

Media and politics in south east asia assignment



Media and Politics in South East Asia Introduction Communication is both “ sending and receiving”. Without communication, there’s no understanding, in turn no motivation, manipulation and support for policies Politics (and politicians) must communicate. There could be emphasis on information or manipulation, depending on the people or the system involved.

Communication is strategic. It involves areas of attention, perception and orientation, values and evaluation, goal-seeking and decision-making. How powerful is the media? It provides information to as many people as possible.

Popular belief that media policy, or even the mere presence of media, can lead to democratic processes. The challenge however is finding the “ right” policy that will either serve the people or the elites in power. Media and politicians alike need their audiences. They have different interests, though media has one more permanent: to serve as a critic of society Emphasis on “ responsibility” for media Journalists and politicians both communicate and want to exert influence. It boils down to the question of “ Who is in charge? ” There is no denial that a free media is important for as long as they know what they re responsible for.

Media in South-East Asia As diverse as the political, social and cultural systems and norms existing in the region. Some are free, others restrained at different levels Presence of policies, laws and other regulations restricting the media for the sake of “ preserving harmony and diversity” Some are owned by government entities, others by businesses and elites Serving the agenda expected of them Different perceptions on its role in society Some see it as corrupt, irresponsible and unreliable Others see it as tool for freedom (e. . Philippines) Method to set political agendas Range of issues

and problems facing the industry Asian Crisis caused closure / merger / rationalization of publications and stations Existence of “ new media” such as blogs, social media, etc. Media and Politics in Singapore Has an extensive media industry disproportionate to its size.

Mostly owned by government (directly or indirectly), though commercially-operated Government has extensive control over the media “ toughest in the region” development of “ self-censorship”, with media careful of not disturbing its relation with the government controls “ necessary” to preserve racial harmony applying to local media extends to foreign media, even in the Internet History First newspaper: Singapore Chronicle (1824) Longest-running newspaper: Straits Times (1845) witnessed the developments in the country, from British colonial rule, merger with Malaysia, to full independence and rise of Lee Swan Yew and his party.

Straits Times is now part of Singapore Press Holdings (SSP), the largest print publishing company in Singapore. It owns a variety of newspapers in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, as well as magazines. Radio broadcasting came to Singapore in 1936 TV broadcasting was introduced in 1963. Full-color broadcasts commenced in 1974 Cable TV service called “ C. V. Cable Vision” was introduced in 1995. Ownership Structure All newspapers in the country must be publicly listed, and no single individual can own more than 3% of shares.

Shares are divided into “ ordinary” and “ management” shares, with the government having a say on who sits on the management of the company. Most radio stations are owned by the Singapore Government and allied

organizations, such as the National Trade Union Congress (. NET) and the Armed Forces. All TV stations are owned by Mediators, a commercial entity owned by Tamales, the country's investment arm. Government-owned media entities also has presence in the Internet, but independent blob sites and discussion forums exists, such as The Online Citizen.

Modes of Control and Censorship The Newspaper and Printing Press Act on 1974 requires all newspapers to obtain a permit with the government. This may be revoked anytime if proven in violation of the country's laws and policies. The same act requires the approval of Ministry of Communication and Information (MICA) on the sale or transfer of " management" or toting shares. MIMIC is also tasked to approve any resolution to the obtainment or dismissal of directors or staff of any newspaper.

Journalists may be sued under the Internal Security Act if they are accused as " extremists". The law provides for detention without trial. The Official Secrets Act prohibits publication of news related to national security and defense unless they have been officially cleared. Libel laws in Singapore are one of the most stringent in the region. Journalists may be sued for any comments that " hurt officials' reputations" The Media Development Authority (MAD) enforces the country's codes regarding TV, radio and film programming.

The Films Act of 1981 bans any film that offends a race or religion or " threatens national interest". " Political films" about Singapore or its politics are banned for exhibition in the country. Foreign newspapers and news magazines may be " gazetted" or have its circulation restricted if its found to

have “ objectionable” content “ detrimental to Singapore national interests”.

Some examples are The Economist and Far Eastern Economic Review.

Private ownership of satellite dishes is illegal in Singapore. Several orders.

However, this can only be considered as symbolic. Some bloggers and

websites have been sued by the government for posting content deemed

objectionable for them. Interaction between media and government

Singapore government Justifies the restrictions it imposes to the press as

necessary to preserve racial harmony and to promote “ nation-building”.

Critics define this as following the government’s official line, whereas the

government sets policy for the development of the press for the sake of its

established development goals.

Historical developments may give an explanation on why the country

decided to impose these restrictions Racial riots in the 1960s attributed to

stories released by Malay and Chinese press Corruption problems haunting

the press in the early days of independence, especially in the Chinese-

language newspapers SIS was introduced to ward off communists, but has

been extended to the media as well. Singapore admits its low rankings in

international surveys regarding freedom of expression and the press, but

defends its position that a free press is not appropriate for the country’s

model of development. Compared to other first-world countries, the

Singapore “ elected” government positions itself as a victim of the press;

that the “ unelected” press is in a position to protect only the vested

interests of its owners, hence, it must step in and prove that “ it is in charge”

Examples of cases filed against media personalities and entities: Sintering

case Nanning Sing Pap Journalists Jailed Prosecution of Business Times editor Patrick Daniel for leaking economic data ahead of official government announcement Woman's Affair feature of female People's Action Party members of parliament Singapore Democratic Party's online video conference Sex.

Violence. Family Values censorship issue Contrary to perception, Journalists in Singapore do not receive instructions on what to write. In practice, government uses a mix of strategies to influence media content, such as press conferences, release of documents, to threat of legal action Political figures would prefer editors that would come to the right conclusions independently instead of having Just mere functionaries or " puppets". This model of control has been successful not because of coercion but of consent.

Lee Swan Yew understood that media is a business, and that publishers and Journalists value more their bottom line than editorial freedom. Use of attractive pay schemes, stock options Forced mergers of Chinese and English presses to secure finances Changing landscape of the media The Internet has gave rise to alternative sources of information and opinion regarding Singapore, its society and politics. Sites such as The Online Citizen, Mr..

Brown, Tamales Review and Yawning Bread are popular for they host dissent as well as forums for discussion outside of government-sanctioned channels The government learned its ropes and swiftly responded to changing trends Requirement While non-profit / cause-oriented sites may exist, their future is uncertain, as the mainstream media extends its economic dominance in the

Internet As the country develops towards a more connected society, there is a recognition that dissent will be more difficult to curtail Sites may be closed and Journalists may be arrested, but there's no stopping citizens to spread information through other means (e-mail, social media) Mainstream media must realize the presence of alternative media, competing with them for attention and respect of the public As citizens become more comfortable with the alternative, government will have more difficulty in maintaining its hegemony Media and Politics in Thailand Western Influences – “ One common feature of media in less developed countries is that they have been transferred, directly or indirectly, from advanced industrial countries. ” – The first newspaper was published in 1884.

It was called “ The Bangkok Recorder”, edited by DRP. Dan Bradley, an American Missionary. – Radio was introduced by Prince Bureaucrat, a member of the royal family who studied in Europe. – Pathetic Radio Station (1930) – It was the major means of communication after 1932 coup to inform people about the political change. Wars During World War II, the Government of Punish Sonogram used mass media for a Nationalist Campaign and to raise Public Morale – so they honored Punish. – There was no positive news about the Allies. Only Radio Thailand and Radio Japan were being aired. – Moreover, Japanese troops were given free passage through Thai territory until August 15, 1945, the Surrender of Japan. The story of two fictitious characters – Ana Mum and Ana Kong was being aired to propagate the idea of the New Thai Society Punish Sonogram and his ideology of a ‘ civilized’ Thai society. State Control – Government Agencies (e. G. Post and Telegraph Department, Public Relations Department) controlled Radio Broadcasting

since its introduction until 1949. - From 1949, the Armed Forces (and other agencies) controlled radio broadcasting. - In 1975, the Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulation was set in place which constituted that every radio station must be " supervised and controlled" by the Radio and Television Administrative Board - from legal to technical aspects, from administrative to programming concerns. - During power struggle, control is made even tighter. Media is utilized as political resources. Media as a legitimizing tool
Media as a military weapon in staging a coup - Media used by new leaders to talk " directly" to the people Government made use of Radio Thailand. Prime Minister General Prep announced repeatedly that he had escorted the Royal Family to Karat and was safe with him, which was later confirmed by the Queen. The coup ended in failure after three days. Society and Manipulation - Thailand in 1970 was called " The Politics of Manipulation". It was against this backdrop that the tragedy on 14 October 1973 unfolded. The flames were stoked in June 1973 when student activists were expelled for anti-government activities. The confrontation reached a climax in October when 13 students led by student leader, Thirtieth Bonbon, were arrested.

Students from Thames University massed at the Democracy Monument demanding the release of their colleagues. Workers and the general population who were equally disgruntled with Ethanol rallied in support. Estimates of number of demonstrators exceeded 200, 000, the biggest public demonstration in Thai history. Things came to a head when the student leaders who were released were rearrested. The die was cast for a bloody confrontation on that fateful day on 14 October. There have been Media manipulation efforts led by the National Student Center of Thailand. Products

of these efforts include a bi-weekly newspaper characterized as anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, and highly politicized.

The publication had a limited audience consisted of young political activists and sympathizers. - In the rural areas, the Farmer Federation of Thailand whose members later joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPA) - was countered by government through Media. - "Conversation on Democracy" - a TV program produced by conservatives attacking communism - Military Radio Stations - established by conservative erasure groups (e. G. Village Scouts, Annapolis ["Force of Nine"]), and Red Sugars. The Military argued that it served to protect the most important institution of the nation: The Monarchy. Recent Developments - From then on, government has applied a number of strategies to maintain its legitimacy in controlling Media.

Reassuring the People - Justifying Actions - Making Apologies - The challenge that elected leader Thaksin Shinawatra poses has been a major threat to the evolving Thai Media. Media Competition - In general, the State practically owns Media. Management ownership, however, could depend on how large a media corporation is. For middle-sized to large corporations, ownership can be private. But for major stations, even management belongs to government. - Classifications of the Radio Stations: 1. Directly owned by state agencies and managed by government - Non-commercial - Government-budgeted 2. Owned by the state and managed privately - Commercial and profit-seeking (i. e. Selling airtime) - Decisions are made by the government. 3.

Owned by state enterprises, where state agencies are shareholders -

Commercial 4. Operated and managed privately, but under government

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contracts In fairness, however, the government and Thai society in general have become more liberal in the last several years, freeing broadcasters somewhat from some erstwhile taboos in TV news. Modern broadcast technology has also played an important role in making the news production more enjoyable. As a result, Thai TV news have become more popular with the viewing public, which now also seems fairly satisfied with the present quality of the news programs. " (Senator Somalia Minion) - Rooms for Improvement a.

Internationalization of news content b. English broadcast within Thailand c. A workable system of regional exchange of news and information through bilateral and multilateral agreements so that news from various Asian countries could be seen every day on local networks" Media Culture Self-Regulation - When the he " Censorship Board" was abolished, each station had to set up its own monitoring board - thus, self-regulation. - Censorship was limited to national security concerns, and to rules like limiting the number of minutes a station could provide for commercials per hour (10 minutes per hour). And that's it. There are also five levels of penalty, which are generally lenient.

State Monopoly was lifted gradually starting in 1993, which was followed by greater private participation (Nation Group [T[TV 1995, the first news channel]anager Group, among many others) - Media was no longer anyone's mouthpiece - at least not of those in political power. - 1997 Constitution Reforms (up to present) Frequency Allocation Audience Orientation Source of Revenue State / Public Downsized General Public / Non-profit (Batty per set per year) NBC Fund License Fee A new Community / Locality Non-profit

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(donation) Commercial Revised from under concession of state agencies to under NBC care General Public / Business (profit- oriented) Advertising Sponsors - The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) - The (inexistent) industry regulator of Media. Ideally, 17 members will comprise the NBC: - 5 from the government - 4 from the academe - 4 from professional organizations [further divided into two: corporate owners and journalists - 4 from civic and nongovernmental organizations - However, the establishing of NBC did not push through. In 2001 , the Administrative Court ruled a lack of transparency on the selection process of NBC. The corporate owners wound up dominating the selection committee. There are advocates at present that are led by Broadcast Stations, Corporate Owners of Entertainment Companies, Program Suppliers (production houses, etc.), Journalists, and Mangos. - There are a number of codes that are being submitted to the legislative body of Thailand pertaining to media self- and co-regulation. These include systems of complaining and enforcement, which are characterized mainly by voluntary and private actions, with approval by the NBC.

Media and Politics in Vietnam - The Communist Party has used Media to uphold revolutionary traditions and propagate Party Policy. Strong censorship is imposed on Editorial content. Even though ' Tabloid-style' publications are okay, the fact of the matter is, political content is still highly controlled. ' Tabloid-style' is the news of the weird. Stories include updates on Princess Diana conspiracy theories, police blotters, and other daily life and death narratives. - Constitutionally, Freedom of Press is enshrined. In reality, however, the story is different. There are probably more suppressed

stories than embraces genuine discussion. Criticism on top party personnel, however, is still forbidden.