



Freedom of the media and the government intervention : Case study Radio and television broadcasting (CF34)

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Abstract

This study aimed to study the history, forms of exercising the power relevant to control and intervention in radio and television media both domestically and internationally. The qualitative study was conducted by investigating and collecting data from relevant documents and research articles, and analyzing all contents in order to summarize and present descriptively.

The results showed that the form of exercising the power was "Privilege of Authority" (since the beginning of the People's Revolutionary Party). The rights and freedom of opinion on radio and television attempted to use newspaper media to promote the new regime, and the other side controlled the news that criticized the government at the same time with the use of radio media as a mouthpiece through the operation of the advertising division. The ineligible conditions and freedom of information and information on radio and television have become "normal conditions" in the consciousness of the ruling classes, elites, and broadcast journalists until the Department of Public Relations and the Radio Station of Thailand were violently opposed for the first time in the movement demanding the constitution of students and citizens In October 1973, an event that clearly reflected "Abnormal Conditions" of society as a result of the accumulation of conditions without rights and freedom.

Keywords: Freedom of Media, Control, Government intervention

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Introduction

When the radio, the first broadcast media radio, was produced and occurred in the world followed by the television. Many countries brought the radio and television for the development of society. With a magical potential of radio and television media, they became a wonderful tool that could promote advances in education, inform political information to the public including disseminating national culture. Every country, therefore, showed standpoint to appear with the law, intention, and policy towards broadcasting media. It also attempted to ensure that this potential media could be used for the best benefit of the nation and the people.

At present, we can say that the world is a learning and communication society, in which the progress or survival of the society depends on the people in the society to receive accurate and timely information, and appropriately adapt to the world in this globalization. The media is, therefore, very important for the development of people, society and democratic governance. Various forms of media can create social hits whether the left-handed dictatorship, right-aligned or democratic flows. By nature, people can wildly access to the media extensively.

However, the media process that requires a lot of capital and media in the market mechanism may be used as an instrument of influential authority with money that choose to present information and ideas in only one sided or conceal, distort the facts until expanding the impact that people did not receive facts or various opinions causing imbalance, monopoly that would harm the democratic development.

Since Thailand has changed the rule from absolute monarchy to a democratic regime. What people expect is self-governing and entitled freedom of action, activities as provided in the Constitution.

Media expects to have freedom in their own roles. In reality, every government has used government power to control and intervene in the media by blocking the work process or seeking information from the media in various ways.

Although these days, there has been the announcement of the Government Information Act to disclose official information to the public. In practice States and state g often violate this principle of law.

In the past, people and the media often lessen the rights and freedom to receive information and opinions from legal provisions, authoritarianism, and the structure of the ownership system in radio and television media by which the government solely monopolizes the ownership of the media, especially the radio and television media. The government has controlled radio and television waves that are considered public resources according to the concept of a democratic regime in order to be allocated in the system of paternalistic authoritarianism and capitalist privilege (Siriyuwasak, 2002). It has caused a monopoly by a large private business. This existing system was created to allow the state to use radio and television media for their own political and economic benefits. Therefore, the state believes that rights and freedom of expressing opinions, recognizing information or political participation are the right and freedom of the state, not the mass media media a mediator acting as a substitute for people) people in any way.

Concrete effects from systems that have blocked the right and freedom are that society and people do not receive a variety of accurate information that is true for the benefits of life in both economic and social aspects including in political participation. In terms of art, culture, and entertainment, there is a lack of life reflection, culture,



values, beliefs and different tastes of various groups in society.

A state with a democratic regime like Thailand seems that the media should have freedom of presenting news and expressing opinions freely. In contrast, it was controlled and intervened by the state authorities in various forms since the change of the state regime in 1932. Consequently, the intervention in that media of the state authority always distorts information broadcasted to the public.

Objectives

1 . Study the history of the government intervening radio and television media both domestically and internationally.

2 . Study the form of government intervention in radio and television broadcasting.

Scope of the study

The study on freedom of the media and the government intervention: a case study of radio and television broadcasting covers the role of news broadcasting and expression opinions of radio and television broadcasting intervened by the government including providing guidelines for media reform to be public.

Related concepts and theories

Concepts of information exposure behavior

Humans have different information exposure behavior resulting from the differences of each human being (Rattapornchai, 1999, pp. 16-21).

Wilbur Scharmm proposes that the composition of the receiver depends on the following factors:

1. Experiences of encoders/receivers who seek information differently
- 2 . Evaluating the benefits of messages, encoders/receivers

seeking information to meet their needs.

3 . Different backgrounds cause different interests

4 . Education and the environment cause differences in the behavior of choosing information and messages.

5. The ability to receive news related to the physicality and mentality cause different media exposure behavior

6 . Personality makes an effect on changing attitudes, persuasion, and behavior of receivers.

7 . Emotional mood makes the receivers understand the meaning of the messages or may be an obstacle to understanding the meaning of messages.

8 . Attitudes will determine the attitude of receiving and responding to stimulus or message received.

Concepts related to media consumption

Mass media consumption has four different reasons as follows (Sothanasatein, 1995);

1: Cognition: the receivers require information to meet the basic needs of human beings in the curiosity aspect. The basic human need is what humans accept that self is part of the social mechanism. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the cognition via media ie., news, knowledge, and entertainment.

2. Diversion: to meet human needs in different ways, such as emotional stimulation, the exposure to media to seek excitement and enjoyment in order to reduce boredom in life

3. Social utility: the need for people who want to create familiarity or be a part of society.

4. Withdraw: the exposure to media to avoid routine work or associations such as rushing to finish work in order to watch television or read magazines in the train or plane and escape from annoyance from those around you, etc.



Concepts of mass media

1. Mass media system concept based on liberal theory

Mass media system based on liberal theory viewed that the prosperity of political democracy, religious independence, trade expansion and free travel, acceptance of laissez-fair economics, and the philosophy of the Enlightenment, destroyed the authoritarianism and demanded a new system, a liberal system. This new theory originated in the late 17th century, took it seriously in the 18th century, and fully bloomed in the 19th century. This theory is contrary to authoritarianism theory. It viewed that humans do not have to rely on others or be reinforced. But humans are reasonably able to see the difference between truth and falsehood.

2. The concept of the mass media system based on the theory of mass communication in which people are democratic participants:

Kluekaew (2002) explained that the mass media system was the media theory that people democratically involved. Mass media, based on this theory, mostly existed in the developed countries. This theory has elements in conjunction with the mass media theory for development, especially focusing on the "fundamental" of society, emphasizing the value of horizontal communication instead of focusing on vertical communication or from top-down. The motivation of this theory is a reaction to the media owned by private sectors which operate for trade and monopoly as well as reactions to public broadcasting institutions established based on social responsibility theory, but are managed in a way of power consolidation and too formal (examples of public broadcasting stations are PBS Public Broadcasting Service, British Broadcasting Corporation of England, etc). Some of the public perform their duties in the form of father-teacher education; children are excessively attached to social norms and

excessively respond to political and economic pressures etc.

3. Mass media system according to mass media theory for development

Mass media system based on mass media theory for development is the theory that mentions to the third world communication. This theory is based on UNESCO, International Commission for Study of Communication Problems.

Methodology

The study was documentary research. Data were collected from academic articles, thesis, related literature review, newspapers and internet source including all related laws, synthesized and analyzed by dividing into the points discussed including a content summary. The data were presented in descriptive induction covering all objectives.

Results and Discussions

An analysis of government intervention in media

Media is the major mechanism of political democracy. News is like a fiber that connects politics and people together. The media presenting any news will inevitably affect the perception and understanding of people in society, especially in politics; the credibility and reliability of the government, understanding of national problems, government role and people, people and other groups.

Therefore, the radio and television media that many governments in many countries have established a broadcasting system based on the authoritarian theory. That is to say, it is not allowed private ownership, but the government claims the right to take control over it, citing the reasons for national security, which in fact, is actually the security of the government itself. Worst yet, the governments of all third world countries, including Thailand, do not have much patience with the media's criticism.

In this part, the researcher analyzed problems of freedom of broadcasting media



based on the concepts, law, and literature reviews as follows:

1. History of governmental intervention in media

The study found that in the year 1927, General Krom Phra Kamphaeng Phet Akarayothin, the minister of Commerce and Transport who was interested in radio communication, experimented broadcasting with the sound of the music with a radio transmitter, at Wang Dok Mai palace. The Radio Technician Division, Telegraph Department also set up a small telephone radio transmitter in order to test the sound of music and speech by sending from the Post and Telegraph Department Building, Khlong Ong Ang in front of Wat Ratchaburana using the name of the experimental radio station as 4 PJ (HS 4 PJ). Later, the first permanent radio station in Thailand called "Bangkok Radio Station at Phayathai was established on Wednesday 25 February 2473, which was the Coronation Day of King Rama VII. His majesty opened the station that the radio broadcast experiment that has begun and conducted experiments throughout with the aim of promoting education, commerce, and entertainment for people (Phaothongsuk, 1983).

State convention policy used radio to campaign for people to wear hats, stop eating betel nut and wear a universal dress. The Fine Arts Department created a pattern for standard dance to promote new arts, instead of the traditional styles of old royalty and noblemen. The traditional dance (Ramwong) became popular. There was an introduction of using arousing music to be Ramwong dance to create enjoyment, patriotic feelings, and harmony.

During World War II (1941-1945), Japanese troops landed in the south to occupy Thailand, Thai army surrendered and accepted joining the Axis with Japan. Mr. Pridi Banomyong and the parties who disagree with the government founded the Seri Thai group to fight secretly with the Allies, which had the United States and England as the mainstay. Radio

broadcasting at that time played a very important role in communication and political propaganda of both parties. The Department of Advertising's news was monitoring the movement. For this reason, broadcasting was considered important (Viriyasiri, 1990).

On the other side, the Ministry of Education established the Educational Broadcasting Station of Thailand, daily broadcasting on January 1, 1954, 16 hours per week, and started the school radio program for student listeners in 1958 in order to be a supplementary lesson for education solving the problems of inequality in schools in rural areas (Sastrarujji, 1990)

During the events of 17 - 20 May 1992, there was a community movement and protesting against being the Prime Minister of Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon. The government closed news on radio and television about the rally and led the military to suppress the demonstrators at Ratchadamnoen Road. During the event, Jor Sor 100 radio stations directed that the rally was illegal affecting the monarchy, while news agencies like INN and Pacific were trying to report incidents according to the situation (Khluekaew, 1993)

The government of Field Marshal Por. Pibulsongkram announced in the opening ceremony of Thai TV Channel 4, Bang Khun Phrom, which was the first television station in Thailand that the objective was to achieve progress for education, medical and public health, and importantly, for the national honor to be named as the first country having a television station in Asia. In fact, the real intention was to use as a tool to counter the opponents and strengthen political influence (Sittthirak, 1992).

The media content control and suspension of news and information are powerful tools of the government and political parties to deprive the rights and freedoms of political and public opponents. Even though the conditions of rights and freedoms were resolved in a better condition



after the Black May 1992; however, the government from the election, such as the government of Banharn Silpa-archa (July 1995 - November 1996), still relied on direct and indirect censorship measures to control the rights and freedom of the media, especially radio and television broadcasting.

The Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the prime minister exercising supremacist power to rule the country, fully controlled the use of television media, both Thai TV Channel 4, Bang Khun Phrom and Army Channel 5. He expanded the network of television stations of Thailand to many provinces, aiming to cover all over the country during 1960-1972, and established broadcasting media Channel 10, Songkla (1960); Channel 5, Khonkaen (1962); Channel 8, Lampang (1963), Channel 9, Surat Thani (1968), and Channel 9, Phuket (1972) (Saengiam-Wattana, Thong Phaothongsuk, 1983).

The media control in many countries around the world is generally regulated by law. The regulations that govern the mass media include civil law, criminal law, libel law, the law on the violation of the rights and freedoms of individuals, etc. there are similarities and differences in regulations of each country depending on the system of politics, economic and social norms. For example, countries that are governed by communism or dictatorship strictly control the freedom of the mass media while countries with democratic governance are more conducive to the freedom of the mass media than the former (Hiranrak, 1997, p. 320).

England is a country without a written constitution, which does not have regulations to protect the mass media freedom as well as the United States Parliament. Court of England is a constitutional constitution that provides protection for the rights of the media in reporting beneficial information for the public. British law consists of statutes and norms from many court decisions, but there is no law that guarantees freedom of

expression. Opinions without caveat and freedom of expression, therefore, mean only commenting on the legal framework (Sophautok, 2005, pp. 167 - 170)

Swedish Radio is the only company that is licensed by the government to operate radio and television broadcasting programs all over the country. The government communication organization operates the transmitter, broadcasting room, technician support, including being a fee collector of receiver machine. The government allocates fees to Swedish radio to meet the necessity of broadcasting programs. Seriges Radio is a Swedish radio and television corporation established by private capital. Initially, the shareholders were journalist companies and radio manufacturers; later it expanded to include new shareholders as cooperative organizations, trade unions, religious organizations (Hiranrak, 1999, pp. 330 - 337)

2 . Forms of government intervention in radio and television broadcasting

Broadcasting intervention in the government of Pol.Lt.Col. Taksin Shinnawatra

2.1 Radio broadcasting

In a democratic regime, all citizens in the country have equal rights and freedom to receive information happening in society. The recognition of the news is thorough, the media is like a mirror that reflects the truth in society. Therefore, appropriate media must be fair and impartial, giving the opportunity to different news or ideas to be presented. The media will become a platform that allows people for various filed to express their perspectives freely in order that people are able to make decisions wisely. The decision or opinion of the people themselves causes a referendum or opinions of the majority of people on important issues that the government should realize.

In the view of the researcher, media can be an important mechanism to drive society into a complete democracy by presenting information responsibly, in



particular, investigative news. In addition, presenting news thoroughly, the new presentation must not be intervened. An important principle is "The media must go through the process of self-righting process" in order that correctness can be proven.

Based on the belief, freedom of communication, the expression of ideas and opinions via the media can be done because people know how to react to the news. When the facts proved, people will skip watching that broadcasting if the news or information is distorted. Therefore, the boundaries of the idea of conflict between the authoritarian government and liberal democracy have occurred these days.

In addition to the media that has to rely on the constitution, the public sector must claim constitutional rights and freedom because it is clear that the government that comes from democratic elections does not refer to truly a democratic government. That is because there is still a violation of the constitution by politicians, especially in terms of diminishing freedom of communication

The concrete impact on the rights and freedoms of people is that people do not receive much true information in order to make use of it for economic operation and social life, and in political participation as a citizen. Contrarily, they receive only information in political propaganda and advertising products aimed at promoting consumerism. In terms of art, culture, and entertainment, there is a lack of reflection on the life, culture, values, beliefs, and tastes of people in society, which has a deep impact in abstractive ways. That is, human rights and dignity have been unequally accepted. In addition, the lack of rights and freedom of radio and television ownership which are considered a public resource, that means Thai people cannot have the right to own their life and properties to express ideas and beliefs that will be a force leading to participation in the creation of democracy and self-reliance to have "freedom" in the intellectuality and spirituality.

Recommendations

The solution to the issue of government intervention is a complicated process. In addition to the establishment of public media to make it more independent which is likely to occur in Thailand. The researcher proposes some guidelines to solve or reduce the interference of freedom of radio and television broadcasting as follows:

1. The government must change from control or media intervention to be just to supervise media so that the media can have freedom in presenting facts, and consider the benefits that the people and the country will receive. Self-image or benefit and dissenters, and omission both direct and indirect actions in threatening and pressuring media through various ways affect the freedom of the media.

2. An independent organization should be established to directly prevent the media from government intervention, which will result in freedom of presenting news, opinions, and information.

3. Media coupled with political parties should be reformed. The media reform is the intention of the current government to support media reform whether by means of pushing for free media or public media, as the mass media expect.

4. Media and media executives should raise co-operation to prevent freedom of media and government intervention based on reasonable rights.

However, both the government and the media should turn towards each other and find out mutual needs by taking into account the public benefits in the country.

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