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Project report
BCM390, “Media, war and peace”
Autumn session, 2015
University of Wollongong

The project report assignment had two parts. For details of the assignment see http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/BCM390_15outline.pdf

*Cassie Doyle* prepared

(1) an information pack in the form of a poster;

(2) a fictional dialogue on doing the project.

See following pages.

- The link to this document is from http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/mwp_tops.html.
Background

On the 29th April 2015 Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were executed by firing squad on the Nusakambangan prison island, Indonesia. These two men had been sentenced to death in early 2006 on drug charges (Alford, 2010). Chan and Sukumaran were a part of the Bali 9, and along with 7 other individuals had attempted to smuggle in 8.3 kilos of heroin from Indonesia to Australia on the 17th April 2005 (Moore, 2005).

In December 2014, new Indonesian president Joko Widodo made clear he would not be granting clemency for any individual convicted for drug trafficking (Guardian Australia Staff and Agencies, 2015). Hence Chan and Sukumaran’s bids for presidential clemency are rejected, and those previously sentenced to be executed for drug trafficking begin to face the firing squad (Alford, 2010).

The death of Chan and Sukumaran was deeply contextual in Australia prior to their executions by the public, media and government. After an almost decade long battle to save the lives of the convicted pair, Australia was outraged with the loss of its two citizens in April. While public opinion was somewhat divided, both media personalities and government officials labelled the situation to be unreasonable and unacceptable (Krott and Willingham, 2015).

The boycott Bali campaign gained a great deal of support and media attention at the time of the executions. From my current analysis of both twitter and Facebook and the hashtag #BoycottBali it is clear there are two main arguments surrounding the death of Chan and Sukumaran. Firstly, many Australians believe that these men broke the laws of a country in which they were fully aware they would face the death penalty and it is of their own actions that they have faced the consequences for. In relation to this, a majority of Australians posted on social media that Indonesia had no right to take the lives of Australian citizens, especially after they had been fully rehabilitated over the last ten years.

According to a Roy Morgan poll taken on the 27th January, 51% of Australians believe that the death penalty for drug smugglers should be abolished in Indonesia (Roy Morgan Research, 2015). However almost one month later a poll conducted by the Lowy Institute discovered that 62% of Australians believe the executions should not proceed with 69% of Australians opposing the death penalty for drug trafficking (Oliver, 2015). The number of Australians in support of Chan and Sukumaran’s executions also dropped to 31% as this time (Oliver, 2015).

The boycott Bali campaign gained a great deal of support and media attention at the time of the fines. However it was a flawed campaign. One thing that the media did accurately report on the close related events that boycotting Bali or Indonesia would have. #BoycottBali was intended show the Indonesian government that killing Australian citizens would have repercussions. However a common element missing from both social media arguments is certainly not going to do any impact. The Australian government to listen to the Australian #BoycottBali campaign gained a great deal of support and media attention at the time of the executions.

“The main argument

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BCM390 Dialogue

Student Number - 4501500

Morning of the 29th of April – Morning after the Executions

Cassie: Hey mum, did you hear that the two Bali nine ringleaders were executed overnight?

Mum: I did Cass. It is very sad news don’t you think?

Cassie: At first I did not think that I had feelings either way towards the situation. To me these men had done the wrong thing, well aware of the punishments. But waking up this morning to this news has left me feeling devastated.

Mum: It certainly has been a very controversial topic in the media lately. I am not surprised you feel confused about the situation as the media has presented a range of different viewpoints. Just by watching the news this morning I have heard an array of very convincing viewpoints. One being that these two men have merely paid the consequence of their own foolish actions which is no one’s fault but their own. On the other hand, I have also heard the argument that these men have had ten years to be rehabilitated, and were no longer the convicted criminals that had originally been sentenced to death¹.

Cassie: I would really like to look further into Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan, and the way the media has covered their story over the last decade. I feel this may help me create a clear perspective of the situation, as well as allow me divulge deeper into the facts that are not being presented by the mainstream media. I have an assignment coming up for my subject Media, War and Peace, and I think it might be a good idea to use this as a case study. Not only is this a fitting example as the death of Sukumaran and Chan are very prominent in the media right now, but as a topic close to my heart I may be able to gain a clearer perspective on the whole thing.

Mum: Great idea Cass, I do remember you telling me about this assignment. This seems like a great topic that is incredibly relevant right now. However from what I remember you telling me, you need to pick a central theory in which you will be discussing, and then relating to a case study. How do you plan on tackling the executions?

Cassie: As executions are not a covered theory in class, I will have to relate them to another theory we have discussed. For example, I could discuss the growing social media campaign to boycott Bali after the executions². By using boycotts as my main theory, I can then relate this to the case study of

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¹ Many of the prisoners on death row have been awaiting execution for ten years or more, with Chan and Sukumaran being imprisoned for just under ten years before their execution. This waiting period was one aspect of the #BoycottBali campaign that the Australian public had most concern with. It was argued that after serving ten years of jail time, these convicted drug smugglers were no longer the same young men that had heading the Bali Nine operations.
² Boycott Bali is a consumer based boycott aimed to protest the recent executions of Australian citizens that is primary carried through the use of social media and hashtags. While originally these protests had begun in aim to stop the executions, they now remain to prevent other Australians from being imprisoned or sentenced to death in Indonesia.
the execution of Chan and Sukumaran’s death leading to the creation of the Bali boycotts. As well as focusing on the new ways social media are emerging in the organisation of boycotts. Does that sound like an interesting idea?

Mum: It sure does. But before you decide it will be best to do some preliminary research to make sure there is enough information out there that will help you get your point across. As well as to help you decide what you are going to say. Once you have gathered some material, let me know your ideas and if this topic is going to fit the criteria of your assignment.

Cassie: Thanks for your help Mum! I will start researching right away!

Morning of 2nd May – 72 hours after executions, 64 hours after withdrawal of Australian Ambassador to Indonesia.

Cassie: Hey mum. After researching the theory of boycotts and the media portrayal of the recent executions in Indonesia I have decided I definitely want to explore this further as my project report topic.

Mum: That’s great Cass! Good to see you are thinking about your project nice and early. Anyway, tell me about the materials you have come across so far, and how you plan to tackle then report.

Cassie: Well firstly I started by finding the main social media page dedicated to the Bali boycotts – which is a Facebook page titled ‘Boycott Bali for the Boys’. I spent a fair amount of time analysing the pages posts, the comments it had received, its growth of likes and the conversation that was being sparked. I found the public response to the page and its message to be very divided, just like you had mentioned mainstream television media to be. I then looked through the news articles that have been released over the last few months, in 2005 when the executions were originally sentenced and from the last three days since the executions have taken place. I found these articles to focus both on the executions, as well as quite substantially on the boycott Bali campaign.

Mum: Sounds like you have found some great sources, and are gaining a clear idea of how you will approach your project. In regards to the section you just mentioned about a theory of boycotts, I have also been doing some of my own research into boycotts. You have sparked my interest in this current topic, and I wanted to tell you about and article I read that was posted in the Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media by Jiyeon Kang in which he argues that when social media is involved in the organisation of a boycott it can simply enable slactivism, where online campaigns are liked or retweeted in order to feel good about oneself, with no actual commitment intended.

Cassie: That is a great theory! It’s relevant to this form of boycott, as well as sums up my original theory that this boycott is a sensational one that became popular due to public outrage. However it portrays little knowledge of the full circumstance, and will overall have no outstanding damage to the Indonesian economy.

Mum: I completely agree with you. The one main challenge you will face in discussing your main theory about boycotts is that there is relatively little literature present about the impact of social

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media on boycotting due to it being a newer form of protest. Similarly, another hardship I feel you will face is due to the executions of Chan and Sukumaran being so recent, there is yet to be any academic writing on its social effects. Other than that, what other aspects of the media have you come across during your research?

Cassie: There are a few things I have found that have not been discussed in the media about the campaign to boycott Bali. Firstly, people are being urged to travel to countries like Thailand or Vietnam instead of spending their money in Indonesia. However it seems to be unknown to most people that both these nations are users of capital punishment. I also find it very interesting that the media reports have been so concentrated on the Australian lives that were lost. In confuses me that six other loves were lost that night, however they are irrelevant in Australian media. I am going to try and focus more heavily on these aspects as I begin to plan putting together my information pack.

20th May – 3 Weeks since the Executions and Media Coverage of the Boycotts has begun to diminish

(Draft Information pack has since been devised and viewed by Mum and her friends)

Mum: Hey Cass, I wanted to talk to you about the information pack you had asked me to look over. You said that you wanted to present your information in a poster as it was an interesting and different way to show off your work. However my friends and I feel that the way you have designed your poster draft is unappealing and shows far too much information. We suggest you cull some of the background information you present and focus on the main point’s you are trying to get across. Also the way you have mimicked a Facebook page set out is not quite clear, and it may make your poster more captivating to diverge from this idea and add more images and colours.

Cassie: These are the same concerns I had about the poster. I think it will be best to stick with the colour scheme of social media (being the blue shades) but I will add more images and separate the information. Hopefully making the poster more appealing!

Mum: Other than that we have no more initial problems with the poster. You have presented a sound argument and present both sides of the story clearly, allowing your readers to be able to make up their own mind about the situation.

Cassie: I have also been able to make my mind up about the whole situation, and am very pleased I have looked at every side of the argument. There was certainly a great deal missing in the mainstream media coverage of the Bali Boycott campaign. It will be very interesting to see if the campaign lasts into the future, or does have any effect on the Indonesian tourist industry. And it will certainly be interesting to view how capital punishment is handled by the Australian media in years to come.
Reference List (Poster and Research)


Koku, P (2011) ‘On Boycotts Organized through the Internet’, *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, vol. 5 no. 6, page 83-84


Theoverlandguy [@theoverlandguy] (2015) #boycottbali You can’t have 500 Million in Aid, keep someone for 10 years in prison then execute them. That is where the anger lays, April 29, Tweet, https://twitter.com/theoverlandguy/status/593374657878761472