

The Development of Mass Media from the Central Region to the Northeast Region of Thailand

Benjapa Kaithong^{1*} and Sekson Yongvanit²

Received: July, 2017; Accepted: September, 2017

Abstract

The Objective of this article is to study the development of mass media from the Central Region to the northeast region of Thailand. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 18 key informants and the research instruments were semi-structured interviews. All raw material data were analyzed by descriptive analysis. The results showed that the mass media developments from the Central Region to the northeast region were slightly different. That is, the newspaper was the first emerge, in the central region followed by radio, television, internet and satellite television whereas, The radio was the first medium, in the northeast region followed by newspaper, television, internet and lastly satellite television. The further analysis found that the driving forces to more mass media in the Central Region were the power of western influence, the spread of democratic ideology, political conflict, and the development of advanced communication technology; while the driving forces in the Northeast Region were the government policy and the development of advanced communication technology. Moreover, the time scales for mass media development from the Central Region to the Northeast Region were likely to be continually reduced; namely, the journey time of

¹ Department of General Education, Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University

² Department of Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University

* Corresponding Author E - mail Address: benjapa.k@bu.ac.th

newspaper from the Central Region to the Northeast Region was around 116 years, followed by radio in around 10 years, television 7 years, internet 6 years, and satellite television 5 years, respectively. Therefore, this research predicts that, in the digital age, new forms of digital media - such as smart phones, tablets, Google glasses, smart watches etc. - will become more rapidly proliferated into the northeast region until there will be no difference between their arrival times.

Keywords: Development of Mass Media; Central Region; Northeast Region

Introduction

Communication is the sharing of information, ideas, and thoughts. It is a vital part of life for all of us. The various methods that allow us to communicate are called media. A postcard to a friend, a telephone call and a computer disk holding homework are all types of media. When media are used to communicate to thousands of people at the same time, they are known as mass media. According to Balley, M. (Balley, M., 2009), mass media began to start life in the 15th century due to a greatest innovation in communication known as the movable-type printing press. With this new invention, the world's first newspaper emerged in 1609 in the North Germany. The innovation in the field of communication was developed continuously until it generated to the birth of radio in the 19th century. Many scientists and engineers contributed to the development of wireless communication. In 1910, it was regarded as the birth of radio broadcasting when using wireless telephony' De Forest sent a signal from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York to listeners up to 50 miles away (Balley, M., 2009; Donald, G. G. and Susan, L. B., 2015).

In the early the 20th century, radio had become the most popular in Europe and American. However, it was gradually diminished when a new medium emerged. That new medium was known as television. Many communication researchers claimed that TV made a greater impact on life than any other medium. It started out in 1925, in the attic workshop of a Scottish inventor called John Logie Baird. In the 1950's, television replaced radio as the dominant broadcast medium and took over home entertainment. In the same decade, it was revealed that Arthur C. Clark, a science-fiction writer, imagined that a communication system to be implemented in the space. Many scientists worked on his ideas to develop advanced communication technology and, soon, the satellite communication was born. It was reported that SPUTNIK of the USSR was launched to become the world's first satellite in 1957 and was followed by the first USA's satellite, Explorer I, in 1958.

After the world had witnessed the dawn of the satellite communications, the new media began to emerge - that is Internet: a worldwide network of millions of computers. The Internet started life in 1969 as a top-secret military project, developed in the United States. The project's aim was to create a secure computer network that could survive damage to part of its systems. In the 1980's, the Internet was established as an effective way for academics to share knowledge, and by the early 1990's, the general public was using it for education, entertainment, and business. A few years later, the number of people using the Internet, throughout the world, was growing by about one million each month (Schrank, J., 1994; Balley, M., 2009; Smith, J. A., 2015).

Based on the aforementioned details, the development of the world's mass media is indicated. However, regarding this part of the hemisphere, it was revealed that the development of Thai mass media was rather different when compared with the development of world's mass media. That is, worldwide, the newspaper was the world first medium emerging in 1609, followed by radio in 1910, television in 1926, satellite television in 1957 and internet in 1969 while, in Thailand, the newspaper first emerged in 1844, followed by radio in 1930, in television 1950, internet in 1987 and satellite television in 1993. Therefore, the researcher needs to consider whether the development of mass media from central region into other regions of Thailand, especially the northeast region was likely to be different or not.

According to the topography of Thailand, the Northeast Region was located on Khorat Plateau; set away from the rest of Thailand by the Phetchabun ranges; by the smaller ranges of Dong Phayayen and Sankamphaeng and from Cambodia by the Phanom Dong Rak. It was regarded as the biggest and most populous region of the country (National Statistic Office Thailand, 2016). It has generally been considered as a problem area of Thailand with low per capita income, environmental degradation and controversial politics. It also included a multiplicity of tribes and groups of different origins, languages and habits. Therefore, the researcher presumed whether the development of mass media from the Central Region to the Northeast Region were different or not. In order to answer this presumption, the study aimed to achieve the following objective:

Objective of the study

To investigate the development of mass media from the Central Region to the Northeast Region.

Methodology

The qualitative method was used to test the above objective of the study. Three issues - key informants, instrument and procedure, and data analysis - are broadly explained here.

Key informants

According to Table 1, key informants comprises of 18 persons - that is three senior broadcast specialists of the Government Public Relations, one Director of Radio Thailand Network for Education, two voice actors from within the Northeast Region, two newspaper distributors of Thai Rath, Daily News and Naew Nah, three reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region, two reporters of Daily News in the Northeast Region and three satellite dish retailers in Nakhon Ratchasrima, Khonkaen and Udon Thani and two executives of the computer center of Khon Kaen University. Those people were selected because they have been involved with mass media for more than forty-five years. The information gained by these interviews was quite valid and reliable resulting in maximizing the chances of uncovering insights into the overall picture of the context of media in the Northeast Region of Thailand.

Table 1 The Data of Interviewees

Interviewees	Gender	Age	Social Status	Date of Interview
A.	Male	80	Senior Media Specialist of Government Public Relations	10 January 2012
B.	Male	76	Senior Media Specialist of Government Public Relations	16 - 30 October 2012
C.	Male	65	Senior Media Specialist of Government Public Relations	20 November 2012
D.	Male	58	The Director of Radio Thailand Network for Education, Khon Kaen	25 December 2012
E.	Male	56	Voice Actor in Northeast Region	3 February 2013
F.	Male	66	Voice Actor in Northeast Region	28 April 2013
I.	Male	80	Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region	5 February 2013
J.	Male	66	Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region	20 February 2013
K.	Male	68	Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region	25 February 2013

Table 1 The Data of Interviewees (Cont.)

Interviewees	Gender	Age	Social Status	Date of Interview
M.	Male	77	Reporters Daily News, Dao Siam and Naew Nah in the Northeast Region,	16 march 2013
N.	Male	58	Reporters Daily News, Dao Siam and Naew Nah in the Northeast Region,	18 March 2013
P.	Male	42	Satellite dish retailers in Nakhon Ratchasrima	16 July 2013
R.	Male	51	Satellite dish retailers in Khonkaen	11 November 2013
T.	Male	45	Satellite dish retailers in Udon Thani	1 December 2013
W.	Male	62	Executives of the computer center of Khon Kaen University	10 July 2013
X.	Male	55	Executives of the computer center of Khon Kaen University	18 July 2013
Z.	Female	70	Newspaper distributors of Thai Rath, Daily News and Naew Nah	6 August 2013
N.	Male	63	Newspaper distributors of Thai Rath, Daily News and Naew Nah	1 October 2013

Instrument and Procedure

Semi-structured interview was designed to seek the data concerning the development of mass media in Central Region and Northeast Region. The interviews took place during 2012 - 2013. Participants were interviewed in person by the primary researcher with a variety of questions. The questions can be adjusted according to how the interviewee responds and can offer probing and follow-up questions in order to stimulate the interviewee's responses. The interview is approximately fifty minutes in length. The location of the interview was determined by each participant. All interviews were audio-taped. The material will be used to generate the interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

All raw materials were analyzed through a 3-step process of (1) decontextualization (identifying and coding segments or units of meaning in the data), (2) subsequent recontextualization (categorizing and thematically assembling a segment with other segments that deal with the same topic), and (3) synthesis.

Results

Based on the content analysis, it was indicated that the developments of mass media from the Central Region and to the Northeast Region were different clearly. In order to understand the differences, the description of media development will begin from the Central Region and followed by the Northeast Region, respectively.

The Development of Mass Media in Central Region

(1) Before the Siamese Revolution, the period between 1283 - 1931, referring back into the history of Thailand, the Thai alphabet, invented by King Ramkhamhaeng in 1283, was regarded as the first communication media of Thailand that was used and developed continuously throughout the Sukhothai period, the Ayutthaya period, and the Rattanakosin period. During the third reign of the Rattanakosin period, it was revealed that Western influence increasingly spread into Siam along with the setup of a printing press, using Thai script, in 1832. It was used to publish 9,000 copies of a royal decree banning opium consumption, which was the first official document printed and produced by the new printing technology (Ekachai, D., 2000). On 4 July 1844, during the reign of King Mongkut, Dr. Dan Bradley, an American Medical Missionary, published Thailand's first newspaper known as the Bangkok Recorder. The bulk of its content related to official news, trade news, miscellaneous stories, documentaries, and news from the United States. After the printing press, newspaper became widespread, especially in the Central Region. King Prachadhipok realized that freedom of expression and the introduction of democracy, for Thai people, were important. As a consequence, public radio broadcasts were inaugurated on 25th February 1930, the Coronation Day of the seventh King. Its initial mission was to provide news relating to commerce, entertainment, and education for tradesmen and commoners. Nevertheless, the Khana Ratsadon coup d'état of June 24, 1932 ended the absolute monarchy and halted press freedom (Padmatin, S., 1984; Public Relations Department, 2016).

(2) After the Siamese Revolution (1932 - 1939), the country's administrative system changed from absolute to constitutional monarchy with the King as the head of state. It was reported that our country encountered a lot of the tumultuous events - that is the political movements of the upper class and conservationists, the serious conflict among military and civilian members of the People Party, the house dissolution of Phraya Manopakorn Nitithada, the coup of Phraya Pholphayuhasana, the Bovorndej royalists rebellion, the abdication of King Prajadhipok and the spread of Japan's influence in Southeast Asia. Besides, there were the rumors, in the remote areas, that Constitution was a son of Phraya Phahon Pholphayuhasana. All of these events greatly affected the security and survival of the People Party. Consequently, it was no wonder that the Publicity Division was set up on 3 May 1933, along with these significant missions - that was to distribute the democracy ideology, to create confidence in the government and awareness

among the people of the new society that had taken the place of the absolute monarchy. It also included publicizing official and general news, propagating a good image of the country, rectifying misunderstandings from both in and outside of country, providing general knowledge, and promoting Thai culture (Ekachai, D., 2000; Public Relations Department, 2016).

(3) In the War Period (1940 - 1960), the systematic use of broadcast media to publicize politics began in the period of the Second World War led by Field Marshal P. Pibulsonggram. It found that radio broadcast had played the most significant role to distribute the news into general public in the period of wartime (Public Relations Department, 2016). After the end of the Second World War, television broadcasting, one of the most powerful media, was introduced and affirmed on the national agenda in 1950 by the regime of Field Marshal P. Pibulsonggram. However, his political power was ended when Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat revolted on September 17, 1957.

(4) In the national development period (1961 - 1972), a gloomy age for Thai Mass Media began when Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat declared martial law, suspended the constitution and imposed press controls. Regrettably, fourteen newspapers were closed down due to extreme criticism of the Revolutionary Party. The authorities arrested hundreds of opposition politicians and journalists who were thought likely to be involved with communists. Article 17 of the 1959 Constitution authorized the prime minister to repress and suppress mass media under the discourse that it jeopardized national security. Sittirak, S. (Sittirak, S., 1990) further explained that Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat realized that television broadcasts played the significant role in publicizing the government's policies and current affairs to the public. Also, Channel 4 'Bang Kun Phrom', established on 24 June 1955 was attracting more and more interest. Because of this, the Royal Thai Army launched Thailand's second television station, Channel 5, on Thai Army Day, 5th January 1959 and expanded Radio and Television networks to all regions in line with the accelerated development programs for the country (Boonyaketmala, B., 1982; Ekachai, D., 2000).

(5) In the democracy movement period (1973 - 1992), although mass media once more obtained the Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Expression after the end of the Student Revolution of 14 October 1973, it ended with the Massacre of 6 October 1976. In that period of time, mass media, especially television broadcast, was regarded as the crucial variable of national development. In mid - 1987, the Internet in Thailand began, when the Prince of Songkla University and the Asian Institute of Technology started the Thai computer Science Network (TCSNet) via an electronic mail connection with the University of Melbourn. Although the internet had arrived in Thailand, television still remained popular in Thai society. In the 1980s, it was regarded as the turning point of the television industry when the Thai government opened the gateway to media investment. In 1991, the *Shinawatra* Computer and Communications Company received a concession to

launch the THAICOM Satellite Project. The first two satellites, THAICOM 1 and THAICOM 2, were launched into geo-stationary orbit in December 1993 and October 1994, respectively (Executive Summary A CASBAA Market Report, 2006).

(6) In the media reform period (1993 - 2014), although Cable and Satellite television were likely to boom, communication technology has developed rapidly until reaching a point of integration with computing, telecommunication and broadcast media resulting in a single digital environment. After the Bloody Crisis of May 17 - 18, 1992, the struggle for Freedom of the Press and the Right of people to know emerged among the Thai middle classes. The voice for media reform from both public and media sectors became louder and louder until it eventually generated the establishment of Independent Television (iTV) in 1996 and the guarantee of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press in the Constitution of 1997. In a period with a more liberal climate, it was a good opportunity for broadcasting journalists and academics to push for the autonomy of the state media (Sriyuwasak, U., 2006). Nevertheless, the deterioration of Thai mass media has increased rapidly and drastically from the first election of the Thaksin government, to today.

Even though the Thaksin government was overthrown, by the army, on 19 September 2006 due to rampant corruption, abuse of power, media interference, and non-government organization interference, Thai mass media has been interfered continuously and drastically by a further four governments in the context of the division of political viewpoint, that is those who supported and those who opposed the Former Prime Minister Thaksin and his government. Under the deterioration of major Thai mass media, the emergence of new forms of media technology - such as teleconference, the office personal communication, laptop computers, internet, MP3 technology, Apple's iPod, DVD media player, smart watch, tablet, Google glass - became the fifth basic needs of Thai people (Tangkitvanich, S., 2004).

The Development of Mass Media in the Northeast Region

(1) The development of modern communication media in the Central Thailand had begun to emerge in the Northeast Region prior to the Siamese Revolution of 1932. Under the pressure and stimulus of Western Colonization and the Franco-Siamese treaties of 1893 and 1904, King Chulalongkorn, Rama Five of the Chakri Dynasty, reformed the bureaucracy and provincial administrative system to be based on the concepts of the West and new technology, which linked, by modern communications and transportation networks, to the Northeast Region. The Post and Telegraph Services, a new and modern form of communication, was inaugurated officially at Nakhon Ratchasima in 1883. Concurrently, the construction of the first railway link to Nakhon Ratchasima was completed in 1900, followed by links to Ubon Ratchathani in 1926, Khon Kaen in 1933, and Nong Khai in 1955 (Keyes, F. C., 1967).

Although the modern media - such as Post and Telegraph Services - journeyed into this region, it was concentrated in particular at the government officers. Meanwhile, the majority of the northeasterner's communication was still tied with the oral tradition that conveyed their ideology and social value system by the use of proverbs, tales, stories, lullaby songs, festivities, rituals and celebrations. It also embraced teaching through daily life situations, such as weaving cloth, making handicrafts, and so forth. Besides, the scriptural tradition - palm leaf and stone inscriptions - had played the significant role in conveying Tripitaka, local stories, and important events since the Great Khmer Empire, during, approximately the 10th - 13th Century. Anthropological linguists reported that there were two traditional scripts in this region: Tham and Khom. The Tham script was developed from the ancient Mon script. It was used only in the inscriptions of Buddhist texts. Meanwhile, the Khom script, derived from the ancient Khmer script, conveyed the local stories through stone inscriptions.

After the end of the Great Khmer Empire in the 13th century, the Kingdom of Sukhothai spread its influence into the Northeast Region along with the diffusion of Sukhothai script, also known as ancient Thai script. In 1295, Sukhothai script became the role model of the Thainoi script. It was used in administrative texts and secular literatures. Henceforth, it became the main script for conveying local stories and important events in a pattern of literature, through historically important persons and historical-based events. It was fair to say that the development of the Northeasterner's communication was not merely a matter of facts but was the spirit of their ancestors and was handed on to their children from generation to generation. Unfortunately, in 1921, when Compulsory Education arrived in the region, Thai script gradually replaced the traditional script, along with the spread of the knowledge of the culture and history of Siam, whose center was in Bangkok (A. personal communication, 2012; I., personal communication, 2013).

(2) After the Siamese Revolution (1932 - 1939), the government, led by the People Party, attempted to disseminate knowledge and understanding about democracy through a wide variety of medium such as microphones, gramophones, images of the constitution, and mobile public relations units. Its main task was to reduce the lack of information in the remote areas, especially the Northeast Region, which was the first model of the operation owing to the Bovorndej royalist's rebellion on 12 October 1933. The Public Relations unit started in Khon Kaen, and moved on to Udon Thani, Nong Khai, Rot Et, Mahasarakham, Ubon Ratchathani, Nakhon Phanom, Sakhon Nakhon, Loei, Sisaket, Surin, and Buriram. According to Public Relation Department (Public Relations Department, 2016), Professor Pairoj Jayanama, Chief of the Publicity Division (1943 - 1947), stated that,

“...During that time, we aimed to travel to all districts and reach all major sub-districts. It was hardly possible because not only was it quite harsh to travel to the Northeast, there was also very hot weather. In some places, we had to go on horseback or by ox-drawn carts...”

Although the news transmitted by the Public Relations Unit could reach the Northeasterners in some places, most of them were still exposed to information that came from opinion leaders, such as heads of villages, monks and chief cattle sellers known as Nai Hoy. Similarly, B. (B. personal communication, 2012), as a Senior Media Specialists of the Government Public Relations, said that,

“...We gain information from monks who study in Bangkok. When those monks come back to their hometown, people living in surrounding areas will be going to visit monks in order to talk to and ask what we would like to know about Bangkok and the current issues of country. At the same time, the monks conveyed the experiences to us. For example, the Bangkokians are interested in new medium or called radio because its information transmission is fast. It also included the music program...”

“...During that time, we had never known what radio is, but we heard that we would, soon, listen to the people’s sound from a box. A few years later, it became true; we see and listen to the radio at the house of the district chief officer...”

Moreover, they gave an example through their experiences; namely, they received information about further education from monks. After they finished Secondary School, they journeyed to study at Pathumwan Institute of technology and other colleges at Bangkok. On the journey, they got on a train from Khon Kaen to Nakhon Ratchasima and from Nakhon Ratchasima to Bangkok, it took approximately 2 days (C. personal communication, 2012; M. personal communication, 2013; W. personal communication, 2013).

(3) In the war period (1940 - 1960), according to the Publicity Newsletter issue 10, fifth year, 1942, the messages entitled Radio Broadcasting, Working, and Taking Orders dated 27 October 1942. Field Marshal Pibul Songkharm announced that

“...Radio is the most important medium for the country in crisis. In wartime, all of us in the nation could only follow the news and perform according to orders, in harmony, only through radio. Consequently, those who do not listen to radio, are shut off ideologically and refuse to communicate, to work in harmony, as a nation...”

From this announcement, radio receivers appeared in the Northeast Region, but they were in particular for the use of governor, district chief officer and schools in some provinces. Radio waves were transmitted from Ayutthaya to Saraburi and from Saraburi to the Northeast Region. The majority of programming was national news aired by the National Broadcasting Service of Thailand. C. (C. personal communication, 2012), as a Senior media specialists of the Government Public Relations, mentioned that,

“...If the Northeasterners would like to listen to music, they should use a gramophone record. The majority of the music was more modern classical songs than folk songs. As for print media, daily newspapers penetrated in to the Northeast Region prior to the revolution on September 7, 1957...”

(4) In the national development period (1961 - 1972) led by the military government was the turning point for media exposure in major Thai mass media. It was revealed that radio was the most popular in the Northeast Region, followed by newspapers. J. (J. personal communication, 2013), as a reporter of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region of Thailand, said that,

“...Daily newspapers were first transported from Bangkok to the Northeast Region by train in 1960. After the Friendship Highway road was finished, the newspapers were transported by ten-wheeled trucks. Thai Rath was the most popular, followed by Siam Rath, Daily News and Ban Muang, respectively. A Newspaper cost approximately one baht fifty satang. The majority of media content consisted of crime, sex, scandal and sport along with summaries of popular news, semi-nude pictures and entertainment news. Political news was hardly reported to the general public. This was the result of Article 17 of the 1959 Constitution that authorized the Prime Minister to repress and suppress mass media under the discourse that it jeopardized national security. It was found that government officials, teachers, merchants, *Kamnan* and *Puyaiban* were likely to access the newspaper to a greater extent than the general public in the remote areas...”

Additionally, the number of radio receivers was increasing continually after the expansion of the television and radio network. It was found that the radio was introduced into the villages together with mobile cinema known as *Rot Kai Ya*. Radio's cost approximately 50 - 60 baht. The Northeasterners could listen to both national and international radio stations. There were four main radio stations in Thailand being the

National Broadcast Service of the Government Public Relations Department (PRD), Radio of the Royal Thai Army, Radio Broadcast Station 1, Po No of the Post and Telegraph Department, and the KU Radio Network of Kasetsart University. On the other hand, international radio stations - namely Moscow Radio, Peking Radio, Radio Hanoi, VOT, ABC, BBC, FEBC, Free Asia Radio Station, Laos Movement Radio, Radio of Kampuchea Radio and Voice of America - had been popular among the educated elite. This is because the military government presented only one sided messages regarding anti-communism through the national radio, especially the Radio Broadcasting Station 909 at Sakon Nakhon (B. personal communication, 2012; E. personal communication, 2013; J. personal communication, 2013; K. personal communication, 2013).

In 1962, the television network was expanded to all regions of the country. Black and white television sets came to the Northeast Region through Chinese merchants. Very few people owned a television set because of the very high price, approximately 10,000 baht. In the Northeast Region, there was only TTV Channel 5, Khon Kaen. All of the programming was live and focused on entertainment programming such as *Seeking Stars (Kon-Hah-Dow)*. Television programming would be aired during 18:00 - 21:00. A few years later, television programming changed from being live to being recorded. It was found that the most popular programming was local serial drama, *Mohlam*, boxing and movies from the United States, Japan and Hong Kong and also cartoons. After that, television stations increased the period of broadcast time, from 18:00 - 21:00 to 18:00 - 24:00 (A. personal communication, 2012; M. personal communication, 2013; Z. personal communication, 2013; N. personal communication, 2013).

(5) In the period of the democracy movement (1973 - 1992), the media coverage in newspapers was more credible while the broadcast media - such as radio and television - were still a crucial mechanism of the government to publicize government policies. It was found that more than 90 percent of northerners could access the radio, followed by newspapers and television. F. (F. personal communication, 2013), as a voice actor in the Northeast Region, said that,

“...The Mobile Cinema was gradually vanishing in the Northeast Region due to the emergence of television. Radio programs still consisted of entertainment, government

lottery, local news, national news, international news, sports news, religious and educational programs and agricultural features. After the end of the Student Revolution of October 14, 1973, television channel 7 was the first channel penetrating into the Northeast Region, followed by channel 5, channel 9 and channel 3, respectively.

Since the massacre of 6 October 1976,

television has succeeded, in a relatively short time, to enter every household.

Its powers of persuasion and attraction seem to be supernatural.

In 1981, color television came to the Northeast Region along
with transistor radio..."

Approximately ten years later, computers and cable television emerged, in particular with the centralization of government officials and business men. The Internet came in 1997. Educated people – namely government officials, teachers, students and business men - were the first group to use computers and the Internet (D. personal communication, 2012; W. personal communication, 2013; X. personal communication, 2013)

(6) In the media reform (1993 - 2014), after the end of the Bloody Crisis of May 17 - 18, 1992, the emergence of new forms of media technology - such as communication satellite, office personal computers, laptop computers, MP3 technology, Apple's iPod, DVD media players and all forms of digital media- allow the Northeasterners to access to a wide variety of media content and media outlets. W. (W. personal communication, 2013), as an executives' the computer center of Khon Kaen University, narrated that

“...In 1997, the internet began to spread in the group of the government officials, teachers and students in the Northeast Region while many people did not know what the internet was. This was because the price was rather expensive and was difficult to use...”

Three years later, the satellite television came to the urban areas of the northeast region. Nowadays, internet was the most popular because the government's support for expand ICT infrastructure has enabled broader internet penetration and cheaper access information. Besides, satellite television was as popular as internet because they could watch various television channels, from both national and international stations. Most importantly, its price was not expensive and was easy to use (R. personal communication, 2013; P. personal communication, 2013).

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings showed that the development of mass media could be studied through six periods based on the historical events of country. This is, before and after the Siamese revolution (1283 - 1939), people in the Central Region of country were exposed to information from both newspaper and radio broadcast while the Northeasterner hardly

obtained any information from outside. In the war period (1940 - 1960), radio broadcast was mostly popular among people in the central region while radio had just come to the northeast region. It was revealed that radio was in particular found at the governor's house, district chief officer's house and schools in the province. Because of this, it is believed that a great number of the Northerners, in the remote areas, did not know what radio was. In the national development period (1961 - 1972), television had played the significant role and was mostly popular. Meanwhile, all sectors of Thailand, especially Northerners began to own radios. They also merely knew of television broadcasts. In the democracy movement period (1973 - 1992), it showed that people in the central region were highly likely to have Satellite Television, Cable Television, Computers and Internet whereas television was mostly popular among the northerners. In the media reform period (1993 - 2014), that is to say, we enter the digital world. Very few people in the Central Region do not know of computers and the Internet. Although the journey of all forms of digital media from the Central to Northeast Region was faster, it was found that there were still some Northerners who did not have access. However, at the present time, all Thai people have access to a wide variety of media outlets such as newspaper, television, radio, internet, satellite television, and cable television.

Analysis through the lens of time-line provides a bird's eye view of the developmental period of media. Moreover, the time period of each medium reflects a difference. That is, in 1844, the first newspaper in Thailand emerged in Bangkok while the Northerners first began to see newspapers in approximately 1960. Radio broadcasting was officially inaugurated in 1930; on the other hand, the northerners began to listen during 1940. As for television, the first television, Channel 4, *Bang Khun Phrom* appeared in 1955 where as a television station with 6-kilowatt transmitter was set up in Khon Kaen in 1962. In mid-1991, the internet was used in the universities in Bangkok while the northerners, especially the educated elite, only used the Internet from 1997. Finally, in 1993, satellite television began to proliferate in Bangkok whereas the Northerners only received access in 1998. In other words, the journey of the newspaper from the central to the Northeast Region took around 116 years, followed by radio broadcasts in around 10 years, television in around 7 years, the Internet in around 6 years and satellite television in around 5 years.

The above analysis pinpointed that the time scales for media developments from the Central to the Northeast regions are likely to continue to be reduced. Therefore, this research predicted that, in the future, the new form of digital media - such as smart phone, tablet, Google glass, smart watch and so on - will be proliferated into the Northeast Region rapidly until there would not be differences between the arrival times.

Besides, it was found that the driving forces leading to the arrivals of mass media in Central Region and the Northeast Region were quite different. That is, in the Central Region, it revealed that the Western influence in the reign of Rama III was the driving force leading to the appearance of the first mass media - that was newspaper. The spread of democracy ideology in the world situation was the significant driver of the arrivals of radio. Political conflict under the administration of Field Marshal Pibul Songkharm led to the emergence of television. Ultimately, the development of advance communication technology of world was the significant variable of the arrivals of satellite television and internet. On the other hand, in the northeast region, the government policy was the main driving force of the arrivals of radio, television, newspaper and internet while the arrivals of satellite television had resulted from the development of advanced communication technology.

Suggestion

Although the Northeasterners are likely to access and use a wide variety of media outlets, mass media has repeatedly conveyed misleading content. That is, the proportion of entertainment programming is likely to increase to a greater extent than news, knowledge, and commentary. Therefore, it was the good opportunity that, in the future research, the researcher should investigate the effects of media use on the changing ways of life of the Northeasterners.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my sponsor, Royal Golden Jubilee, Ph.D. Program, for giving me a chance to pursue my study. I thank the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University and Bangkok University for all the valuable support. Also, it is very important to say thank you my key informants. Most importantly, I would like to extend my appreciation to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sekson Yongvanit for his guidance and contributions to this article. Without his guidance and contributions, it might have been twice as long, than as good. His patience with me throughout a long period of work was highly appreciated. I am indebted to Prof. Emeritus Dr. Nonglak Wiratchai for his constructive comments and recommendation.

References

Balley, M. (2009). **Narrating media history: Communication and Society**. London: Routledge.

Boonyaketmala, B. (1982). Thailand. In **J.A. Lent (Ed.), Newspapers in Asia. Contemporary Trends and Problems**.

Donald, G. G. and Susan, L. B. (2015). **Routledge Reader on Electronic Media History**. Ringgold, Inc.

Ekachai, D. (2000). **Handbook of the Media in Asia**. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Executive Summary A CASBAA Market Report. (2006). **A CASBAA Thailand in View: Thai Pay-TV**. Access (15 June 2016). Available (<http://www.casbaa.com/publications>)

Public Relations Department. (2016). **82 Years of the Public Relations Department of Thailand**. Access (10 August 2016). Available (http://thailand.prd.go.th/ewt_news.php?nid=1676&filename=index)

National Statistical Office Thailand. (2016). **Population and Society**. Access (20 February 2016). Available (<http://web.nso.go.th/>)

Keyes, F. C. (1967). **Isan: Regionalism in Northeastern Thailand**. New York: Cornell University.

Padmatin, S. (1984). **Mass Communication in Thailand**. Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center.

Schrank, J. (1994). **Understanding Mass Media**. NTC Publishing groups. USA.

Seri, P. and Kavin, H. (1990). **Thai Village Life: Culture and Transition in the Northeast**. Mooban Press.

Sittirak, S. (1990). **Khum Neud Torratas Thai: 2493 - 2500 (The Birth of Thai Television: 1950-1957)**. Creative Publishing Bangkok.

Siriwyasak, U. (2006). **Thailand's Media: Politics and Money Versus Media in Asian in Media Report: A crisis 2006**. Bangkok.

Smith, J. A. (2015). Writing Media History Articles: Manuscript Standards and Scholarly Objectives. **Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly**. Vol. 92. No. 1. pp. 12-23

Tangkitvanich, S. (2004). **Krongsang Talad Sue Witayu Lae Toratat**. Thailand Development Research Institute. (TDRI).

Interview

- A. Senior Media Specialist Government Public Relations. **Interview**. (10 January 2012).
- B. Senior Media Specialist of Government Public Relations. **Interview**. (16 - 30 October 2012).
- C. Senior Media Specialist of Government Public Relations. **Interview**. (20 November 2012).
- D. The Director of Radio Thailand Network for Education, Khon Kaen. **Interview**. (25 December 2012).

- E. Voice Actor in Northeast Region. **Interview.** (3 February 2013).
- F. Voice Actor in Northeast Region. **Interview.** (28 April 2013).
- I. Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region. **Interview.** (5 February 2013).
- J. Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region. **Interview.** (20 February 2013).
- K. Reporters of Thai Rath in the Northeast Region. **Interview.** (25 February 2013).
- M. Reporters Daily News, Dao Siam and Naew Nah in the Northeast Region. **Interview.** (16 March 2013).
- N. Reporters Daily News, Dao Siam and Naew Nah in the Northeast Region. **Interview.** (18 March 2013).
- P. Satellite dish retailers in Nakhon Ratchasima. **Interview.** (16 July 2013).
- R. Satellite dish retailers in Khonkaen. **Interview.** (11 November 2013).
- T. Satellite dish retailers in Udon Thani. **Interview.** (1 December 2013).
- W. Executives of the computer center of Khon Kaen University. **Interview.** (10 July 2013).
- X. Executives of the computer center of Khon Kaen University. **Interview.** (18 July 2013).
- Z. Newspaper distributors of Thai Rath, Daily News and Naew Nah. **Interview.** (6 August 2013).