



**Thai Media Policy Center
Chulalongkorn University**

Academic/activist nexus and research:
frequency reform experience in Thailand

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Two waves of frequency reform in Thailand

- ▶ **First wave – 1991 coup and Black May 1992**
 - ▶ Academic-activist nexus sparking constitutional debate leading to frequency reform mandate in 1997 Constitution
 - ▶ Frequency Allocation, NBC/NTC Act 2000
 - ▶ Telecommunications Act 2001
 - ▶ The establishment of NTC in 2004 and two failed selections of NBC
 - ▶ TDRI-led media reform research project and series of telecom policy research
- ▶ **Second wave – 2006 coup**
 - ▶ The NLA and passage of three frequency-related laws, with varying degrees of research support, and the consistent presence of TDRI
 - ▶ 2007 Constitutional provision to converge telecom/broadcasting regulatory functions under one entity
 - ▶ Frequency allocation and NTBC draft law 20..



Actors in ongoing frequency reform inside and outside of political establishment

▶ Inside

- ▶ Parliament – MPs from government and opposition
- ▶ Senate – elected and appointed senators
- ▶ Regulator – NTC

▶ Outside

- ▶ Technocrats
 - ▶ Think-tanks
 - ▶ Universities
 - ▶ Independent organizations
- ▶ Civil society
 - ▶ Media, NGOs, Interest groups
- ▶ Industry (mainly telecom)
- ▶ Military

Change in the new draft law

- ▶ A single convergent regulator with relevant backgrounds and new age limit
 - ▶ Process of getting the regulators
 - ▶ Promotion of free and fair competition
 - ▶ Auction for all commercial licenses
 - ▶ Prohibition of license sub-contracting
 - ▶ Corporatized state telcos required to return certain % of concession revenue
- ▶ R & D and USF to be overseen by another body, not separate from the regulatory agency
- ▶ Mechanism to increase transparency and accountability of regulator while ensuring compliance with government's policy



Continuity in the new draft law

- ▶ Liberalization of the airwaves and clearer timeframe for frequency recalls
- ▶ Concessions (both telecom and broadcast) and current frequency holders unaffected until the end of concession period
- ▶ Apparatus licensing as opposed to technology-neutral spectrum usage rights
 - ▶ fear of risk of monopolization by one dominant player or compromise with existing frequency heavyweights
 - ▶ no spectrum caps
- ▶ 20% of radio frequencies allocation to civic media

Thank you for your attention : -)

