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Singapores' Media System

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Abstract: Singapore is working hard to become an economic and cultural information center in Southeast Asia and even the world. The Singaporean government has different controls on the opening up of the country and the freedom of speech of the people. On the one hand, they hope that the state can provide more social space and political resources to express democracy and attract investment from foreign companies. On the other hand, it limits the freedom of speech of the people and foreign media. The impact of such a contradictory regulatory system on the Singapore media system and its impact on national development is worth exploring. This article will also focus on how Singapore's distinctive media systems face the challenges of globalization.

Keywords: Singapore; Media system; Control of the government

1. Introduction

Singapore is a country with rapid information and technology development. Based on these advantages, they also want to become an international economic and information center. Because of the developed information technologies in Singapore, it has been awarded the title of 'Intelligent Island' by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1990. Meanwhile, from point of the connection to the Internet, half of the Singapore's families were connected to the Internet in various of methods (IDA 2001). A large number of network users and advanced Internet applications have brought many development spaces and commercial benefits to Singapore. The data reflect Singapore's achievements in Internet applications which has been proved that the use of Internet in Singapore is better than some developed countries. Based on the latest United Nations estimates, the current population of Singapore is 5.8 million. It is interesting to find out what's the impact of transnational media companies entering Singapore on domestic companies and the citizens. In Singapore, where online information exchange is so developed, the impact of the application of cyberspace on the development of its media industry is worth studying. Comparing the Internet usage rates of Singapore and other developed countries, it is necessary to find the differences of development strategies in various of regional media. The relationship between Singapore's excellent Internet development and its limitation in media freedom is worth studying. Challenges Singapore government facing and the positioning of the Singapore media will be discussed in this paper.

2. Characteristics of Singapore's Media System
2.1. Control of the government

One of the characteristics of Singapore is that the state has strict control over media freedom and freedom of speech of the people. This is reflected in the fact that media companies are controlled by the government.

Singapore's policymakers want to turn the island into a center for information trade. Both Jayasuriya and Tremewan state that Singapore's laws are used for the controlling of the government. It means that Singapore's legitimate media regulation is for centralized services to a certain extent. Comparing with the laws of other democracy countries, Singapore's laws limit the freedom of people to challenge state authority. Laws in Singapore contribute to enforce the government's objectives and policies. The Singapore media system under the government's control, on the one hand, must bear the responsibility of reporting the news fairly and fairly, and on the other hand, succumb to the government's coercive power.

Rodan holds the view that the downturn of Singapore in 1985-1986 aims at reinforcing the emphasis on IT basis. Because Singapore's policymakers want to turn the island into a center for information trade. In order to achieve this goal, Singapore government has vigorously developed the Internet economy and applications. It is worth noting that in the Singapore's National Computer Board detailed a new strategic statement (IT2000). It indicates that the government aims at establishing a national network instead of an international network. In my opinion, it can be recognized as a strategy to decrease the risk from international network. However, it turns out that under the globalization flow, it is inevitable to participate in the use and competition of the Internet. Due to the market competition of cyberspace in various countries around the world, the government has strengthened its control over its citizens while strengthening its ability to compete externally. One of the most representative of the Chinese government is the control of cyberspace. Singapore is characterized by a different definition of media freedom from the Western world.

Western countries' media systems have consistently promoted freedom of speech, while the Singapore media has expressed criticism. As the Singaporean government believes that in some special cases, freedom of speech and the freedom of the media must be second to the integrity of the Singaporean state and the primary goal of the government. The Singapore government has clearly stated many common values in the country, including the country's supremacy, limited society, and religious tolerance. In fact, these values have more or less influenced the management of Singapore's media policy. The Singapore government believes that news is free, but they place more emphasis on the importance of responsible journalism. In my opinion, on one hand, such a news concept is more conducive to the development of the Singapore media industry in a more objective and fair direction. On the other hand, this unique system leads more limitation to the public and the media companies in Singapore.

2.2. High information exchange rate

Citizens in Singapore are good at using the internet to gain information, which contributes to the establishing of the network regulations. Singapore has the world's highest Internet penetration rate, and it is the first in the world countries that openly implement network supervision systems. Compared with some developed countries, Singapore's Internet penetration rate has already at the leading edge. While Singapore is at the number of 50%, the United States is with 42% connection to the Internet and Britain is 35%. Since free media aggregates information and limits the development of hegemonies, such a situation is what the Singapore government does not want to see. The large numbers of the internet users make reasonable content control and media control necessary. The main mechanism of network supervision and governance in Singapore involving content management, national political security, administrative licensing and registration, policy advice, public education and network guidance.

To conclude, Singapore is a typical government-led network supervision countries [1]. It indicates that the Singapore government wants to provide the best Internet experience to the public and the ability to use the Internet. However, at the same time, they hope to control the freedom of speech of citizens, just like the way they control traditional media platforms.

3. Changes in Singapore's media system

There were two media companies in Singapore, but in order to gain more economic benefits and international competitiveness, the two companies merged into one. Media Corporation of Singapore Pte Ltd (Mediacorp) is a company which controlled by the government of Singapore. As the only free TV operator in Singapore, it contains various of multimedia channels. Mediacorp different from other corporations in that its predecessor is Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), which belongs to Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI).

The communication and media policies in Singapore are always discussing based on specific events of specific media tool, especially the journalism and the Internet [5]. After the establishment of the Mediacorp, Singapore has legislating for different platforms to control and limit the media freedom.

Singapore's media system is gradually changed by the new technologies and international media companies. Because they don't have the awareness of technology revolution, they are hardly to change the structure and strategies as soon as possible [5]. New forms of communication including the internet has led to a loophole in the Singapore's regulation of the media. Although the Singapore government has many restrictions on multinational media companies reporting on Singapore in order to manage domestic information dissemination, these multinational companies still pose some challenges to the Singapore media system.

In Singapore, some controversial news is forbidding or restricting to report inside or outside [8]. Due to this policy, several transnational media companies include The New York Times, Far Eastern Economic Review and The New York Times International Edition have been charged and faced ten million dollars' fees. This behavior has been criticized by the western countries. However, the Singapore government takes it for granted to maintain the security of policy and the society. The main method of Singapore media company to develop oversea business is cooperating with local companies in specific country.

4. Challenges in Singapore's media system

The current fierce dispute over the control of media and communications at the global level is a very serious incident [6]. Ó Siochrú and Girard, also argue that on the one hand, the challenge is the interest relationship between citizens, society and certain organizations. On the other hand, it is the impact between the economy or national interests. It indicates that the control of information content is not only subject to public opinion, but also the intervention of powerful countries in other countries. In my opinion, the root cause of this situation is that countries have different restrictions on media freedom. Especially in countries like Singapore that have special restrictions on freedom of speech, it is difficult to develop a multinational media company or cooperate with media companies in other countries.

4.1. Regulations in different countries

As the rules of media freedom for different countries are different, the Singaporean government as a soft-authoritarian state has been challenged by transnational media companies [10]. For example, in March 2010, Lee Kuan Yew and Lee Hsien-lung passed a lawsuit against the New York Times Group through the Singapore judicial system, arguing that one of their subordinates, the International Herald Tribune, was published as a family theory. The article on the pros and cons of family politics contains flaws. The New York Times finally apologies to apologize and compensates for the $60,000 in damages. It is not uncommon for foreign media companies to be prosecuted for reporting domestic political news in Singapore. some controversial local news is forbidding or restricting media coverage inside and outside. In addition, foreign media must agree to accept the Singapore government's review of content that is considered derogatory. In recent years, the Singapore government has often used legal means to sue foreign media for reports of filthy reports. Some well-known international media such as The New York Times, Far Eastern Economic Review,

and Time Magazine have all been met by Singaporean politicians or authorities. The accusation was forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. Unlike Western media, Singapore has some restrictions on the definition of freedom of speech and media freedom. These include sensitive topics that do not involve religion.

4.2. The risk of losing control of the content in the internet

The network is very developed, thus providing a basis for the development of multinational media. In recent years, more and more international media companies have started operations in Singapore [11]. Along with the positive influence of transnational media companies on Singapore's economic income, some of the shortcomings caused by different media freedom regulations are gradually emerging. In the face of today's so developed Internet development, the Singapore government's regulatory strategy has revealed some problems. Includes challenges to media freedom and government control.

Singapore is striving to become a nationalized economic and information exchange center. To become such an important country requires relatively high transparency. The Singapore government has limited the development of the media industry and information transparency to a certain extent [12]. There are two reasons. First, for Singapore, information control is a strategic resource for the government, and they are hard to give up control over information. Second, the people's political party government will still use the right to restrict the media to report certain social problems. The Singapore government's restrictions on media freedom have become a key factor affecting the development of its media system. How to deal with the state's control of information has become one of the most important challenges facing Singapore.

Singapore's media companies should try to find its position in the middle of the watchdog and the government's response to the insects. This role should include building consensus rather than creating disagreements [15]. As far as the author is concerned, on one hand, it indicates that the government forbidden the media companies provoke them. On the other hand, the government require the media companies to be just.

5. Conclusion

Overall, Singapore's media system and government control are in a dilemma. The Singapore government is committed to developing domestic Internet activities. Whether it is the implementation of Smart Island activities or Singapore's Internet coverage, it shows the ambition of the Singapore government to a certain extent. However, it is paradoxical that the Singapore government is also controlling the freedom of speech and media freedom of the public while promoting the development of Internet technology. In the face of the rapid development of Internet information exchange, the Singapore government should reflect on whether its control over the media is reasonable. If it is still different from the management of other Western countries, then the Singapore media system will face the challenge of not being able to connect with the international. In addition, the Singapore government's control over the media limits the possibility of citizens accessing information to a certain extent. Such restrictions are inconsistent with Singapore's commitment to developing information systems and becoming a worldwide economic and information exchange center. Under the premise of ensuring national stability, the Singapore government should consider how to face the challenges of Internet information exchange for its own media system. Meanwhile, it is necessary to change the way of controlling media freedom.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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