

New Media and Its Role in Shaping the 'Bersih Movement' in Malaysia

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Abstract : New media is facilitating collective action in ways never thought possible. Although the broader political climate may have a powerful influence on the success or failure of emerging social movement organizations, the Internet is enabling groups previously incapable of political action to find their voices. Whether this shift is offering greater relative benefit to previously underrepresented or incumbent political fixtures is subject to debate, but it is clear that like-minded people are now able to better locate and converse with each other via many Internet. The recent social movement in Malaysia - the BERSIH Movement had attracted demonstrators from countries all over the world. The movement with an unforeseen mixture of nationalities became world news. Interestingly, the new media seemed to play a crucial role in the organization of the protests around the world. This article maps this movement via an analysis of their websites. It examines the contribution of these websites based on the collective identity, actual mobilization and a network of organizations. This research indicates signs of an integration of different organizations that contributed to an important role of the new media.

Keywords : Bersih Movement, Malaysian politics, new media, social movement

Conference Title : ICEG 2016 : International Conference on e-Government

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : March 17-18, 2016