriphap* wanted the readers to know that the Free World embraced and commended these traditional and cultural values, which opposed the perception of the atheist communist regime.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper demonstrates a significant involvement of women's representations in *Seriphap* magazine in the crucial period of the Cold War in Asia under the influence of the American psychological warfare strategy. The use of women's representations was strategically employed by the magazine to serve its purposes, mainly, the promotion of cosmopolitanism, American modernity, and even local traditions and cultural values. These were aimed at building up the modern Free World in non-communist Asian countries against the backdrop of communist encroachment. Overall, the magazine was a symbol of US-Asian integration that was part of Cold War Orientalism. While it is difficult to measure the impact on the readership of this magazine, previous studies show that it was widely distributed and printed (Namwong, 2020). These copies were sent to provincial centres in approximately 13 provinces of Thailand together with other propaganda materials produced by USIS (Namwong, 2020). Nevertheless, the main challenge of *Seriphap* was not from

the Thai government but the rapid growth in communist publications in the 1970s that aimed at promoting revolutionary movements in the remote provinces. As a result, the cultural battle of the Cold War continued and the employment of women agencies would appear again, though this time in the role of proletarian women that dominated the communist publications in the period that immediately followed.

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