

## The Role of the Media in the Results of the 2016 State Election and the 2018 General Election in Sarawak

<sup>1</sup>Wan Khalik Wan Muhammad, <sup>2\*</sup>Rusdi Omar, <sup>3</sup>Kamarul Azman Khamis

<sup>1</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>2\*</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

### Abstract

This paper studied whether social media, traditional media, and online news portals and blogs on politics may directly influence voter decision-making during the 2016 State Election and 2018 General Election in Sarawak. Economic development is a mediating factor that has an indirect influence on voter decision-making. The study population was among 21 aged and above during the 2016 general election and 2018 general election. This study used the strata sampling technique. The procedure for obtaining the survey data involved 480 respondents for the quantitative method and 10 for the qualitative method. 480 respondents were randomly selected in 8 state assemblies for the state of Sarawak. The review looked at the literature relating to the type of media to understand its role in terms of their results on the process of election. It considers the impact of media on Sarawak society in terms of political implications. Voting in elections is very important in the political system of a democratic country. This can lead to the results of voting among the Sarawak's people.

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### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

**Rusdi Omar**

rusdiomar@uum.edu.my

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## Introduction

The development of technology in the digital age and the application of social media in cyber politics have made it easier for political parties to influence voters to support them in elections. The wider adoption of cyber politics through social media has impacted the country's political landscape. Social media is among the essential tools for fast and cheap election campaigns to gain political support. WeChat Instagram, You Tube and Twitter and ICT devices such as WhatsApp for the purpose of campaigning and propaganda on their role in the development of the country.

Information disseminated by political parties can also influence the views of voters/netizens. Voters / netizens who are influenced by the information provided by the political parties running the government may be biased in favor of the government. Similarly, voters / netizens can support opposition parties as an alternative government if influenced by their information. Correct information provided by political parties through social media may have a positive impact on voters, thus, making good decisions. However, there may be information with negative elements in which social media is manipulated and information is distorted for information directed to party competitors to get votes and win elections. Voters need to be careful when collecting information from various forms of social media so that they can avoid making wrong decisions that may not be beneficial.

The role of social media as an election campaign tool is undeniable. As such, it became very clear during the Sarawak 11th state election campaign (PRN-11) held in May 2016. In this context, Sarawak Police are tightening their monitoring process on social media to avoid any negative elements that might threaten public order. Police are firm with all social media postings, especially from Facebook, that have uploaded or shared false information that might cause discomfort among the public (The Star 2016, April 21). Candidates and supporters of all parties participating in the election were advised not to engage in activities that would incite anger, rejection, hate sentiments, racism and abuse of political rivals (Bernama 2016, 21 April). For example, the state BN party, led by Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB), has been using social media to spread information to city dwellers. However, they do not use traditional media such as TV, radio and newspapers as campaign tools to communicate with people in remote rural and remote areas where there is no internet access and ICT infrastructure (Bacalah Malaysia, 2016, 21 April).

The result of the PRN-11 held in May 2016, was a landslide victory for the state BN which secured 72 out of the 82 seats contested, with more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority (or 87%). In fact, BN has managed to snatch 5 seats from DAP, and the state assembly seats are: Batu Kawah, Repok, Meradong, Dudong and Piasau. These five seats are essentially Chinese majorities won by DAP in the 10th state election. However, DAP still retained seven seats namely Assek, Kota Sentosa, Padungan, Kidurong / Tanjung Batu, Pelawan, Pending and Pujut. Another opposition party, PKR, retained three state seats captured in the 10th state election and they are: Ba'kelalan, Batu Lintang, and Krian. Besides, PAS did not win a single seat. Thus, the results of PRN-11 raise several issues related to this study whether social media, traditional media, online news portals and blogs about politics influence voter decisions.

The relationship between social media use, political participation and voter decision-making in Malaysian politics can be categorized into two broad issues which is significant influence of social

media on political socialization and popular unrest, and positive influence of social media on voter decisions, and subsequent electoral success for parties actively using social media. The Malaysian government's outlawing of traditional media policies related lawfully to the media and motivated the people to find alternative ways of expressing their opinions (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad, & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013). Citizens now have greater and unrestricted access to political news, thus bypassing the usual barriers and surveillance controls of publishers, editors and journalists in traditional media (Leong, 2015). This resulted in increased use of social media and increased political awareness among Malays (Muhamad, 2015; Raof, Zaman, Ahmad, & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013). Studies such as Muniandy, & Muniandy, 2013; Hashim, Mahpuz, Khan, & Daud, 2012 found that, apart from socialization and network advantage of social media use, it also influences the rate of political agitation, political discussion and political liberalization in Malaysia, which is different from the experience in the United States (Weiss, 2012).

A social media revolution that changed the political and journalistic landscape in Malaysia began after the 2008 election. Politicians now understand the competitiveness that technology can be used to leverage, as opposed to the initial notion of being a political threat (Abdulrauf, Hamid, & Ishak, 2015). It has drafted an "internet for all" policy to encourage further internet penetration into urban areas. It influences redistributive power and open debate across online and offline communities; and fostering a stronger interpersonal commitment and genuine community, where youth lead (Leong, 2015; Abdulrauf, Hamid, & Ishak, 2015; Weiss, 2012; Hashim, Mahpuz, Khan, & Daud, 2012). On top of that, the definition of social media as Table 1.

**Table 1: Definition of Social Media Variables**

Social Media Platforms & Social Networking Apps	Description
Facebook	A free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, and connect with friends, family members and colleagues.
Twitter	A free micro-blogging service that allows registered members to post short posts called tweets. Twitter members can tweet and follow other users ' tweets using a variety of platforms and devices.
Google+	It is a social networking project, designed to duplicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services.
Wikipedia	Free, open, and encyclopaedic online content produced through the collaborative efforts of a community of users.
LinkedIn	Social networking site designed for the business community. LinkedIn's primary goal is to enable registered members to establish and document a network of people they know and trust.
Reddit	A news site and social news forum where stories are developed socially and promoted by members.
Pinterest	A social repository website for sharing and categorizing images found online.
Instagram	A social network application created to share photos and

WhatsApp	videos from a smartphone. A cross-platform instant messaging application that allows iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone, and Nokia smartphone users to exchange text, image, video, and audio messages for free.
WeChat	A cross-platform instant app launcher that allows iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone, and Nokia phone users to exchange text, image, video, and audio messages for free.

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## Literature Review

### Social Network Theory

Social network theory is a theory that focuses on social context and behavior. It explains that the decision of an actor is often based on the relationship of social relations rather than the actor's own choice (Fredericks & Durland, 2005; Scott, 2017). In today's society, social networking has become commonplace since the rapid development of social networking. Instagram Facebook, twitter, and other similar sites have encouraged users to increase their friends, followers and contacts who indirectly build connections and connect with others. This phenomenon can be called a virtual social network connection.

Thus, to explain voting behavior through information media, this study proposes 'socio-cultural networks' (Onaka, 2013) as a middle distance theory, and 'innovation diffusion' as a community theory. These two theories are integrated under the paradigm of social network theory.

### Socio-Cultural Networks

Socio-cultural networks explain that actors behave in accordance with culture, and cultural change is the process of changing behavior. Relationships between actors propagate culture through network structures (Onaka, 2013). In the context of this study, a new culture is emerging, which is a transition from traditional media towards new social media. The process of connection through new media carried new cultural elements for new generations. Elements of the cultural process of connecting people can be explained through a simple example. Before internet technology, people used letters to communicate with others, then when internet technology appeared, people began to use e-mail to replace the letter. When the technology of digital devices has come about, people started using 'short message services' (SMS), and at present, when internet technology has been integrated with digital devices, new applications have emerged such as 'WhatsApp' or 'WeChat', and SMS technology has begun to marginalize. Thus, to explain this changing process of cultural networking from the perspective of technological progress, it can be more practical to look at it from the perspective of 'diffusion of innovation.

### Dissemination of Innovation

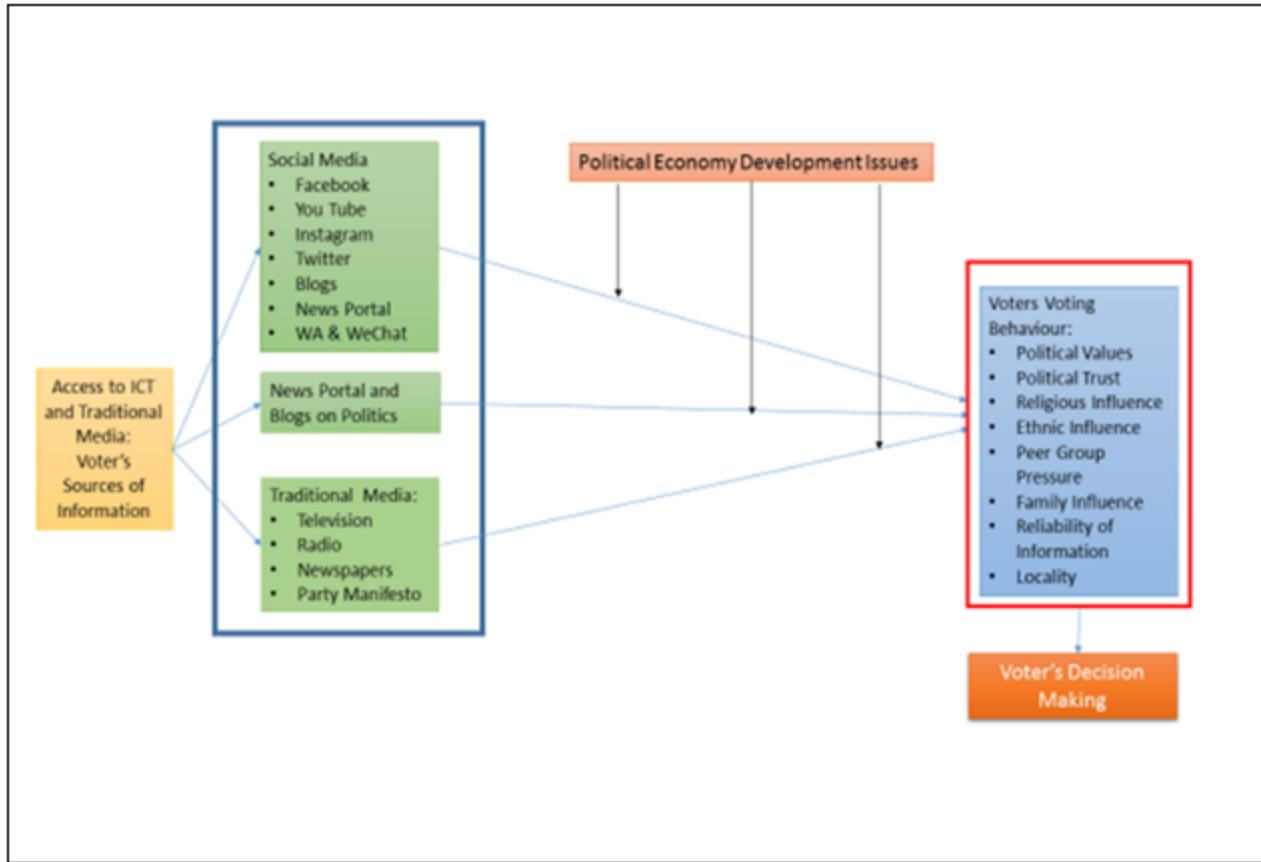
The theory of diffusion of innovation is proposed in this study as a type of theory of society. This theory describes innovation in communication and processes to sustain innovation. Innovation must be widely adopted so that it can achieve self-sustainability. When a sufficient number of transporters are reached to sustain themselves, and at the same time create further takers, then this

condition can be termed as reaching 'critical mass' (Rogers, 2013).

There are five categories of application of innovation technology namely 'innovators', 'early adopters', 'early majority', 'majority' and 'lagging behind'. From this category of people who use communication technology, this theory seems to be able to explain how the acceptance of technology related to their social status and behavior. Therefore, from this theory, it is natural to assert that social and new media users can strengthen their bonds with other actors through the medium of innovation compared to traditional media, and that these media will influence their behavior (especially voting behavior in the context of the study).

### **Voting Behavior**

Voter behavior among voters is a critical area of study in election analysis. Holland (1992) described that voting behavior can explain why individuals vote and the factors that influence voter decisions. There are four voting models to explain the factors that influence voter behavior and decision-making in elections, namely as sociological, psychological, cognitive and the Michigan model. Among the four models discussed above, this study used the Himmelweit (1987) Model to achieve the research goals. Figure 1. Presents the research model for this study which clearly shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This model was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Independent variables identified that could directly influence voters' decisions in the 2016 election include social media, traditional media, and news portals and blogs on politics. Voters can access online information on the internet through social media, news portals, and blogs, in addition to traditional media, by subscribing to major newspapers and party manifestos, or by receiving information from television and radio.



**Figure 1: Framework of analysis**

### **Study on the Role of Social Media in Political Engagement and Voter Decision-Making in Malaysia**

Asiyah, Shaharuddin, Zurina, Sarina, Mazlan, Nadrawina and Azami (2009) conducted a study to understand the role of social media in Sarawak's ethnic politics. Using participatory and interview approaches, the study showed that social media proved to have the ability to change the scenario of struggle for political campaigns in Sarawak. They concluded by highlighting that voters, especially residents in urban centers and a large portion of the youth are increasingly playing on mainstream and traditional media campaigns because they are so interested in the happenings within their own social media circles.

Similarly, Chinnasamy and Roslan (2015) examined the impact of political advertising in the Kajang (Selangor) by-election via Facebook and the extent to which it influences voters in the decision-making process. Based on a qualitative approach, they found that online political campaigns are active because political information is received online by voters. The study also revealed that the results of the by-election in Kajang reflected the level of online political information chosen by voters. The study also noted that Facebook empowers voters in Kajang to vote for the political candidate of their choice. They concluded that by encouraging political parties to promote a degree of online political campaigning as voters increasingly moved online for communication.



Accordingly, Ahmad, Kee, Mustaffa, Ibrahim and Muhamad (2012) examined the power of online media and information dissemination in Malaysia. Using qualitative methods, they showed that through social media, people easily upload images, information and text comments, videos among others, enabling interactive cybercriminal debates. They also revealed that online networking platforms such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and YouTube allow users to exchange information and opinions among themselves. The study however noted that local traditional media are still popular as nine out of ten readers still derive their news from the mainstream press. It revealed that in the 2008 general election, social media became a powerful medium in promoting democracy.

Leong (2015) investigated how the use of social media has influenced political communication strategies and the political landscape in Malaysia. Based on in-depth interviews, the study pointed out that online media has widened the public circle and helped more Malaysians to participate in the country's democratic process through crowd sourcing, dissemination of information and mobilization.

Ibrahim (2010) examined the role of online media in political communication during the 2008 general election in Malaysia. The study generated data with the survey method and found that the influence of online media in elections is a more positive one since access to the internet also continues to manifest outside the urban areas of the country. The results also show that politicians are now more and more able to use the internet and that the country's political development is expected to continue to increase as access to information becomes more open and open to the public.

Similarly, Muniandy and Muniandy (2013) evaluated the impact of online media in political and social aspects in Malaysia. This study uses a survey approach and found that the use of online media, especially in Malaysia is increasing and influential. The study also found that online media has a positive impact on the lives of Malaysians mostly in social networks. The study also noted that online media is also transforming Malaysian politics from static to more dynamic as the unrestricted internet offers an opportunity for politicians and citizens to debate and express their political views on important issues of the country.

In addition, Weiss (2012) examined how the current generation of online media will change the social mobilization and political landscape of Malaysia. The study relies on a qualitative approach and its findings suggest that people have enjoyed more democratization in the country's political landscape. According to Weiss (2012), a key factor for more democratization is the increased use of social media which has given citizens more opportunities for information, political opinion and participation.

### **Study on the Role of Traditional Media in Political Engagement and Decisions Made by Voters**

With the advent of social media, the impact of traditional media on people's voting behavior and political engagement is still debated and Malaysia is not left out of this debate. In this regard, Saabar, Sualman and Hashim (2017) noted that the results of the 12th general election in Malaysia showed that traditional media still retains its relevance as an important platform for political

interaction in political campaigns. They go on to argue that during campaign periods, almost all political parties work hard to make their presence in the mainstream media to influence voters as well as the effectiveness of political information.

In a related issue, Wan Asna, Salfarina, Mohamad Zaini and Zainon (2011) assessed the nature of traditional news and social media applications among individuals accessing the internet in Malaysia using Penang as a case study. The authors found that respondents who used online media also used mainstream media to obtain political information and news.

According to Hafizuddin (2013), both social media and traditional media are equally important in influencing voters especially in urban and rural areas. However, it is not surprising that the opposition usually relies on social media to express their opinions.

Meanwhile, Shriver (2003) states that traditional media in Malaysia as a powerful agent of the ruling government. He said the government heavily controls and manipulates the traditional media thereby influencing the decision of voters during the election to support the government. Similarly, Ahmad and Othman (2014) see that the function of the media is important in understanding the political scenario and voting issues in the country. The study revealed that mainstream newspapers have maintained their status quo as being friendly to the ruling party.

Mus, Jamilah, Mohd Helmi, Mat Pauzi and Normah (2015) revealed that traditional newspapers are united in supporting the government's common agenda, but not the same in social media. The study also revealed that the mainstream media has been operating for a long time and has always been able to work towards the same agenda in various traditional newspapers in the country and influence votes during elections. They concluded that the traditional media enjoyed the advantages of social media, especially in promoting the agenda of the ruling government under BN.

Finally, Yi (2009) revealed that mainstream media faces strong competition especially from social media. Social media is becoming very popular and credibility beyond the mainstream media controlled by the government. However, Yi (2009) is confident and argues that social media will not replace traditional media in the future. Although it can be contested, but the generation and voters who accept traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers are still very much around. At least the traditional media will still be around for three decades before their influence on Malaysian voters can be seen as excessive in the Malaysian political landscape.

### **Study on the Role of Social Media in Political Engagement and Voter Decision-Making in Other Countries**

As Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak (2015) examined online adolescent political participation in online media based on cognitive engagement theory (CET). The data was produced by a qualitative approach and they found that online political participation through social media makes engagement in politics much cheaper, easier and also, increases cognitive engagement.

Bode, Vraga, Borah and Shah (2014) examined the role of social networking sites (SNS) by investigating both what motivates individuals to express politically themselves in this realm, and what consequences such expressions have on the public interrogation of political participation. The study was conducted in the United States using questionnaires sent by mail, and the results



showed that the political use of SNS greatly influenced both the level and growth in classical political participation in the 2008 US elections. They also found that blogs and internet news about politics were strongly associated with political SNS among youth.

Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero (2012) concluded that Facebook allowed the creation of online political groups that offered many of the incentives that face-to-face groups are known to offer forums for interaction, information, communicative exchange and inspiration for political action.

Dumitrica (2014) explored social media as it relates to political engagement by evaluating how Canadian undergraduate students at the University of Calgary via Twitter and Facebook discussed political engagement. This study uses a qualitative approach and reveals that social media builds a sense of community, offers access to information and the ability to disseminate it, providing a new channel to develop personal relationships between citizens and politicians. Dumitrica (2014) also revealed that social media promotes effective information exchange, as well as the egalitarian structure of interaction between citizens and politicians and the aptitude for successful online campaigns is now projected as the final winning mechanism in elections.

In a related study, Chan and Gou (2013) examined the correlation between Facebook / Internet using civic and political participation. The study relied on online surveys and found that the use of internet news and the use of SNS for political participation, to some extent, can counter the absence of real-world civic materials and resources available to youth by offering a convenient source of information as well as a channel for like-minded individuals to meet, coordinate or discuss participatory actions. Their findings reveal the importance of SNS for youth participation in civic and political life compared to other media networks.

Boulianne (2015) examined the relationship between political participation and social media use by adopting a meta-analysis. The study used quantitative surveys and found a positive relationship between political participation and social media use. However, Effing, Hillegersberg and Huibers (2011) argue that social media played little or no influence in the case of the 2010 and 2011 municipal elections in the Netherlands. They also revealed that the level of involvement of politicians is very little due to low participation. They concluded that the use of online media does not always result in active political participation.

Enjolras, Steen-johnson and Wollebaek (2013) evaluated the impact of social media use on political participation. The Data was generated through survey methods and findings showed that the nature of participants mobilized through social media were less socio-economic people of the country and young adolescents compared to other groups of participants mobilized through other channels. They concluded that social media represents a replacement structure alongside mainstream media and civil society and better political organizations that engage in a variety of ways and reach different group participants.

Additionally, Gil de Zuniga, Jung and Vlenzuela (2012) analyzed if SNS can promote desirable Democratic behaviors and attitudes when people use these platforms to keep up with information about their public or community affairs. The Data was generated through a survey method and the results emerged that the use of SNS in terms of information had a positive and significant impact

on the activities of the targeted public to take political and civic action. The study also revealed a statistical link between using social networking sites for disseminating updates that social media can facilitate people's lives on top of strict measures of civic engagement. They concluded that the increased exchange of information between members online usually helps in building a relationship of trust between members and also, increases the ability of SNS for political engagement.

In a related development, De Zuniga, Copeland and Bimber (2013) examined the extent to which social media and digital media use increase the likelihood of participating in political communication in America. Containing a survey approach, the study shows that political communication is strongly related to civic engagement. The study also found that the interactive part of political communication, especially with regard to digital media, should be interpreted in the theory of public engagement. In the same vein, De Zuniga, Puig-i-Abril and Rojas (2009) investigated how the political environment is being changed by the internet. The study used survey methods and found that the use of online resources was positively associated with various forms of political engagement. It also concluded that the use of blogs similarly emerged as an important predictor of political engagement in the online world.

In addition, Ikiz, Sobaci, Yuvuz and Karkin (2014) analyzed the political application of twitter in the case of metropolitan city participants in the 2014 Turkish local elections. The study relied on a qualitative approach and found that twitter can be used as a powerful tool for political communication by local politicians and mostly in election campaigns. Furthermore, Turkish metropolitan participants increased their use of twitter for their campaigns as the election neared and concluded by seeing that local participants reduced location and tweet sharing activities, but increased their use of messages to target mobilization support and promotion as the election neared.

Information obtained from social media by voters with internet access can influence them to decide whether to support the ruling or opposition parties in elections. However, the role of traditional media is also undeniable in influencing voters, especially in rural areas that do not have internet access. In any case, voters should evaluate the information obtained from social and / or traditional media before making an informed decision.

Communities in urban and rural areas in Sarawak may have access to the internet through ICT infrastructure, provided by the government and the private sector. Overall, internet access by households in Sarawak is 45% (2013). This shows that 55% of households do not have internet access. At the same time, internet coverage in Sarawak is low compared to other states in Peninsular Malaysia and it is also below the national average of 57%.

In the context of politics in Malaysia, social media websites are a popular and important medium to disseminate information related to the current political situation that will favor the government. This will ultimately affect individuals who will later come out in support of the government. However, any information received and collected from the internet must be evaluated by users to avoid any form of misinformation and false information based on lies and rumors. This will cause people to make decisions in favor of the government.

## Methodology

This study uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The study population consisted of voters aged 21 and above during the 2016 general election and 2018 general election. The total number of voters registered with the Election Commission was 1,141,294 voters. The study used strata sampling techniques. In this strata sampling, voters are grouped according to their place of domicile. The grouping represents the place of domicile according to the city, the interior and the deep interior.

According to MCMC (2015) to every 100 households only 78 households have internet access (broadband). Thus, the remaining 28 households do not have internet access. Among the causes of low internet access are low household incomes and high subscription costs. Another factor is that there is no communication infrastructure in the deep interior. This was shown in the 2014 Internet users survey by MCMC (2014) which showed only six per cent of the National internet users were from Sarawak. Internet users are more concentrated in developed countries such as Selangor, Johor and Kuala Lumpur.

In the context of the location of the state assembly constituencies, 62 of the 82 Sarawak State Assembly constituencies are in rural areas. Thus, it shows that Sarawakians, especially in rural areas, still rely on traditional media rather than social media when searching for information. Most internet users in Sarawak are located in cities such as Kuching, Sibul and Miri because of the ICT infrastructure.

The total sample for the study was 480 voters. This is based on Cavana et al (2001), for a population of over one million, the minimum sample size is 384 people. Hence the sample size. Out of 480 voters, randomly selected from voter locations. Eight (8) State Legislative Assembly (DUN) seats are selected based on location: Piasau, Bukit Assek, Batu Lintang, Satok, Tanjong Dato, Sadong Jaya, Mambong, and Kedup.

For each state Assembly, 60 voters were randomly selected to determine the estimated impact of social media, traditional media and news portals and blogs on politics on the outcome of the PRN-11. Surveys and interviews of respondents are conducted to address research questions and thus achieve goals.

The survey instrument (questionnaire) is divided into three parts. Part 1 is a dependent variable comprising voter profiles and the nature of decision-making during PRN-11. Instagram Facebook WeChat Part 2 consists of independent variables which are social media - Facebook, You Tube, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, WeChat, -media centers and news portals and blogs on politics. Section 3 covers political economic factors that mediate or moderate voter decision-making.

The procedure for obtaining survey data involved 480 respondents for quantitative and 10 for qualitative methods. 480 respondents were randomly selected in 8 state assemblies for the state of Sarawak. These areas are Piasau (N73), Bukit Asek (N40), Batu Lintang (N11), Satok (N8), Tanjong Dato (N3), Sadong Jaya (N24), Mambong (N19) and Kedup (N22).

## Results and Conclusion

As the result 60% of the respondents is male and 40% is female. The age range of the respondents from 18 to 60 years old. The occupation of the respondents recorded 40% from government sector, 30% from private sector and 30% from another sector.

80% of the respondents strongly agree that social media is relevant for voters' decision making. 20% views moderately that social media is relevant for voters' decision making. 70% of the respondents strongly agree to make a comparison from other information resources before they make a decision. 20% respondents agree to make a comparison from other information resources before they make a decision. Another 10% of the respondents solely use social media to make decision.

**Table 2: Percentage of Social Media Usage among Respondents Form Eight State Assemblies in Sarawak**

State Assemblies/Social Media	Facebook	Youtube	Whatsapp	Instagram	Twitter	WeChat	Do Not Use any Social Media
Piasau (N73)	35%	15%	30%	10%	2%	3%	5%
Bukit Asek (N40)	40%	10%	40%	5%	3%	1%	1%
Batu Lintang (N11)	40%	10%	40%	5%	2%	1%	2%
Satok (N8)	30%	10%	50%	5%	3%	1%	1%
Tanjong Dato (N3)	40%	10%	40%	5%	2%	1%	2%
Sadong Jaya (N24)	30%	10%	50%	5%	1%	1%	3%
Mambong (N19)	40%	10%	40%	5%	1%	2%	2%
Kedup (N22)	40%	10%	40%	5%	3%	1%	1%

Based on the table shows that 30%-40% respondents in six state assemblies in Sarawak prefer to use facebook as their most preferred social media. On the other side, whatsapp becomes the most preferred social media in Satok and Sadong Jaya. Thus, facebook and whatsapp will have a great impact on the political communication between political parties in Sarawak and the voters.

There are still small percentage that of respondents in eight state assemblies in Sarawak do not use any social media. This type of group mostly from senior citizen group and do not have any social media account. Thus, this group will still can be focused throughout conventional way of political communication.

The 2016 state election and the 2018 general election were successfully managed by the Election Commission of Malaysia. The Election Commission has established the rules that parties,

candidates and the public must adhere to in holding elections. Voting in elections is very important in the political system of a democratic country because it is an activity that connects the people with the political system of the country and is able to influence the policies made by the government elected by the people of Sarawak.

However, the role of the media is an issue of interest in conducting this study. The media usage scenario is not the same in Sarawak compared to other states that still use traditional media to obtain information. However, there are still some people in Sarawak who do not have the information to fulfill their voting responsibilities in the national election.

In conclusion, independent variables such as social media, traditional media, and online news portals and blogs on politics may directly influence voter decision-making during the 2016 PRN. Meanwhile, economic development is a mediating factor that has an indirect influence on voter decision-making.

### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

The authors have no competing interest to declare.

### **Author's Affiliation**

**<sup>1</sup>Wan Khalik Wan Muhammad, <sup>2\*</sup>Rusdi Omar, <sup>3</sup>Kamarul Azman Khamis**

<sup>1</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>2\*</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

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