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MEDIA AND POLITICS



CONTENTS

pg. 3

MEDIA AS A WEAPON IN THE BATTLE OF POLITICS IN INDONESIA

By Afriska Anditha

pg. 5

THE (UN)FREEDOM OF SINGAPORE'S MEDIA

By Celine Foo

pg. 7

OF MEDIA, POLITICS, AND HOW ONE AFFECTS THE OTHER IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Earl Alcantara

pg. 9

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN CAMBODIA

By Kimchann Chon

pg. 11

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAO PDR)

By Phaiboun Panyasavath (Leo)

pg. 13

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF THAILAND

By Nutnapuk Torcheep (Milko)

pg. 16

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF VIETNAM

By Nga Thuy Nguyen

pg. 18

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF MALAYSIA

By Mohd Shahmirzzy Bin Kelvin Sembai
(Shaz)

pg. 20

WHEN POLITICS AND MEDIA CLASH

By Sophia Wong

pg. 22

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF MYANMAR

By Thinn Nay Chi Sun

MEDIA AS A WEAPON IN THE BATTLE OF POLITICS IN INDONESIA

BY AFRISKA

It is general knowledge that media has an essential role in our lives. The high level of desire to communicate among individuals or/and group is fulfilled by media. In other words, media has become one of our main necessities.

In Indonesia, media functions both to communicate and to share information. Also, they have the ability to change people's views towards some things, one of them is politics. If you surf through Indonesian community Facebook page, you will be able to find many posts about politics. Nonetheless, some of those posts are considered to be provocative and tend to spread hate towards specific politicians.



One of example of a case like this was during the election of the governor of Jakarta. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok was accused of saying blasphemous words towards one religion, which was practiced by a majority of people in Indonesia. He mentioned about the Holy Quran in one of his campaigns.

In fact, Ahok happens to be a very good and honest leader of Jakarta. He has been making many significant improvements in Jakarta since 2012, such as changing the prostitution area into a very useful garden which can be enjoyed by people. As a result, he has received four awards during his being a governor of Jakarta. On top of that, his determination against corruption makes him very strict on the government employees. He is not reluctant to fire those employees who come late and skip a day of work without essential reasons.

This year, he is going for election again. However, many people and groups hyperbolise his 'blasphemous' words to kick him out of the election. The effect that media gives is fast. The news has spread not only in Indonesia, but it has also spread to media in the other side of the world such as The Guardian from the United Kingdom, and the United States' New York Times. Furthermore, in Indonesia, discussions, seminars, and actions related to that case has appeared since then.

Media definitely plays a significant role during the election. They are also used by many groups to change people's point of view towards Ahok by posting many hoax articles about him. Nevertheless, many people believe that those groups are owned or controlled by the rivals of Ahok in political world. The headline of the articles sounds very provocative and is not accordance with the content. Accordingly, many people who only read the headline believe the news and change their point of views towards Ahok.

As a result, at the first round of the election, Ahok succeeds to get 42,99% while his rivals get 17,07% and 39,95%. However, on the second round, because of the headlines spread on media, the percentage which Ahok gets decreases to 42,05%. This made him fail to continue his duty as Jakarta's governor for the next five years.

After discussing about this case, it can be said that media is indirectly used as the tool to influence people, since people will trust media wholeheartedly. Especially in political world, media are the weapon in the battle of politics.

THE (UN)FREEDOM OF SINGAPORE'S MEDIA

BY CELINE

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is currently
unavailable

The Media in Singapore, both print and broadcast in particular, is highly regulated by the state. The media environment is essentially dominated by two companies, Mediacorp and Singapore Press Holdings, both of which have close links to our ruling party – the People's Action Party (PAP).

The former for example, has a large portion of its shares owned by Temasek Holdings, which is the investment arm of the government, while the latter has its management shareholders and leadership positions appointed by the Minister of Information, Communications and the Arts.

It is therefore no secret that print and broadcast media in Singapore tends to express a pro-government stance, while censoring politically sensitive topics. On one hand, one may critique Singapore for heavily constraining freedom of speech and encouraging biasness in the industry towards government-friendly news, especially since the country has been ranked 153 of 180 countries worldwide by the Press Freedom Index. On the other however, one may also say that it is necessary for government intervention in this space so as to not leave the media market to the free hand, which may potentially result in the publication of content that can harm racial and religious sensitivities in a multi-racial and multi-religious Singapore.

The state does not take lightly on people who step out of line in print and broadcast media, and this stance extends to the relatively new realm of social media as well. Social Media is undoubtedly a whole new ball game for regulation with all the grey areas and controversies, but Singapore has not spared those who have published online material that the government deems harmful to society, or upsetting to the government. For instance, a then 16 year-old blogger named Amos Yee was arrested and sentenced to jail in 2015 for posting a YouTube video that “wounded... religious feelings” with “threatening, abusive or insulting communication”, as well as for criticizing the first Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew. It is no surprise then that journalists and even ordinary citizens in Singapore regularly practice self-censorship to avoid the harsh ramifications that the state can bring down on them.



OF MEDIA, POLITICS, AND HOW ONE AFFECTS THE OTHER IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY EARL



In the Philippines, the citizens are allowed to vote and elect leaders that they want. Before this, they must be knowledgeable about the politicians who will serve the country in the future. In order for them to be involved and know the politicians better, they need to be informed of relevant information regarding their platforms and background. The voting public has been given a lot of avenues to know their leaders better. Today, the media has become one of the instruments in the realization of democratic ideals by the citizens. However, the media can also be responsible for the public's discontent in the government. Hence, the tendency to accentuate the negative. But, what really is the role of media that creates an impact for the Filipinos?

There are different types of media in the Philippines but mass media form part of a typical Filipino's existence. Television, radio, newspapers, and the internet have become daily sources of information, opinion, entertainment, instruction, and advertising to name a few. These types of media play a big role in Philippine politics. Undeniably, it can be a powerful instrument of persuasion or manipulation. They can serve the interests of the most dominant body controlling it. Mass media also reflects society, just as society mirrors the type of media it possesses. Through media, one can read, hear, or see a nation's political, economic, and social existence.



For example, extrajudicial killings are prevalent today in the Philippines and the media contributes to the public perception of other countries to the leadership of our president. After all, words that are heard or read can easily translate to opinions that may give a glimpse of the entire nation. From another point of view, mass media may be seen as instruments that enable the Filipinos to communicate with their leaders. It can also be used to disseminate public information.

The relationship between Philippine politics and media is quite dependent and almost parasitic. The government and politicians communicate to the people through the media and the people respond also through this medium. Hence, this highlights the importance of media in politics in the country.

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN CAMBODIA

BY KIMCHANN



Samdech Hun Sen,
Cambodian Prime
Minister 
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Kem Sokha 
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A Thai factory was burned by rioters in 2003, Cambodia



Cambodia-Thailand border conflict in 2008

In Cambodia, since technology plays a crucial role in the era of globalization in connecting and integrating countries from every corner of the world, it has been implemented in almost every governmental and private sectors. It is considered as an important element to accelerate production process and system. The Cambodian government is currently active in using and fostering technology factor in administration and, especially in politics. The political parties use media, especially Social Network Sites (SNS) like Facebook, as an effective way to manage and boost working process.

SNS provides them an efficient approach to the parties' members and the citizens. Every updated event can be shared to different people from various tasks and duties. Because of this quick sharing, the parties are able to strengthen their strategies. For instance, since the parties' members work in different positions and locations, it is really hard to connect and work with together as a team without technology. In addition, SNS is a powerful method of spreading online information since most Cambodian switched from accessing news and information through radio and television to SNS. In this sense, nowadays, people, need a widely platform which contains independence and official information, news, and knowledge.

Moreover, by online accessing with SNS, political parties can easily improve their popularity. In Facebook as an example, people can easily interact with their arguments on a particular topic. Hence, observation can be made anytime. Furthermore, the governmental and opposition parties use Facebook to show their activities and follow up on citizen's comments. It provides them a wide rank of supporters to express concerns and needs. By the way, since both governmental and opposition parties have used the same way to connect people and infiltrate their supporters, this competitiveness led to consequences in the country. For instance, sensitive issues such as border conflicts, historical wounds, and corruption have raised by opposition parties to invoke people to anticipate in politics. Hence, some group of people take it over nationalism. Then it turned to chauvinism which make people hate and express hostile attitude toward each other.



In addition to the huge effectiveness of media integration, the political parties benefit much more on financial management. Before the trend of technology in Cambodia, campaign was broadcasted through television and radio. These methods costs much on the parties' budget by paying on TV and radio channels as a sponsor. On the other hand, these methods have not worked well for opposition parties since national frequency is controlled by Minister of Information. They can spend less on time and materials which are needed to spread such as transportation, accommodation, posters, and flyers. Also, channels of independent press news take SNS, besides radio, as a main field to sensitive news. For instance, Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) are Cambodia-focus because of people trust on detail and independent news.

Last but not least, in politics, media is a crucial tool to influence people since accessibility to technology is moving forward. It brings a great impact to both citizen and political parties such as efficient approach and interaction, financial saving, and analyzing data. Meanwhile, it can cause many consequences while they push too hard and lost balance of nationalism on the competition. So, both sides of the political parties need to focus more on prosperity and peace because people need to live together with respects and mutual understanding by avoiding prejudice and stereotype. At the same time, we need to take history as lessons and make up for the mistakes in a under the purpose of sustainable development and globalization toward shared future.

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAO PDR)

BY LEO



Laos is a politically one-state party which is administrated by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) since the revolution in 1975. The government owns and supervises all media outlet which means all the media productions must be checked by government officials before being published or broadcasted. TV Programs, shows or news that contrasts to our culture, tradition or aim to rebel politics are not allowed to be published or broadcasted.

In Laos, there is a Law against Cybercrime which was legislated in 2015. The essence of this law is to provide security for the computer system, against untrue information, protect individual rights, cyber harassment, etc.

There are many kinds of media in Laos such as television, radio, magazines and newspapers. Most common sources of news for Lao people are television and radio because it is easier to access and cheaper than other sources. Newspaper's market does not gain high volume as radio and television, however newspaper in Laos is published in three main languages included Pasason (The People) and Vientiane Mai (Vientiane Message) which are published in Lao language, Vientiane Times published in English and Le Renovateur published in French. Lao government uses media to clarify their policies, raise awareness in the areas of protecting and developing the country, promote our cultural and traditional activities in order to preserve them.

Nowadays social media is playing a very essential role in Laos and it has the potential to increase its influence more and more. It is seen that social media is used a channel for the citizens to criticize and report to the government about many issues such as officials corruption, land acquisition, deforestation, governmental projects etc.

For example: Illegally timber trading and deforestation issues in Laos are very difficult to be controlled by many factors. A few years ago, with the emerging of social media, those mentioned issues are decreased rapidly because many people uploaded pictures and articles they have faced through social media especially Facebook which is very popular in Laos.



Another example: there are some banana plantations invested by Chinese enterprises, used chemical fertilizers which is environmentally damaged and caused many diseases to the workers who work on the plantations. After people uploaded proofs and articles about the issue on social media, those plantations were closed by the government immediately. So we could say that the use of social media is one of the fastest ways to report issues to the government to increase level of transparency in our society and to solve urgently.

As a result, Lao government is sometimes criticized by other countries or international organizations about the Human Rights concerning the Rights of Expression. But I think every single country has their own indigenous issues and they all need the solutions which are suitable for the context of its current situation. I think no one could understand the issues in our country as well as our own people.

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF THAILAND

BY MILKO



The media is an important part of our lives now. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. It is one of the most influential means among people in every societies due to the fact that technology are spreading throughout every corner of society. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet. The general public typically relies on the media to provide information regarding political issues, social issues, entertainment, and economic issue. News outlets have a major influence on the general public and major impact on the public's opinion on certain topics. In many cases, the media is the only source that the general public relies on news.

In Thailand, there are only a few even though the numbers of social network user are amongst one of the highest of the world, especially the use of Facebook and youtube. The media has immense power within Thai democracy because just all Thai get news from the Media rather than from other people or the other sources. In thai political system, the media perform a number of function important to the democratic process. So Thai politicians started using Facebook and Twitter in 2009 and 2010. Politicians and social commentators usually post thoughts on political matters, photos, links to their articles, and YouTube links of interviews.

The Bangkok shutdown The Bangkok shutdown, that is the role of the social movement in democratization and this incident was part of anti-government (Yingluck Shinawatra). The demonstrators occupied many parts in the heart of Bangkok, such as Business district, airport, government office and another city to pressure the government.



They create political activity space on social media so called as Facebook Mob. There were heavily usage of social media in order to communicate and share the photos, person who shares the same opinion. They change their Facebook profile pictures either to protest against government and Amnesty bill. Media is a powerful tool for spreading information. It reaches faster and farther than any communication method to date, that is the reason why they use media for political activity.

Since 1990's the military had practically total control of print and broadcast media. Following the end of military dictatorship in the early 1990's media became freer but several major TV and radio-stations remain under military ownership and mainstream media is still largely under elite control.



Thai government and military control of the media. The media are free to criticize government policies, but media tend to exercise self-censorship. The media in Thailand is under the broad supervision of the Public Relations Department in the office of the Prime Minister. For Case study Prayuth Chan-o-cha (Prime Ministry of Thailand), says has power to execute reports if the media don't have to support the government.

As evidenced by the study, media and government control is something that is affecting many nations currently, and not only Thailand. In order to attain media freedom free of any kind of government interference, we need proper legislations to be passed by the governments to guarantee lack of that involvement by government. But citizens are able to freely express their views on economic, political, and social issues, there will be an abundance of information, both in the mainstream and alternative media spheres, from which the public can evaluate what is best for themselves and society.



MEDIA AND POLITICS OF VIETNAM

BY NGA



There has been a noticeable rise of social media in Vietnam's politics in recent years. Therefore, the public has been better informed about politics and economic concerns. Especially, if given information about the corruption cases in Vietnam's government, media plays an important role in raising people's awareness of preventing corruptions, and its consequences to the society and the development of the country. Therefore, everybody notices the alarming corruption situation in Vietnam.

Besides, the government uses interactive functions of the social media to generate content and public interest to support their own positions and bolster their popularity. Minister of Health Nguyen Thi Kim Tien had a facebook account where people can message and ask about what issues they are confused of in health policies.

Media can help people widen their knowledge in political aspect. However, media is still censored by the government. After the Revolutionary Wars (1945-1975), many opposition forces evolve, and they are always trying to spread the idea of fighting against Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnam's government issued a lot of laws to prevent opposite forces from propaganda against the state. In Article 88, Penal Code 2009, it is written that: Those who propagate against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam shall be sentenced to between three and twelve years of imprisonment. In the case of committing more serious crimes, the offenders shall be sentenced between ten and twenty years of imprisonment.

In 2016, "Me Nam" Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh was arrested for conducting propaganda against Socialist Republic of Vietnam, criticizing one-party system, human rights violations and corruption of the government. In June 29th 2017, she was sentenced to 10 years to imprisonment by a court in Khanh Hoa province after being found guilty of publishing propaganda against the country under Article 88. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said "Article 88 effectively makes it a crime for any Vietnamese citizen to enjoy the fundamental freedom to express an opinion, to discuss or to question the Government and its policies," and accused of the arrest of Me Nam, as well as Vietnam's domestic laws on human rights and demanded to release her.



Media plays an important role in informing people of the political issues nowadays, also helps the government public their policy, economic and political situations. However, it could be used to propagate information against the government or to orient people to the wrong ways if they do not have the ability to select and process information. Therefore, Vietnam's government is still applying laws to prevent propaganda against the state.

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF MALAYSIA

BY SHAZ



Mainstream and alternative media play an important role in circulating powerful narratives within and often beyond a country's borders. In the developing world, national development and modernization have obviously been the overriding concern and objective of most political leaders. This leads to many government leaders in the developing world to protect and safeguard the interests of its members by justifying their control over the media with supposedly noble intention of national development and to ensure that the media do not fall into the wrong hands. In other words, state control over the mainstream media has clearly been justified in the name of national development as well as national security.

In this regard, mainstream media has often been reminded by the Malaysia's ruling government of their social responsibility to partner with the government in this collective project of nation building. Or, at the very least, are not expected to play an adversarial role in their interaction with the state. This seemingly innocuous relationship has been sustained in a manner that encouraged the compliant media to sing praises of the government's economic endeavors and discouraged even genuine and constructive criticisms of the government and its developmental policies and projects.

During general elections, the government expects Malaysia's mainstream media not only to propagate but also to flaunt to the whole country with the ruling government's achievements, particularly in the area of socioeconomic development. The mainstream press depicts the government leaders as having a naturalized affinity with the general populace in terms of socioeconomic aspirations and goals. This wide public pronouncement of the incumbent BN's economic successes is facilitated by the media's deliberate narrowing, if not closure, of access for the other contesting political parties. The opposition parties' stand on some issues and their policies on economic, political, and cultural matters are hardly heard by the electorate. Worse, the coverage of the opposition parties by the mainstream media often resulted in the former being depicted in the most negative light possible.

It is evident then that the mainstream Malaysian media contribute to the erosion of the Malaysian electorate's democratic right to information. Malaysians in general had been deprived of the opportunity to make informed choices when they went to the polls. Equally important is that the public sphere in Malaysian society has been further constrained so that ordinary citizens and concerned civil society groups have not been able to fully express their views and to directly participate in the country's democratic processes. As a result, the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press have been severely curbed.

WHEN POLITICS AND MEDIA CLASH

BY SOPHIA



Media and politics have always been powerful role players in shaping the stability and security of a country. Although often overlooked, these two bodies have been working hand in hand ever since. Whatever politics produce, media would talk about. And whatever media produce, politics would be affected. They having been coexisting, even when at times, these two bodies may not get along. Media's responsibility is very crucial in the spread of 'word'.

Irresponsible journalism such as fake news, misleading headlines, unchecked facts and biased or exaggerated articulation of news can lead to unintended public miscommunication and even social unrest. In the Philippines, for example, this exact situation has happened regarding president Duterte's latest tirade on the 'war on drugs'.

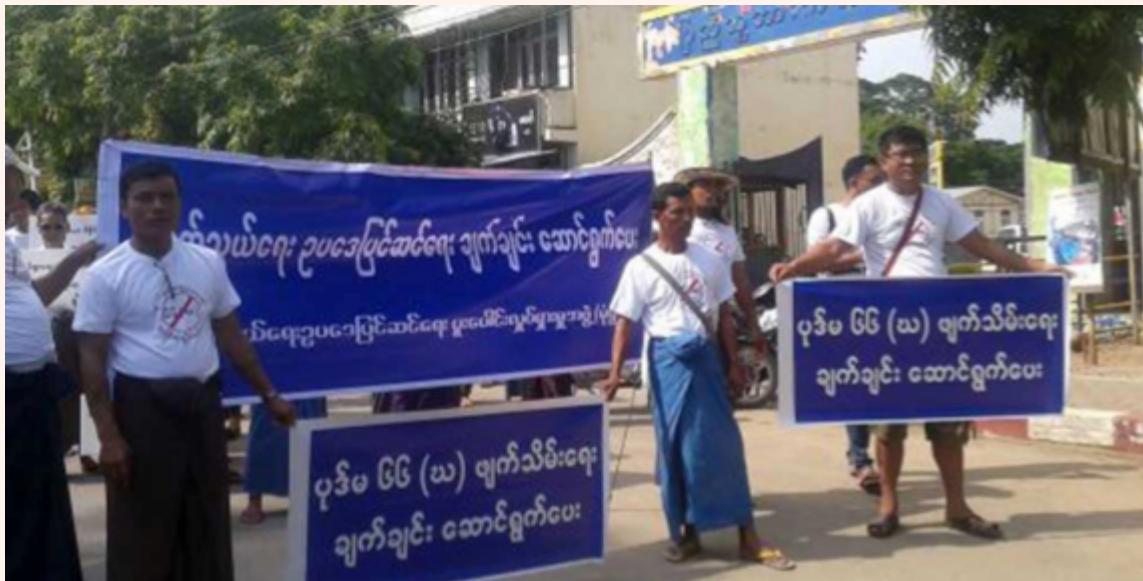
Duterte is indeed Philippines' most vocally vulgar president. He has been known for his verbal attacks on the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Former President Barrack Obama and even his predecessor, former president Benigno Aquino Jr. for giving their comments against the drug of war. Because of this, he is under the heat of international criticism. We cannot deny that media, whether international or local, has contributed to the shaping of this widespread public criticism. Media has the tendency to exaggerate on the president's vulgar statements instead of focusing on the actual content that the president is trying to convey to his audience. If you actually look at the full footage of the president's speech, you would find that these scandalous headlines and the written news reports have all been taken out of context. Hence, misunderstanding between the president and local and international audiences arise.



This kind of irresponsible journalism has caused social unrest in the country. Foreign investment and tourism rates have declined since the release of sensational news regarding the president. I personally believe that media has failed to see through the damage that they have inflicted. In the long term, their irresponsibility will be the detriment of their own country. Therefore, for us, the youth, we should learn from the past mistakes such as this one. In the age of media, we must know how to use it properly. We need to produce and accept only unbiased, true and well written media outputs. Our generation must learn the importance of responsible journalism.

MEDIA AND POLITICS OF MYANMAR

BY THINN



Media plays an important role around the world and also in Myanmar. In information technology age, the power of media became stronger and stronger day by day and placed as one of the essential for every country. As Myanmar's parliament opens, the world continues to watch closely to ensure that the country continues on the path towards democracy.

Media laws and a media regulatory framework remain central to the democratic process. New civilian government was formed in Myanmar in 2011, but for a long time its media policy is influenced by the ex-military officials in charge.

Until 2012, the vast majority had no access to news. The military government prevented the development of local media, fearing that armed groups based in the countryside might use them for propaganda purposes. A new media law came into effect in August 2015. The new government has announced plans to merge certain Ministries which are concerned with procedures associated with media legislation under Ministry of Information.

Both the civilian government and the military are criticized by Section 66(D) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law. It would leave people in the country at risk of imprisonment simply for sharing opinions online.

Under international human rights law and standards, restrictions on human right to freedom of expression are allowed for certain, narrowly defined purposes only, including protecting the rights and reputation of high-level government officials. Restrictions should be clear, detailed and well-defined in law, limited to those specified purposes, and necessary and proportionate to achieve their aim.

Both the civilian government and the military are criticized by Section 66(D) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law. It would leave people in the country at risk of imprisonment simply for sharing opinions online. Under international human rights law and standards, restrictions on human right to freedom of expression are allowed for certain, narrowly defined purposes only, including protecting the rights and reputation of high-level government officials. Restrictions should be clear, detailed and well-defined in law, limited to those specified purposes, and necessary and proportionate to achieve their aim.

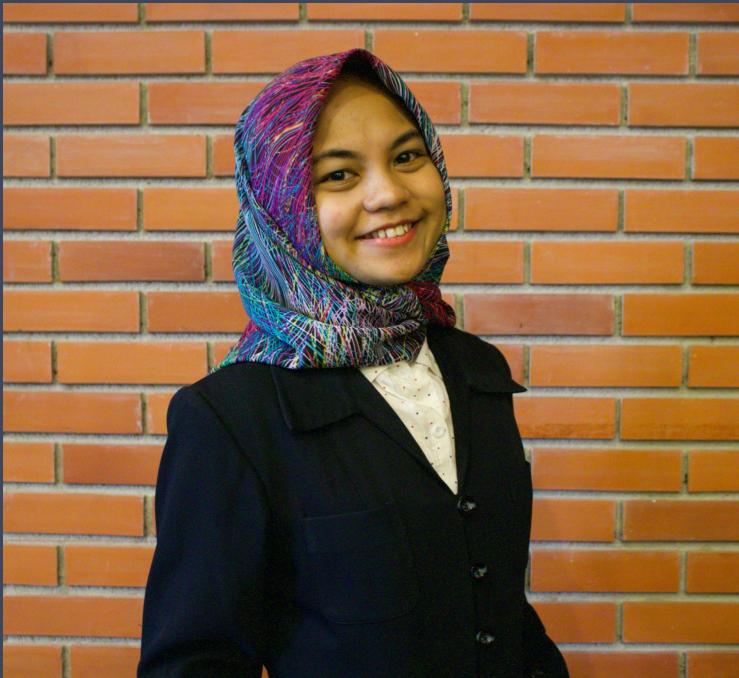
Government also uses media as a tool for propaganda. And it plays an important role in election campaigning process.

Media can create riots and religious conflicts by describing fake news. Since it is easy to access information from social media, it shouldn't create hate speech by insulting other community. Not only the government, but also the media should take responsibility of their news. International media can also influence domestic and international situation of the country. For example, BBC news mentioned about Bengali (so-called Rohingya) issue in Myanmar from Bengali side. It described Myanmar is violating human rights without mentioning terrorist actions of those Bengali. Thus, international community is forcing Myanmar government to accept them as citizens.

Media is a necessary evil for politics. It is needed to educate the public and act like a bridge between the government and citizens. For the betterment of the country, journalists, government and people should apply media effectively by amending some irrelevant laws and implementing realistic policies to use media in politics.



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