

The Role of Social Media with Regard to ‘Time- Space Compression: With Special Reference to the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka

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Ethnic conflict is one of the biggest problems in the modern era. Since the World War II the history has showed us how media can be directly involved in ethnic conflicts. Sudan, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, UK-Northern Ireland, Spain, Chechnya, Turkey and Sri Lanka are current examples of these conflicts. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka showed a new dimension of conflicts that crippled the whole nation for a long time. In Sri Lanka, an un-armed conflict between major communities has caused mass human rights violations and loss of human lives and; strained the economy and damaged the environment. In this study, basically the following points will be examined: 1) what are the connections between ethnic conflict and the media; 2) how do Sri Lankan Social media framed the ethnic conflict; 3) what role do the Social media can play to prevent/resolve ethnic conflicts. The study also includes comparison of fundamental approaches of peace journalism, war journalism and reconciliation towards the Ethnic conflict. Although most of the examples brought by the literature review that shows what role the social media played in ethnic conflicts are negative. According to Preliminary data, in today’s conflicts media have a pivotal role to play, as an arena and as an actor in the political system. Influence of the media is closely related to the conflict dimensions pertaining to the communication of attitudes and perceptions that influence legitimacy and credibility in any political system. Social media operates on virtual world and given that it is not easy to control their usage due to its anonymity; we can only deal with the root causes. The root causes of ethnic hatred are historical injustices, lack of media objectivity in coverage, politics based on ethnic blocks, and economic injustices that exclude members of certain ethnic groups (KHRC REPORT, 2008). Some control policies can also be employed at secondary level to achieve some control, especially those that come at times of crisis. For example, closing up of all accounts (Such as Facebook accounts) disseminating ethnic hatred through the web hosts can save a great deal. Social media violence can intensify and translate to physical war in future if not controlled. It can also be used to fuel already erupted violence and this can result to prolonged violence if not checked. Also from time to time, social media has created new dynamics in relation to ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the author of this paper attempts to identify those dynamics. In the study will be conclude that the Social media can play a major effective, positive role to prevent or reconcile ethnic conflicts and to contribute to the post conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace building.

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