

# Agenda Setting on Telecommunications Services Policy: Three Streams of Effects on Privatization and Concession Conversion<sup>1</sup>

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## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งตรวจสอบรูปแบบของ Policy agenda-setting ซึ่งได้นำมาใช้ในกระบวนการของการจัดทำนโยบายด้านโทรคมนาคมของประเทศไทย เพื่อวิเคราะห์ว่าประเด็นทั้งหลายของนโยบายได้นำไปสู่การปฏิบัติของรัฐบาลอย่างไร การศึกษานี้ครอบคลุมถึงการตรวจสอบบทบาทของบุคคลกลุ่มต่างๆ เหตุการณ์ และกิจกรรมทั้งหลายที่มีอยู่ในกระบวนการนี้ โดยได้ตั้งคำถามในการวิจัยหลัก(main research question) ไว้ว่า “สมาชิกของกลุ่มนโยบาย และกระบวนการของสตรีมทั้งสาม (3 streams) ได้นำไปสู่สถานะหนึ่งๆ ของวาระ(agenda status) ในนโยบายโทรคมนาคมได้อย่างไร และภายใต้เงื่อนไขใด?”

ในการวิเคราะห์ได้ใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพเป็นกรณีศึกษา โดยการผสมผสานข้อมูลจากเอกสารและการสัมภาษณ์ และวิเคราะห์ตามกรอบแนวคิดการวิเคราะห์ (analytical framework) ซึ่งเน้นเรื่องของการปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสามสตรีมที่เป็นอิสระซึ่งมีอยู่ในกระบวนการของนโยบาย(policy process) อันได้แก่ ปัญหา (problems) การเมือง(politics) และนโยบาย(policies) ซึ่งก่อตัวเข้าด้วยกัน(coupling)

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ในขณะที่โอกาสของนโยบายได้เปิดขึ้น โดยกรอบแนวคิดในการวิเคราะห์เช่นว่านี้ได้นำมาจากสามโมเดลคือ Kingdon's stream, Bureaucratic politics, และ Group theory

ผลการศึกษาพบว่ามีความสอดคล้องสนับสนุนกับกรอบแนวคิดการวิเคราะห์ที่ว่าสามสตรีมดังกล่าวได้ก่อตัวและลอยอย่างสม่ำเสมออยู่รอบๆ บรรยากาศของนโยบายเพื่อรอโอกาสที่จะเปิดให้สำหรับนโยบาย สตรีมแรกคือการเมืองประกอบไปด้วยปัจจัยด้านการเปลี่ยนรัฐบาล (government turnover) และแรงกดดันของกลุ่มต่างๆ ที่ได้รับผลกระทบจากองค์กรทางการเมืองนั้น การก่อตัวในการเปลี่ยนแปลงนโยบายและการพัฒนาการเมืองได้มีขึ้นเพื่อกำหนดประเด็นด้านนโยบายโทรคมนาคมให้เป็นกิจกรรมของรัฐบาลในลำดับต้น ส่วนสตรีมที่สองคือ Problem Stream ประกอบด้วยปัจจัยด้าน 1) ความรับรู้ปัญหาของผู้เกี่ยวข้องกับนโยบาย เช่น รัฐบาล สภาพแรง งานของ TOT และ CAT รวมทั้งสถาบันทางวิชาการและบรรดาผู้ได้รับสัมปทาน ด้านโทรคมนาคมทั้งหลาย และ 2) ความหมายหรือนิยามศัพท์ของคำว่าปัญหาซึ่งมีความแตกต่างกันตามความคิดของผู้มีส่วนได้เสียที่แตกต่างกัน สำหรับสตรีมสุดท้ายคือ Policy Stream จะประกอบด้วยสองปัจจัยคือ ปัจจัยด้านแนวคิดหรือข้อเสนอของ Policy entrepreneurs และปัจจัยด้านการสนับสนุนจากผู้ประกอบการโดยการใช้องค์กรต่างๆ ในการสร้างอิทธิพลเพื่อผลักดันนโยบาย โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในประเด็นเรื่องของอิทธิพล ผลการศึกษาได้ยืนยันว่าการเมืองส่งผลกระทบโดยตรงในการกำหนดวาระนโยบายใหม่ ในขณะที่กลุ่มนักวิชาการและกลุ่มผู้มีส่วนได้เสียอื่นๆ ไม่ได้มีอิทธิพลในการกำหนดนโยบายเท่าใดนัก ผลกระทบขั้นต้นคงมีเพียงในช่วงเวลาของการจัดตั้งวาระของนโยบาย หรือในช่วงก่อนเวลานั้นเท่านั้น

อย่างไรก็ตาม โอกาสของการกำหนดนโยบายจะเปิดขึ้นในช่วงระยะเวลาที่สั้นมากและจะเกิดขึ้นเป็นช่วงๆ เท่านั้น ผลการศึกษายังพบว่าตัวแปรต่างๆ ที่ผสมผสานกันซึ่งนำไปสู่การก่อตั้งวาระของนโยบาย ก็มีความแตกต่างไปตามประเด็นของนโยบาย โดยที่ประเด็นด้านการแปรรูปรัฐวิสาหกิจได้รับอิทธิพลจากเหตุการณ์ใน Problem Stream กับ Politics Stream มากกว่าจากเหตุการณ์ใน Policy Stream ในขณะที่ประเด็นด้านการแปลงสัญญาสัมปทานได้รับอิทธิพลสูงสุดจากการเกิดขึ้นของ Policy Stream

จากการศึกษาทำให้สรุปได้ว่า ผลการวิเคราะห์ไม่ค่อยสนับสนุน Linear Model ของกระบวนการนโยบาย และการกำหนดนโยบายถือว่าเป็นเพียงเหตุการณ์ที่แยกออกจากกัน ซึ่งต้องขึ้นอยู่กับแรงผลักดันของปฏิสัมพันธ์ และความสัมพันธ์ของอำนาจที่ซับซ้อน ผ่านทางสิ่งพิมพ์ การประชุม และการจัดสัมมนาที่หลากหลาย ดังนั้นผู้มีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการจัดตั้งวาระ อาจมีอิทธิพลต่อวาระนโยบายได้มากกว่า โดยการพยายามผลักดันปัจจัยทั้งหลายซึ่งจะนำไปสู่ผลลัพธ์ที่พึงประสงค์ให้มากที่สุด

ผลการวิเคราะห์ของการศึกษา ทำให้ได้ข้อเสนอแนะว่าการจัดตั้งวาระสำหรับนโยบายโทรคมนาคมมีความหลากหลายตามแต่ละแนวคิดและกิจกรรม และกิจกรรมในการจัดตั้งวาระนโยบายส่งผลให้มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงสาระสำคัญของนโยบายด้วย

### Abstract

*This research aims to examine the policy agenda-setting model as applied to the process of policy making for telecommunications policy in Thailand in order to determine how policy issues become the subject of government action. The study also seeks to determine what role different people, events, and activities play in that process. The main research question for this examination is "how and under what conditions did the policy community members and the process of three streams lead to an agenda status in Thai telecommunications policy?"*

*For analysis, the research methodology employs the qualitative case study method through the analysis mixing data from documents and interviews. The method is used with an analytical framework that focuses on the interactions among three independent streams within the policy process: problems, politics, and policies, which coupling while the policy window opens. The perspectives that guided the analytical framework come from three models: Kingdon's stream, Bureaucratic politics, and Group theory.*

*The finding of the study supports the analytical framework in which three streams are constantly floating around a policy environment, waiting for the opportunity of policy windows to open. The first stream, politics, comprises such factors as government turnover and group pressure from affected organizations. The generation of policy alternatives and politics development comes into play in order for a telecommunications issue to emerge as a priority for government action. Although numerous factors related to problems stream, the second stream also consists of two main factors. The first factor is the recognition of the problem by policy participants, namely the government, TOT and CAT unions, concessionaires and academic institutions. The second factor is the definition of the problem that is given variously, depending on their different interests. The last policy stream embodies two factors. The first factor is a viable idea or proposal from policy entrepreneurs. The second factor is a support from other entrepreneurs through using strategies of ability to influence. Regarding the issue of influence, the study confirms that politicians have a direct impact on the specific content of new policy agendas. The influence of academic or other interest groups is not on policy formulation; their primary effect is during the setting of the policy agenda and even before. Nevertheless, the window of opportunity opens in a very short period and only from time to time. The study also finds that the mix of variables that contribute to agenda setting varies by issue. The privatization issue is influenced by events in the problems and politics streams more than by the policy stream, while the concession conversion issue is most affected by policy stream occurrence.*

*From this examination, it can be concluded that there is little support from the linear model of the policy process and decision making is understood as a discrete event which relies to a great extent on a web of interacting forces and complex power relations, and through various publications, conferences and meetings. Thus, participants in*

*the agenda setting process may be able to influence more effectively the agendas by focusing their efforts on those factors most likely to lead to the desired outcome.*

*The analysis result in this study suggests that the agenda setting of telecommunications policy varied according to individual perspective and activity. The analysis also implies that the agenda setting activities resulted in substantive policy changes.*

## **Introduction and Significance of the Problem**

Telecommunications is synonymous with all forms of data transmission through a variety of electronic means, both wire and wireless. Telecommunications holds out opportunities for strengthening the national economic and political systems and empowering individuals. Moreover, telecommunications also provides new opportunities for addressing important social needs and problems, i.e. to build the community, enhance basic freedoms, and rectify long-standing inequalities. However, telecommunications technology may also cause a stressful impact, for instance, information overload, computer crime, privacy right infringement, and trade secret violation. New technologies may also create unemployment and aggravate the gap between the rich and the poor. In sum, the impact of the telecommunications is felt around the world as it creates different impacts and has many unintended consequences as well as responses from national societies.

The significance and importance of telecommunications issues have led many countries to review and change their public policy for telecommunication services. One key component of such reforms is to remove all barriers to entry into the telecommunications sector, and to develop mechanisms to ensure effective competition in telecommunications. Such mechanisms will prevent powerful incumbent telecommunications operators from abusing their market power to the detriment of their competitors and consumers.

Historically, telecommunications services in Thailand have been provided under a public utility regime. At present, the government has made it clear that it is prepared to dismantle its monopoly policy in favor of a quasi-market-regulated policy. This has led to a conflict over government regulation of telecommunications. Currently, Thailand is in the process of reforming its telecommunications sector. At its core, the government has attempted to reform the public agencies into more business-oriented entities. This study seeks to analyze the process of policy making which may take place prior to or along with actual policy decision in the area of telecommunications services. Keeping in mind that agenda setting has long been recognized as an essential part of an entire policy cycle, this study therefore aims at analyzing the policy agenda setting status.

To analyze the complexity of the telecommunication policy process and to capture the conflicting policy positions and interests pervasive in the policy community, Kingdon's theory of the policy stream (1984, 1995) is utilized. Additionally, in order to clarify the nature of the interaction among the policy community's members, the researcher uses the group theory and bureaucratic politics framework to facilitate the development of her analytical framework. The underlying assumption is that policy change can be explained through analysis of the policymaking process, and that the government itself is not a single unit working in policy making. By focusing on agenda setting and by examining the development of current policy issues, the researcher hopes this study will fill an important gap in the research on policy agenda setting. Ultimately, a better understanding of agenda setting may help ensure that important problems or issues come to the attention of key decision makers.

The central research questions underlying this study are presented as follows:

*“ How and under what conditions did the policy community and the process of the three streams lead to an agenda status in Thai telecommunications policy? ”*

## **Scope of The Study**

The focus of the dissertation is on the policy-making process in the area of telecommunications services, especially on the agenda setting process. The intent of this dissertation is to “discover” and “map” the events that occur within the agenda setting process. Policy is developed within a public sphere that is populated by many kinds of potential participants. Thus, the concern of this study is to examine two variables: the policy community and the process of agenda setting in telecommunication policy, even though there are various factors that affected the telecommunications policy, such as technologies, the socio-economic environment and security. More specifically, it focuses on the two issues as a case study: the privatization and concession conversion that directly involve the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) and the Communication Authority of Thailand (CAT).

## **Literature Review**

In reviewing the academic literature in this area, we find that most literature relating to public policy making does not systematically analyze the substantial role of the policy community in this process. Most research on telecommunications policy has focused on the narrow question of whether or not telecommunications operations should be privatized or transfer its ownership from public enterprises to the private sector. What the research has shown is that the hypothesis only hints at the advantage or disadvantage of the reform of the private sectors or the people with the ability to use the telecommunication services.

According to Kingdon, the three streams consist of the political, problems, and policy.

The “political stream” is the change in the political climate to make the solution a favorable one. Change in the political stream can have profound effects on agendas, as some ideas gain currency and others lose ground in the

face of positive or negative political development. Forces such as political culture and formal structure also play a role in defining agendas by limiting the range of “acceptable” policy alternatives and constraining actors seeking to affect problems definition.

The “problems stream” consists of those problems and issues that “come to capture the attention of people in and around government.” It occurs when key policy-makers or people in and around the government realize that there really is a problem that demands their attention, with information about real the world and the prior effects of government actions. Problem recognition that seizes public and official attention often occurs because of 1) systematic indicators, i.e., routine government, governmental statistics, or budgetary trends; 2) focusing events like crises or disasters, or 3) feedback from the operation of the programs, i.e., input from citizens, program-evaluation data, and bureaucratic experience.

The “policy stream” exists when key stakeholders can identify some alternative, achievable public policy solutions to the problem, and then generate policy proposals and offer them for consideration. The policy stream thus includes “ideas and proposals” generated by various members of a “policy community” consisting of bureaucrats, researchers, interest group advocates, staffers and other players who engage in political activities within a dynamic political environment. These participants in the policy stream have knowledge of and interest in a particular policy area. They manipulate issues using elements of conflict and salience so that these issues can be added to, or dropped from, the systematic or formal policy agenda.

Policy proposals float around the government, in a policy primeval soup, waiting for the right moment to attach themselves to a problem with the decision agenda, or for the “coupling” of the three streams at critical junctures creating a “policy window” and a “policy entrepreneur” to orchestrate the policy innovation.

According to Kingdon, each of the three streams contains various individuals, groups, agencies and institutions that are involved in the policy-



making process. In the event of the occurrence of the coupling stream, the members of the policy community get busy trying to influence the next round of agenda changes. Development within streams, and interactions among them, are important because agenda setting decisions can have a profound impact on policy outcomes.

In order to capture sources of the political dynamics relevant to the process, it is necessary to include another model in the conceptual framework for studying the policy process. The researcher suggests the “group theory” and the “bureaucratic politics” framework, which will help focus on the policy participants and their interactions, and visualize them in a way that would be predictable of the policy.

The assumptions underlying this framework are further described below. First, there is not only a single participant in policy making. Groups with more power will choose policy alternatives to best realize their policy goals. One individual or group representative, however, may not handle enough power to achieve his or her policy goals. Instead, he or she is compelled to share power with others who have different priorities.

The assumption of bureaucratic politics is that every decision, to some extent, must reflect the interaction among various actors. To explain the “interaction among participants” in the policy-making process, the bureaucratic politics model suggests such important terms as activities, capacities, position, and motivation. In most cases, political actors will act as representatives of constituencies, yet their motivations for participating are mixed. Some individuals are self-interested, while others participate for nonmaterial reasons, including a sense of solidarity, morality, or satisfaction with working on a particular cause. To pursue their goals, members of the organization are involved as policy makers and as implementers. They may develop structures to limit participation in order to maintain their policy preferences or to implement policy that may be changed at one time, as new political actors arrive or with the rise and fall of critical policy issues. They also experience deadlines that often exacerbate conflicting, competing, and threatening perspectives regard-

ing the issues (Allison, 1971: 178). Executives and bureaucrats compete over preferred solutions or engage in exchanges regarding particular policy problems and use the resources available to them through their positions – for example, hierarchy, control over information, and access to key decision-makers, to achieve their goals.

As a result, the interaction among actors often takes the form of bargaining games, characterized by compromising, bargaining, coalition-building, and competition. The actors in each bureau or agency continually strive to maximize their autonomy and discretion in decision-making in the area of their responsibility. They are in competition or bargain with each other for budgeting shares and allocations. For this reason, within the process of decision making, players are encouraged to negotiate and compromise with one another in order to minimize the impact of losing. Through this review literature, the bureaucratic politics framework can be seen as one of the good frameworks for understanding the political environment.

The analytical framework for this study begins by elaborating a collection of ideas in the existing models of the policy-making process seen as central to an understanding of agenda setting. The fact is that while frameworks meet some of the criteria, a single framework meeting all of the criteria could not be found, and when translating each theory into policy, there were problems regarding methodological inference. Thus, we choose the model of Kingdon's stream, and some idea taken from the group theory and bureaucratic politics framework, for guiding this study.

The process of three streams coupling: problems, politics, and policy, composed of questions on what, how, when and why such participants and events combined to influence the policy agenda. The coupling occurs when the three streams of problems, policies, and politics are joined together. The probability that a policy proposal will move up to a decision agenda increase if all three streams converge at one point of time; that is, problems are recognized, policy proposals are available, and a favorable political climate exists.

Those five key points made by Kingdon stress the complexity of the policy making process. Kingdon's framework explains different aspects of change in a policy to gain the greatest explanatory power. Each stream of the framework has a unique ability to examine the process of change within a policy and to measure reaction at all levels of participation by providing participants that are involvement and that may affect the success of a politically viable agenda item.

Through this review literature, the bureaucratic politics framework can be seen as one of the good frameworks for understanding the political environment. This is because policy makers are concerned with staying in their positions, serving their own self-interest and only compromise under conditions where they can not wield enough power to ensure their preferences or longevity.

The intention of this literature review is to obtain the key terms for developing the researcher's conceptual framework by answering the research questions of the study. The next section will underline the framework adapted from Kingdon's model, group theory, and the Allison/Halprin approach, which will be discussed below.

The analytical framework for this study begins by elaborating collections of ideas in the existing models of the policy-making process seen as central to an understanding of agenda setting. The literature reviews provides us with some insight into the variables to consider what? and the dynamics of the policy agenda-setting status, including how to conceptualize the various players involved in the policy process. After reviewing the literature, however, evidence indicates that using only a single model cannot provide an adequate framework.

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streams converge at one point in time; that is, problems are recognized, policy proposals are available, and a favorable political climate exists.

As Kingdon (1995: 3) states, the model helps us to discover why some subjects become prominent in the policy agenda and others do not, and why some alternatives for choice are seriously considered while others are neglected. The mapping of the analytical framework helps us to observe the set of variables that is used in this study. This basic framework probes descriptively useful. It guides the researcher to? a context or perspective from which she can analyze the dynamics of telecommunications policy agenda setting, and examine the behavior of policy participants as accurately and as realistically as possible. It also enables the identification of key policy, and political and issue-related policy agenda.

This study is concerned primarily with the policy making process, with special attention on how telecommunications issues gain an "active" agenda status. The main objective is to describe and analyze agenda setting in the telecommunications policy-making process. To understand and determine the variables involved in policy agenda-setting, we need a better understanding of the policy-making process, including how and why issues rise and fall on the agenda, and, to identify the participants who influence the telecommunication policy-making process.

The main objective of this literature review us to connect the research questions to the larger themes in political science, and to identify the data in this literature to examine how, why and what factors influence the policy agenda. The literature search in this chapter considers writings on decision-making, the policy process, telecommunications? policy, and theories of the policy-making process. This inquiry is also connected to the larger theoretical and methodological themes in public policy. It begins with a review of the published literature on the making of public policy; defining terminology, presenting ideas and theories, and asking key questions. It then examines more general models of the policy-making process, drawing from the current literature, in an effort to form a conceptual framework that will help us to think more

clearly about the ways in which research and analysis contribute to a better understanding of policy making. Finally, it starts to outline a framework that we hope will prove useful in planning and evaluating project activities aimed at improving policy decision making in telecommunications.

The study begins with the belief that the policy-making process framework is important because it gives us propositions that help us understand how and why policy problems are defined. In particular, the frameworks used in this study are the "Kingdon's stream model" (Kingdon, 1984, 1995) with the supplement of the group model (Truman, 1951; Lathman, 1952; Olson, 1971; Lowi, 1979; Dye, 1984), and the bureaucratic politics model (Allison and Halprin, 1984). These models have been chosen over other models because their constructs make them a useful and appropriate tool for studying policy community members in telecommunications policy as a case study. Each model is described and used as a foundation to explain the case events as they develop at the early policy formulation stage. In addition, these models will be used to: (1) specify and clarify the thinking about public policy and the policy-making process, (2) identify important aspects of policy (3) help to suggest explanations for public policy and predict its consequences, and direct efforts to a better understanding of public policy by suggesting what is important and what is unimportant.

In trying to assess which variables are most relevant, we review the main focus of Kingdon's policy model, the group model, and the bureaucratic politics model. "Kingdon's approach" contributes to the development and enrichment of the agenda setting process. The policy community is conceived as members that show a substantial interest in and consensus on policy agenda. This framework uses the streams of policy, problems and politics as the central premise to explain the interactions of various individuals and groups that come together in the window opportunity to achieve their policy goals. The "group model" provides a theoretical lens to understand the interaction among groups in which public policy is made. The equilibrium reached in the group struggle is the central concept for the group theory. The bureaucratic politics

framework focuses on the power and influence among various actors in the policy process in order to understand the key players and the relationships among them.

This section consists of three parts. The first section provides an overview of public policy and the policy-making process in order to build a background understanding of the concept of the policy process. The second section evaluates the theories and models of the policy-making process in order to build a theoretical framework, particularly regarding the model of Kingdon's stream policy, the bureaucratic politics framework, and the group model. The last section presents the proposed framework for analysis of the process of policy agenda setting.

The literature reveals that different authors identify varying numbers of stages in the policy process. However, in the most common version of the policy stages model, the public policy process is broken into six stages of sequential events. These include:

- Identification of policy problems through demands for government action;
- Agenda setting, or focusing the attention of public officials on specific public problems;
- Formulation of policy proposals, their initiation and development, by policy-planning organizations, interest groups, and the executive or legislative branches of government;
- Adoption and legitimization of policies through the political actions of the government, interest groups, political parties;
- Implementation of policies through bureaucracies, public expenditures, and the activities of executive agencies; and,
- Evaluation of a policy's programmatic implementation and impact.

Policy formation may proceed in stages, but the process is not produced as if it moved along a conveyer belt. Those stages do not necessarily follow each other through time in any regular/consistent pattern or in an orderly, step-by-step manner. The basic criticism of the stage framework is that it is represented as a model of actual decision processes. But in the real world, events seldom unfold in this ordered fashion, and policy decision-making only rarely follows this pattern.

My interest in this dissertation is in focusing on the process of policy formation, or the agenda setting process. This study is also guided by the definition of Jenkins (1978: 1, 3), who terms the public policy as:

*...A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve. The policy thus consists of political bargaining in complex and crowded arenas.*

The intention of this study is to identify the process of the policy agenda setting. The literature review of the agenda setting process found that scholars seek to understand the role of agenda setting within the overall policy process by addressing the question of how and why policy agendas are set. A central feature of the agenda-setting approach is thus to view the processes of problem definition and alternative specification as independent processes.

In sum, there are three requirements for policy change. First, there must be a recognized problem. Second, there must be a solution, most likely one that has already been floating around in the political “primeval soup” of ideas. And third, there must be the right political condition to facilitate the

connection of the problems and solution. In other words, the policy participants recognize the issues, generate proposals for policy change, and engage in such political activities as playing authority roles in power positions, using strategies for interaction and so on, then, setting the policy agenda.

Kingdon views policy making in terms of the three relatively independent process streams. Each stream proceeds with its own patterns and each can impede or facilitate progress through the policy process. He also notes that these streams do not progress in a linear fashion. In fact, the streams operate independently, although each is affected by the others; proposals can precede problems, and political changes can precede the formulation of proposals.

## **Methodology and Research Design**

This study devises a practical methodology for conducting the process of inquiry and evaluating the policy-making process in Thailand. Keeping in mind that telecommunications? policy is complex and difficult to isolate. Thus, it is conceivable? that we should find appropriate methods for understanding and explaining outcomes of the analysis by following the ways? In which research is conducted.

The applicable methods for this study are discussed in this chapter. In the realm of research methodology, the qualitative and quantitative methods are notable. However, the researcher chooses the qualitative method. In addition, the case study approach is what? No end to the sentence.

This research consists of essentially two case studies, the findings of which are compared and contrasted in order to understand more fully the factors that influence policy agenda. The qualitative method and a case study approach are chosen and seen as the best way to understand the phenomenon of telecommunications? policy.



The qualitative research method is a process of identifying and organizing data into a number of categories or themes relevant to research questions (Kingdon, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1987). According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 89-98), qualitative research can be characterized as follows: (1) It is concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products; interested in meaning – how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world; (2) It is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis: data are mediated through human instruments, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines; (3) It involves fieldwork: the researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting; (4) It is descriptive information technology that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures; (5) It is inductive in that the research process builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details; (6) The validity and reliability of data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and training of the researcher.

Qualitative research involves more than one data collecting technique. Those techniques include in-depth interview, documentary analysis, observation, and participation. Methods employed for data collection and analysis will therefore be taken with concerning such triangulation techniques as documentary analysis and in-depth interview. By using a combination of interviewing and document analyses, it will be possible to obtain different data that validate and crossed-check findings, and strengthen the approach of the study.

Documents are also a valuable source of information concerning a program's origins, processes, policies, and activities. Documents also allow one to get a "behind the scenes" perspective and may provide one with information that cannot be observed or collected from a questionnaire. For this study, the document review is conducted concurrently with the interviews to validate the data and information selected during the interview. An historical approach is used for collecting and analyzing documents of public policy. A case study is conducted using primary artifacts such as legislative minutes,

master plans, published reports, speeches, and records of decision-making. As a result, with the combination of the documentary review, it is believed that the in-depth interview obtained will be more complete and reveal more in-depth data.

However, the interview method has its weakness to some extent. The weakness may come from the bias of the interview itself or of the respondents when the interviewers misunderstood a response or when the respondents react to the interviewers and misunderstand questions. In addition, when giving interviews the informants may provide inaccurate information, or may lack anonymity. More importantly, less standardization of question wording may make comparing responses and cause/create misunderstood answers. As a result, before the study began, such disadvantages were taken into consideration, acknowledged and monitored to ensure that the most appropriate method was employed and to minimize bias as well as to cross-check the respondents' answers.

The four basic questions asked of each of the interviewees are:

- (1) What and why are the two priority issues about telecommunication policy become into the agenda attentions;
- (2) How did such issues come into the agenda and how did they change over time;
- (3) What are the perceptions and activities that the informants have joined in the issues;
- (4) What is the expectation about the status of the telecommunication policy agenda of each issue?

The greatest limitation of the interview method concerns problems in getting behind closed doors, and telecommunications? policy making is very difficult to research. The difficulty of this research resides in the nature of the topic of the study and the environment in which the research takes place. This study cannot fully deal with all the interplay and complexities involved in the communication policy process, nor is it capable of getting behind closed doors and summarizing in a comprehensive way the detailed policy process.

## **Telecommunications Services and the Policy Making Process From Monopoly to Liberalization**

The study highlights telecommunications services policy making in Thailand. It analyzes data together from all literature documents and interview notes with an emphasis on the main issues and findings of policy-making activities in telecommunications reform. This study can be considered exploratory as it raises issues for further investigation on how policy agenda is set. To gain understanding of the political dynamics surrounding telecommunications policy, a historical approach is required. For more than a century telecommunications was basically a monopoly in Thailand.

### **Time line of the monopoly era**

- 1881 - Telecom service for military purpose, later for people  
- Responsibility of MOD
- 1934 - The passage of the Telegraph and Telephone Act, B.E. 2477  
- PTD was established under the control of the MPT
- 1954 - The passage of the Telephone Organization of Thailand Act, B.E. 2497  
- TOT was established under the control of the MOTC
- 1976 - The passage of the Communication Authority of Thailand Act, B.E. 2519  
- CAT was established
- 1988 - Severe shortage of telephone service in the period of Chatchai's government
- 1990 - the first concession – the BTO concept
- 1991 - external and internal pressure for change in telecom policy  
- proposal of the TMP

The monopoly was largely untouched and had been regulated or owned and controlled by government in an effort to meet defense and security needs,

and to provide universal and affordable services for the general public. After the 1988 general election, economic growth led to a severe shortage of telephone services. Despite the rapid growth of telecommunications evolution, the TOT/CAT still lacked enough capacity to meet the rising public demand. Advocates of telecommunications services demanded that the government continue more services in telecommunications by referring to a rapid increase in demand and the diversification of services driven by new technology. This resulted in the first concession in the early 1990s when the government decided to issue an invitation to the private sector to participate in telecommunications services using the "build-transfer-operate" (BTO) concept. Many telecommunication companies were awarded concessions, ranging from wire-line, wireless, internet, data communications and various value added services. The concessionaires were responsible for the construction of the telecom network concession and transmission network's assets to the controlling state enterprises.

At the end of the monopoly era, there were two important events that Thai telecommunications faced: internal and external pressures. The internal pressure came from the technological advancement and the increasing demands of users of telecommunications services. The telecommunications networks had become more and more software-based. As a consequence, the telecommunication networks were transformed into some of the biggest computer installations. Joining the WTO brought changes to the telecommunications policy, in particular in terms of market access. Thailand must eliminate its monopoly regime by opening the telecom market for all domestic and foreign companies that have long been prohibited for a long period of time.

The transition from monopoly to competitive telecommunications services makes this case study useful to the field of public policy in that it focuses on a recent paradigm shift. The focus in this section is primarily on telecommunications policy over the course of five periods of governments during the transition of telecommunications reform. As in most countries, telecommunications reform has been a very complicated process in Thailand.

Reform has reached a difficult occasion even though there has been a political motivation behind the decision to create it.

### **Time line of the liberalization era**

- 1992 WTO, GATS enter into force
- 1995 First draft of TMP (Chuan I government)
- 1996 Draft TMP version II (Banham government)
- 1997 Approved TMP version III (Chawalit government)
- 1997 Section 40 of 1997 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540
- 1997 Implementing the TMP (Chuan II government)
- 1999 Promulgation of the Public Corporation Law B.E. 2542
- 2000 Enactment of the Radio and Television Broadcasting and Telecommunication Regulatory Body Act, B.E., 2543
- 2000 The Telecommunications Business Act, B.E. 2544 came into effected.
- 2002 TOT Corporation set up
- 2003 Thaksin government approved the Excise Tax

The process to develop a new telecommunication policy has taken several years. The process includes report-back sessions, ministerial briefings, a national colloquium on telecom policy and the annual plenary meeting of the national telecommunications forum. During the process, the discussion of the proposal focused on the new telecom laws. As described above, the old laws have no provision to preclude entries by other carriers into either the domestic or international telecom market.

As a result, to understand the policy-making process through which the televide insight into the ideas of political structure and policy institutions in the telecommunications services area. It presents the evolution of Thailand's polity through

the regimes of different political parties in order to focus on the role and influence of the political actors on policy agenda; in particular, the structure and roles of the politicians in telecommunications policy making.

Few interviewees described the Parliament as an active participant in the process leading to telecommunications reform policy. They stated that whereas the government played a vital role in the creation of the telecommunications reform policy, the Parliament had not much impact on the policy formulation process. All informants interviewed for the study stated that the Parliament was involved in the creation of the telecommunications policy, and yet most of them emphasized that the creation of policy was an issue that required Parliamentary involvement too in order to balance power with the executive branch.

Although the parliament has the jurisdiction to legislate telecommunications, not until recently has the the legislative body been a key participant in telecommunications policy. The parliament only voted on budget authorization for the MOTC with the consideration of the standing committees for telecommunication of both houses. Inaction by Parliament had an impact on the making of telecommunications policy, and its failure to act allowed the executive government to do everything that it wanted to do.

Apart from the executive office, the advisors are also important sources of advice on regulatory affairs for executives. Advisors are responsible for keeping the executive office informed of specific policy making in their respective areas. In addition to government departments and agencies, there are a number of independent agencies and independent regulatory commissions that are part of the executive branch. Within the executive branch, the Prime Minister can be a dominant agenda setter in Thai politics if he effectively establishes a focused set of priorities.

In principle, these three branches of power are involved in making policy by making coordination and agreement across the branches to ensure and influence the passing of policies. Apart from the idea of those three separated power branches, it can be noted that ideas for making public policy

may come from several other sources. One may be an electoral commitment by the government parties. A second may be the bureaucrats who are working for the government. The last source comes from public outcry or pressure imposed by interest groups. As in any democratic political system, political parties in Thailand represent many political, social, economic, and ethnic interests.

It can be remarked that the institutional arrangement of telecommunications policy making in Thailand is remarkable for its multitude of actors and its fragmentation of authority and power as well as vested interests. This remark reflects the feature of the institutional framework of policy agenda that is presented in the next chapter.

### **Discussion, Presentation, and Analysis**

This chapter describes the results of the study by outlining how the variables of the policy process framework appear to be linked to policy agenda. The primary concern of this work is the process of policy agenda setting, or, the “pre-decision processes” from issue recognition to decision agenda setting in telecommunications policy. The areas of implementation and evaluation are beyond the scope of this study.

As time was constrained, this study chooses to limit discussion on only two first issues: privatization and concession conversion. It begins with identifying the participants in the policy community of Thai telecommunications? policy. Using these variables in this study as the analytical framework is expected to have a strong explanation power in terms of analyzing the process of policy agenda setting in which policy participants are involved in issue recognition, proposal formulation, and politics: it explains how events and activities in three streams – problems, policies, and politics – can converge, creating a policy window that enables an issue to achieve agenda status.

As discussed in the literature review, the policy community is one important part in the policy-making process and the members in the community often

play their roles in influencing policy decisions. The policy community is defined as those actors that specialize in a particular policy area and regulatory follow, serve, and seek to influence the course of policy making in that area. It serves as a label for shared experience, frequently of communication and staff interchanges. Those participants in the policy community are those who are attentive to and undertake to influence policy outcomes from inception through execution, and who have advantages in encouraging bargaining in policy resolution. Therefore, both terms - the participants and the policy community, are used in this study interchangeably, meaning "policy participants."

For a major policy area like telecommunications policy, the policy participants imply a very large number of groups or individuals. The participants in this study, therefore, are grouped into four predominant sectors: the political sector, the bureaucratic sector, the business sector, and the interest group sector. Each sector or individual in each sector is assumed to be able to create agendas of issues, then carry out strategies of action which match particular channels to influence policy agendas.

The interviewees were asked which groups or individuals they perceived to be the most important ones in the telecommunications policy agenda setting, and why they considered those groups or individuals to be important. Thus, in the interview record, the researcher identified each citation of an important player as a group and as an individual separately with regarding such interview to have cited a group or individuals if the interviewees mentioned it both directly or indirectly. In responding to the question of individual key players, some interviewees either named a person directly as a key player or named an individual who represented the group; however, a few interviewees seemed to be reluctant to point out the certain key players directly. In responding to the question of the key group player, most interviewees pointed to the agencies of the four groups directly; some named the agency only, while others named a mixture of agencies together. Therefore, whenever the data from the interview can be translated to have precise meaning, the researcher regards such meaning to be the citation.



Within the political sector, the interviewees commonly cited the government or the cabinet as the key player in policy decision-making, following by the parliament and the political parties, respectively. Yet, they accepted that in reality the government is not a unified actor that formulated telecommunications policy, as many other departments and agencies within particular areas of the government also play a role at varying points in the process. Some interviewees, however, argued that it is the government that determined the behavior of those in the political group and used them to pursue its own interests. Despite evidence suggesting governmental influence on policy agenda, when reviewing the literature the researcher found that no study in Thailand has examined governmental agenda setting over telecommunications service issues. Thus, we cannot be sure whether the government or the Prime Minister is influential on telecommunications policy agenda without taking into account other factors or actors that may influence policy agenda.

Most interviewees also agreed that the government acts as an autonomous institution. They believed that the government made decisions without consultation with any group or institution. In addition, the government, especially Thaksin's government, often used its influential powers to satisfy legislation in both houses of parliament.

The Parliament as a whole was described by the interviewees as an inactive participant in the process of telecommunications policy making. However, some prominent agencies in the Parliament that should be mentioned here are the House Standing Committee on Communication and Telecommunications (HSCT) and the Senate Standing Committee on Telecommunications (SSCT). These two groups have sometimes worked together as working groups focusing on issues involving telecommunications services, yet, mostly they have worked separately. They study, analyze, supervise, recommend, and sometimes control whatever comes to be issues discussion in the houses.

When the government announces that telecommunication services would be liberalized, the issue of fair and efficient marketplace for business and consumers must be considered, and that is the responsibility of the Ministry

of Commerce (MOC). Since telecommunications services are seen as trade in services, they are considered as part of the commercial affairs that the MOC and their trade representative offices must be concerned about in terms of unfair trade in services. Among other things, this agency has responsibility for competition policy development by fostering the growth of business, promoting a fair and efficient marketplace for business and consumers, encouraging the incumbent to enter into new markets, advocating industry and consumer interests, and providing competition policies. The ultimate objective is to give all industries a fair advantage. Its mandate is to develop the information technological industry and policy and ensure that appropriate levers are in place to achieve the goals. This agency is the leader in developing draft laws relating to the telecommunications infrastructure throughout the country.

Discussing the position of the government, the bureaucratic environment of departments or branches often became the focus of the debate. In the bureaucratic structure, those agencies represent a decentralized bureaucracy with a rather loose hierarchy. Much of the way in which the bureaucracy operated is based on the public service criteria and regulatory practices. Individuals within the bureaucrats have been largely trained in the legal field and are concerned about regulatory practices, not the market. It was proposed by an interviewee that since understanding of a market-based approach requires some forms of economic training, the composition of the current bureaucracy could explain the slow penetration of market-based instruments in telecommunications policy reform.

Although the authority for regulating the telecommunications operation falls to TOT and CAT, both of them have to share their power with a number of other administrative agencies, including the government, NESDB, MOTC, MOF, and so on. This overlapping authority has led to tensions among these different agencies.

The business sector is the one which was expected to be ranked among the key players. In this study, the business sector refers to those companies providing and operating telecommunications services in Thailand.

Those companies do various kinds of business in the telecommunications market. For a long period of time Thailand industry was under the supervision of the two state enterprises – TOT and CAT. Thus, the telecom business companies could operate and provide telecommunications services under concession grants from TOT and CAT. As a result, since the first grants of concession there have not been many telecom companies in Thailand.

In discussing the reason why the business sector is perceived by the interviewees as the key player in telecommunications policy, most interviewees gave the common view that there are two points: the organization's participation and representation in the telecommunication policy process.

Looking back to the lengthy history of political involvement of the telecom companies, most interviewees agreed that the four big companies held a private oligopoly over the supply and operation of telecommunications services, and have represented all other companies and acted as the leader in telecommunications sectors in charge of developing policy proposals to telecommunications and laws/regulations. These companies also cooperate, advise, educate, propose, or oppose government agencies involved in telecommunications industry matters.

Interestingly, the interviewees in the business sector did not perceive itself to be a direct player in the telecommunications policy development process. They insisted that only the government agencies have power in terms of telecommunications policy, and that companies can only make informal recommendations to the government to ensure the direction of the industry”

In theory, interest groups are recognized as an important player through participation in the policy process and an organized association which engages in activity relative to the government and the society. The range of these groups is wide, with business and labor enjoying considerable prominence which included the group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), journalists, the media, academics, analysts, and so on.

In addition to the issue of concession conversions debate, laws and practices involve telecommunications policy, such as the NTC setting up what? and the privatization planning are also being debated among those interest groups.

In reviewing documents and interview records, the researcher also found that those interest groups have participated regularly at telecommunications proceedings, making submissions to public hearings, releasing publications, attending conferences, meetings, and hearings whenever the issues were of public interest. The similarity of these organizations' activities, however, is also a reason for interviewees blending them together, which may have reduced their impact on policy.

The last interest group for this study includes the media, which are seen as a prestigious and independent group in society. Historical events have shown that on some occasions the media have influenced the policy making process because, in part, the public has perceived social and political reality as well as public policy through the lenses of the media. Besides, political actors, policy makers, bureaucrats, companies, and all other groups or individuals in the society are likely to passage their views, perceptions or activities to going public attention through the media channels, either in the newspaper or on radio or television.

The researcher also found that when focusing on the key players of the two prominent issues, the privatization and concession conversion, to find what sectors and individuals could be outstanding actors, the interviewees cited different key players when discussing different issues. Within the separate particular issues of privatization and concession conversion, there was a broad diversity of agencies identified by at least 20 interviewees among the 25 as to the important players in the issues. For example, TOT and CAT were cited as key players for privatization, yet the business sector was cited as key player in the issue of concession conversion.

Concerning the privatization issue, although several actors both in and outside the government and the researcher anticipated that the key players would be groups in the business sectors that are affected by the issue directly and be the ones with the greatest potential to influence the policy agenda, the result turned out to be the bureaucratic sector. TOT and CAT were cited as the key players influencing the issue during the agenda setting. During the interviews, no interviewees mentioned political actors who, in fact, govern the privatization programs and push the issue to the policy agenda. However, when the researcher asked whether or not the situation of the government changed when the Prime Minister or Minister of MOTC changed and would affect the privatization plan, then most of the interviewees conceded the government or the political sector to be another key player. The Cabinet and the Prime Minister thus were cited as other key players in the process to determine the privatization issue or proposal. The MOF was not cited as a key player in the policy agenda setting even when focusing on the Minister of MOF himself; the interviewees still did not perceive him as a key player.

The business sector and other interest groups were also cited by a few interviewees to be the key players in the privatization issue as well, yet at a much lower rate than those in the political sector and TOT/CAT. The reason was that the process of privatization involves the plan, action, and the perception of only people and organization that will be privatized and those that command privatization. The advantages or disadvantages of the privatization will be faced only by the government and TOT/CAT and not someone else. Besides, nobody can get involved in the process of privatization; thus, this may be the reason why can the business sector and other interest groups be not the key players in privatization. It is offered that the only thing we can do is that the public, including the media, must examine and watch closely whatever affects the privatization process and how it will affect the state and citizens.

## **Discussion of the Findings and Conclusion**

This study examines telecommunications policy issues through the use of a case study, looking at what the agenda status is for those issues. The study is concerned with three streams: problems, policies, and politics, which can create a policy window that raises an issue to the decision agenda.

The main task of this dissertation is to understand the agenda setting process, as the pre-stage of the policymaking process, and to examine factors that influence the status of telecommunications policy agenda. It considers why some issues rise on government agendas while others are neglect, and why people in and around the government pay serious attention to some alternatives. The study thus extends agenda-setting theory by incorporating the political actions and intentions of policy participants in influencing policy agenda. The researcher believes that this approach of studying fits well with the subject under study. The underlying assumption is that telecommunications policy is better understood if they are placed in their historical and political context, and that agenda setting matters - that what get considered, or not, affect the end results of the policy process.

This study is significant for various reasons. First, the telecommunications policy involves national wealth and power, while at the same time creates opportunities and conflict of interest among different groups. The activities of competing groups, which may include actual or threatened violence, in the policy process illustrate the importance of telecommunications policy. Second, Thailand now is on the way to implementing telecommunications reform policy. The transition period from monopoly to liberalization approach has been taken for a long period of time, since 1991. During this period, there have been some changes both in the political and economic situation associated with huge interests gaining from doing telecommunications business. Third, the telecommunications policy involves several issues and programs that have led to conflicts of interests among various interest groups, both inside and outside the government. In the complex and dynamic arena of agenda setting, these groups place effort in using various types of strategies and interactions

to influence the rise or fall of decision making in all issues concerning telecommunications policy. Fourth, agenda-setting research is important because it studies the pre-stage of the policy process. The success or failure of the pre-stage can lead to the success or failure of the following stage of the policy process. Since the agenda setting is complex and dynamic, this study helps determine whether the policy participants are generally regarded as powerful forces in the policy-making process, and actually do influence policy agendas and subsequent policy outcomes. Despite the complexities and difficulties of the policy agenda setting, attempting to understand how and why certain issues are selected for political attention, as well as how agendas of issues are influenced by others and interrelated with each other in the policy-making process, is important to understanding policy change.

The study found that the analytical framework helped a great deal in explaining the process and policy participants due to its comprehensive elements. The framework concerns four variables: problems, policies, and politics streams, and window opportunity, which help to explain internal dynamics and trade-offs between criteria in agenda setting. Thus, it helps explain how political changes, policy ideas, and recognition of issues can interact to create a window of opportunity to achieve agenda status.

The interviewees present perspectives that highlight the participation of various groups in policy making. Concerning the analytical framework, the perspectives of those interviewees on the process of privatization and concession conversion issues can coincide. If the analytical framework developed from perspectives in group theory could explain the policy making by which the privatization and concession conversion issues were created, the following scenarios should apply.

The creation of the privatization and concession conversion issues is the result of a struggle among diverse groups that competed to advance their interests; and the government is only one among these groups, and its task is to play the role of arbiter and to oversee the marketplace within which these groups operated.

Moreover, the decisions to create privatization and concession conversion plans are taken without the balancing participation of other potential players. This is a finding which would not have been predicted by the group theory, that the policy environment provide virtually equal chances to various groups and players to become involved in telecommunications policy making.

In conclusion, the perspectives of the three models are all applicable for the study in terms of the presupposition that focusing on an environment where various groups are able to compete to advance their interests. Except for bureaucratic politics and group theory, which do not offer a good explanation of the policy making for the private sector, each perspective has offered a different explanation of the policy and each cannot provide a complete understanding of the framework.

In the final analysis, the researcher agrees that the three approaches are useful for analyzing telecommunications policy initiation and development. However, using only a single framework is not adequate for her study in order to fully describe both the policy process and as a useful predictor. With the combination of those three models in her analytical framework, the study yields a more telling explanation and successful predictive model of the policy process. In addition, the study gains more ability to successfully describe and predict the finding outcomes.

Specifically, comments regarding the analytical framework with the importance of variables, missing variables, or the sequence of events are probed. Overall responses to the framework from 24 of the 27 interviewees is very positive. They see the framework as a very good illustration of the dynamics surrounding the agenda-setting process. Most of them feel that the politics stream is the most important factor that influenced the agendas of privatization and concession conversion issues. The problems and the policy streams are also essential factors in yielding the results of agenda. More than 75% of interviewees identify variables in consistency with the analysis of documents. All 27 participants believe that power and interest are more likely to influence policy issues which are resolved through lobbying, personal contracts, and



bargaining, rather than through the media or increased public awareness and involvement.

In this study, three main observations are offered. First, telecommunications policy is not free of politics. The policy process by which is established is highly political, as suggested by both the content of the policy and the identification of its direct beneficiaries. The study has shown that this policy is formulated in a manner that permitted the transmission of resources to a political elite and allowed the government to act as a dominant actor. The decision to create the issues in telecommunications policy is a political decision. The privatization and concession conversion programs are created without a call for tenders and with less involvement of other policy participants.

Second, the study demonstrates that the privatization and the concession conversion issues are sensitive to pressure, and, in fact are greatly influenced by the country's specificities and unique national characteristics. The political structure of the country placed limits and constraints on the participation of some potential actors while providing more power to the government, enabling it to act autonomously through the use of different strategies.

Finally, it is the conclusion that policy decisions concerning the privatization and the concession conversion issues should be made as major national economic policy decisions, not as a minor decisions to be made within the stakeholders.

This paper would be incomplete if it did not offer suggestions as to how the following topic would be valuable in terms of contributions to the further study of public policy.

*First*, further research needs to be done with testing theory, confirming that procedures used are repeatable and address the acknowledged limitations of this research. Repeating this research yet contacting other individuals with direct knowledge of the telecommunications policy process and arriving at similar conclusions would confirm the procedures and the elements of the policy theory and would also help confirm that the interview approach, questions, and data analysis are sound.

*Second*, rather than depending only qualitative research, the multiple method should be focused on estimating missing data and utilizing various public opinions. Future researchers therefore should make more effort to estimate the missing data of public opinion.

*Third*, understanding of the ways in which public policy interacts with the forces that shape competition could benefit from further work.

*Fourth*, a longitudinal study of the policy process impact of the change of government is also needed.

*Fifth*, the researcher should construct an analytical framework based on the games metaphor and examine the ways in which other games influence agenda setting in order to help explain the various forces and activities that affect agenda setting in public policy. This could also be organized according to policy areas such as human services, health, and so on.

*Sixth*, a study should be done to examine the concept advocacy and factors associated with these variables to better understand their significance in the policy process.

*Seventh*, a study should be conducted to compare and contrast the perceptions of elected and appointed officials who are involved in the issues and those not involved in the issues toward public policies associated with the issue debate.

*Eighth*, future research should compare study of telecommunications policy development in countries such as Thailand and China, which have many similar characteristics but many different ones as well. It would be informative to compare and contrast the telecommunications policy communities, policy process, and policy outcomes and impacts in both countries to investigate how the two different styles of policy development affect the entire policy process. A study such as this would identified the differences between the countries in terms of who participates and who wields power, and it would also demonstrate how formal processes, or lack thereof, affect each nation's public policies on socio-economics issues such as universal access and essential services.

In conclusion, the research results<sup>2</sup> should lead to the further studies by using an analytical framework that consists of various main factors (politics, problems, and policy streams). Each factor can be studied in depth into those sub-factors, such as behavior of policy community, different problems of individual and organization both in Thailand and other countries. By doing this, the suggested further studies will not only confirm the results<sup>2</sup> of this study and the strength of the analytical framework but will cover the gaps that have been omitted in this study. Moreover, the results<sup>2</sup> of this study may be applied to preventing or resolving some certain problems that would occur while setting other policy agendas which are in a similar environment as telecommunications policy. Those policies are also embodied in the context of such factors as using the analytical framework; thus, applying the research results to other organizations will be useful.

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