

Article

Regulations for Broadcast Media on Islamic Values and Afghanistan's National Interests

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Abstract: This study analyzes the issue of media content regulation in Afghanistan within Islamic values and national interests. This paper analyzes how media in Afghanistan is restricted or regulated based on religious and national values, and what this process means from a sharia and legal perspective. The main objective of the study is to examine how media policies in Afghanistan are based on religious standards, cultural values, and national unity, and how these regulations can be harmonized with the objectives of Sharia. Employing a doctrinal and qualitative methodology, the paper draws on Islamic values, Afghan legal documents, books, journal papers, and expert opinions. This study attempts to bridge the legal gap and ambiguity in regulating broadcasting in light of Islamic values and national interests. The findings show that regulating broadcasting is considered important for strengthening Islamic values and protecting national unity, but if there is no clear and balanced policy for broadcasting, it will harm the independence of journalism and the free flow of information. The article suggests that in light of the objectives of Sharia, a legal framework is needed that both protects religious values and provides an environment for responsible media activity. The results of this study can help formulate policies that combine the objectives of Sharia, the need for national unity, and international journalism rules.

Keywords: Islamic values; national interests; broadcasting, regulation; Afghanistan

Introduction

In the modern era, the media has become a fundamental part of the intellectual, cultural, and political structure of society. Among these, radio and television are considered the most powerful tools for disseminating information and shaping people's opinions. (Bakenne, & Salawu, 2025). While these tools serve as a means of public awareness, education, entertainment, and understanding between nations, if misused, they can harm cultural, moral, and religious values. (Hashmi, et al., 2021).

Afghanistan, as an Islamic and traditional society, has unique values. Islamic values, which stem from the principles of Sharia, such as honesty, modesty, trustworthiness, chastity, and the avoidance of forbidden broadcasts, provide an ethical framework for the media. On the other hand, Afghan national values, which are related to the people's culture, language, traditions, history, national unity, and independent thought, must be preserved and further strengthened through the media. (Vivian, 2023).

Dindar Khel (2023) states that since approximately 99% of Afghanistan's population is Muslim, all media outlets in the country should prepare their broadcasts following the teachings of the holy religion of Islam. According to Rubini et al. (2025: 333), technological platforms should broadcast within the Islamic ethics and Sharia texts to prevent criminal broadcasting. Generally, they prepare a legal design for regulating modern technological outlets broadcasting in light of Sharia standards. In conclusion, (Ma'arif, 2023) summarises the duties of Islamic broadcasting to spread Islamic instructions more broadly and strengthen religious understanding among the challenges of modern times.

Although these studies have been conducted on media regulation, most have only referred to general Islamic principles or have been limited to criticizing modern media. Similarly, a holistic analysis of national values, a deep focus on specific forms of radio and television broadcasting, and the proposal of practical solutions have been largely ignored.

The key objective of this study is to propose a coherent and coordinated framework for regulating radio and television broadcasting in light of Islamic and Afghan national values so that these media can make a positive contribution to the growth, unity, and preservation of the nation's values. Additionally, this article provides an analytical framework for policymakers, media professionals, religious scholars, and cultural activists to align media content with religious, moral, and national values. The main topic is the definition of broadcasting, Islamic values and Afghan national interests. Also, the standards and rules of Islamic values and national interest will be investigated in detail.

Literature Review

Media regulation is a serious and highly valued issue in contemporary Islamic and progressive countries, which requires a balance between freedom of expression on the one hand and religious-national values on the other. Afghanistan, which has a deeply Islamic and cultural society, media regulation should be based on Islamic ethics and the common interests of the Afghan nation.

1. Islamic Values and Broadcasting Responsibility

According to Islamic rules, broadcasting is obligated to uphold truthfulness, justice, modesty, and social stability. Contemporary Islamic research emphasizes that the media should be a tool for propagating religion, promoting morality, and preventing obscenity and immorality (Al-Rashidi & Alghafli, 2021).

2. Defining National Interests and the Position of the Broadcasting

Recent studies show that the definition of national interests should be based on cultural identity, national unity, linguistic diversity, security stability, and economic growth (Ahmadzai, 2021). The media has the power to create social consciousness and enrich national memory. If the media acts against national interests, it leads to division and discord in society (Noori, 2023). Therefore, a transparent and realistic framework for the media in the light of national policy is necessary.

3. The Balance Between Freedom of Expression and Islamic National control

Contemporary theories emphasize that freedom of expression is not absolute, but should be limited by the values, religious principles, and moral lines of society (Shahbaz & Funk, 2022). According to the Constitution and mass media law of Afghanistan, freedom of expression is guaranteed, but violations against Islamic values, national interests, and public order are prohibited. This makes it clear that the organization must maintain a balance between law, religion, and national unity (Media Commission of Afghanistan, 2022).

4. International Experiences and Adaptable Models

The experience of Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Qatar, and Turkey shows that media regulation based on religious-cultural values not only provides the basis for social order, but also for innovation, creativity, and responsible media (Yusuf & Hasan, 2021; Erdem & Kaya, 2023). Afghanistan, due to its unique situation,

needs to create a moderate regulatory framework that balances freedom, responsibility, human rights standards, and religious-national values.

Therefore, the literature review shows that media regulation in Afghanistan should have a balanced and principled framework between Islamic ethics, national interests, and freedom of expression. If the media is regulated based on these values, it not only leads to the promotion of social cohesion and values but also creates a reliable system for the responsible transmission of information.

Methodology

This study follows a purely doctrinal legal research design. This type of research conducts an analytical study of existing legal texts, Sharia, laws, and regulations, to examine the relationship between Islamic values and the national legal framework to resolve a specific legal issue (Hutchinson & Duncan, 2021). The data was collected through secondary sources, which include Afghanistan's Constitution and Mass Media Law, authentic texts of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh Principles, Maqasid al-Sharia), legal norms of other Islamic countries, academic articles and research books, and peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. No primary data (such as interviews, polls, or surveys) were used, as this research is structured according to the criteria of doctrinal research (Kelsen, 2020). In doctrinal research, sampling is done through the selection of examples, laws, and scholarly works. In this study, special attention was paid to these sources: The Constitution of Afghanistan (2004), the Mass Media Law of Afghanistan (2009), the perceptions of Imam Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and contemporary jurists, Media laws and implementation experiences of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Qatar (Rahman, 2021).

Furthermore, the data analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis. These steps are taken for the analysis: (1). Identification and differentiation of Islamic values from the original texts. (2). Comparison of values with Afghan laws. (3). Analysis of regulatory models of other Islamic countries. (4). Identification of value gaps and challenges. Also, the analysis is based on the principles of Maqasid al-Sharia, which are: religion, self, intellect, lineage, and protection of property (Auda, 2022). Similarly, national interests such as national unity, cultural identity, and social stability were also assessed.

The Findings

Islamic values and national interests are the basic resources of the Afghan legal framework. (Faizan, et., al, 2024). The Afghan legal framework pressingly emphasizes that media must broadcast in light of them. Especially, the Constitution of (2004), the mass media law of (2009), and the law on the propagation of virtue and prevention of vice of (2024). Furthermore, the responsible authorities and government officials always make such statements in meetings, media debates, sessions, and conferences that the media must regulate their broadcast within Islamic and national values. (Shamshadnews, 2024). Based on this, the researchers classify the findings of their study in the following points.

1. The Position of Islamic Values and National Interests in The Afghan Legal Framework On Broadcasting
Islamic values and national interests are a central theme in the Afghan Constitution (2004). Article 1 of the Constitution states that “the identity of Afghanistan is Islamic, meaning that all laws, institutions, and systems must be by the holy religion of Islam.” The same article also states that “national interests ensure the unity, independence, and territorial integrity of the country. This is of vital importance for the survival and security of the nation.” In Article 2, “Islam is declared the official religion of the state, which confirms the fundamental status of Islamic law.” And “the mention of religious freedom of minorities leads to the strengthening of social stability, solidarity, and national unity, which are important principles of national interest.” In addition, Article 3 explicitly “guarantees the rule of Islamic law, meaning that all laws must be following the values of Islam.” Accordingly, “observance of religious principles is a factor of public confidence, and through this, political and legal stability is ensured, which is an important national goal for the development of the country.”

Besides this, Afghanistan's mass media law (2009) has a clear position on regulating broadcasting in articles (1,2, 15,16, 20, 25, 26, and 45) to protect Islamic values and national interests. This law obliges media

outlets to conduct their broadcasts under the rules of the holy religion of Islam, the provisions of the Constitution of Afghanistan, national unity, social values, public order, and the national sovereignty of the country. According to the law, no media outlet is allowed to publish content that insults Islamic sanctities, incites racial prejudice, promotes violence, or obscenity, or is contrary to national interests. This law recognizes freedom of expression but defines this freedom under the umbrella of responsibilities and limits so that freedom of the press does not conflict with Islamic and national values.

Furthermore, articles 17 and 21 of the law on the propagation of virtue and prevention of vice of the Islamic Emirate (2024) provide basic doctrines for regulating broadcasting in light of Islamic values and national interests. According to Article 17, "All media and broadcasting outlets are obliged to harmonize their broadcasts with Islamic law, the faith, culture, and national interests of the Afghan nation, and to refrain from broadcasts that contain obscene, indecent, or content that is contrary to the values of religion and the nation." Also, according to Article 21, "relevant agencies are obligated to monitor media content and prohibit and take legal action against publications that are contrary to Sharia principles, social ethics, and national unity." Both of these articles were enacted to ensure healthy, responsible, and value-based broadcasting for the spiritual well-being of the Islamic community, the unity of the nation, and the protection of the Afghan Islamic identity.

2. The Impacts of Unclear Regulations on Broadcasting Activities in Afghanistan

The ambiguities and unclear regulations of Afghanistan's legal system have a direct negative impact on the freedom and transparency of broadcasting activities. Freedom of expression, which must be protected alongside Islamic values and Afghan national interests, is under serious threat, as the applicable laws, particularly the mass media law, use the terms "Islamic values," "national interests," and "public order" vaguely and without clear definition. This situation provides the authorities with the opportunity to restrict or even close media activities at their discretion, resulting in censorship, self-censorship, and obstruction of the free flow of information (Human Rights Watch, 2022). This legal instability increases the risk of continued legal pressure, arrests, and even violence for media executives, which leads to a decline in professional standards of journalism and the erosion of rights-based information provision to society (International Media Support, 2023). In addition, inconsistent interpretation of laws and the limited capacity of judicial bodies have led to decisions in media cases often being non-transparent, unfair, and in conflict with legal principles, which in turn leads to a decline in social trust (UNESCO, 2021). Therefore, reforming the legal system, establishing clear, balanced, and Islamic-compliant principles for the media, and ensuring transparency in law enforcement are vital measures to both respect Islamic values and national interests and protect the fundamental right to freedom of expression. Even broadcasting in the name of freedom of expression, due to unclear regulations regarding Islamic values and national interests, is considered a cause of the regime's downfall (Rafi Tabee Youtoub, 2023).

3. Legal Instances and cases of Restrictions on Afghan Media Based on Islamic and National Values

The media in Afghanistan has faced various restrictions under the guise of Islamic values and national interests during both the Republican and Islamic Emirate periods, although these concepts have been used by each regime with their unique interpretations. During the republican era (2001-2021), although relative freedom of expression existed, the media was forced to exercise caution with topics that were related to "national interests" and Islamic values. For example, some media outlets were subject to advise from security institutions not to raise certain topics based on national interests, such as criticism of the peace process or criticism of the policies of some neighbouring countries (Hassan, et al., 2024). Besides this, in 2014, the screening of Afghan filmmaker Sediq Barmak's film "Al-Fatiha" was met with opposition from several religious circles and protests were held against it for insulting Islamic values, which ultimately led to the film being withdrawn from public release. Also in 2013, a report by the newspaper "8 Subh" that raised the issue of forced marriages was met with opposition from some religious circles, who accused the newspaper of publishing content that went against Islamic values (International Media Support, 2015).

Moreover, after the advent of the Islamic Emirate (2021 to present), these values were deemed even more important for the media to respect Islamic values and national interests, and for this reason, many media outlets reorganized their publications, content, and even staff for coordination. Media representatives have been advised to avoid topics that conflict with religious or national values, and therefore many publications have been restricted or changed out of caution. For instance, banning the broadcast of foreign films and series (Turkish, Indian, Pakistani, Iranian, American). Banning the broadcast of music and singing programs such as *Satara Afghan* and *Tolo News'* comedy show *"Shabka Khandeh"* (UNESCO, 2021). Therefore, it is argued that these restrictions on broadcasting are the demand of the Afghan media norms and regulations. Since Afghanistan is an Islamic and traditional society, such broadcasts hurt people's thinking and behaviour and cause social instability, just as some broadcasts of the Republican era are now criticized for paving the way for moral corruption, obscenity, and instability.

In addition, the Media Violations Commission of the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban suspended Noor and Bariya TV stations in 2024 for "non-compliance with Islamic and national values." (BBC News, 2024). Besides this, Arezo TV was shut down by the Taliban's Ministry of "Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice" for "inappropriate broadcasts" and collaboration with foreign media. During the action, the TV station's staff was arrested and equipment was confiscated (VOA News, 2024). Also, journalist Mahdi Ansary was sentenced to 18 months in prison by the Islamic Emirate of Taliban for "anti-regime propaganda" and collaborating with "anti-Islamic Emirate of Taliban media." (International Federation of Journalists, 2025). Furthermore, According to a UN report, the Taliban arrested 256 journalists from August 2021 to 2024. These arrests were often carried out based on unclear regulations regarding Islamic values and national interests (Reuters, 2024).

In Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate refers media outlets and journalists to legal and judicial organs when their publications conflict with the values of Sharia and Afghan national interests. From the perspective of the Islamic Emirate, the media should be a means of reforming society, strengthening moral values, and protecting Afghan identity, rather than fueling unbridled violence, cultural invasion, or propaganda against the regime. Therefore, if a journalist or media outlet publishes content that is contrary to Islamic precepts, Afghan culture, or public order, this action is considered punishable by law. This approach is considered essential by the Islamic Emirate to build a permanent Islamic society and to prevent Westernization, irresponsibility, and intellectual deviation (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2022).

4. Regulating Broadcasting in Light of Islamic Values and Sharia Objectives

Islamic values are the moral, intellectual, and social principles that are based on the objectives of Islamic law (Maqāsid al-Sharia) and guide the welfare, justice, and moral reform of the individual and society. These values indicate the protection of religion, intellect, self, lineage, and property, which are the fundamental goals of Sharia. According to contemporary research, Islamic values guide reform and development not only for individual life, but also in all aspects of social, economic, and political life, and provide the foundations of societal stability, justice, transparency, responsibility, and human dignity (Ismail et al., 2025; Azmi et al., 2024). Therefore, in Islamic societies, radio and television are not only tools for entertainment and dissemination of information, but they are also considered very important and effective tools for intellectual, religious, and moral education. Consequently, the regulation of the content of these tools must be consistent with the values and objectives of Islamic law. The objectives of Sharia, or the goals of Sharia, which include the protection of religion, soul, intellect, race, and property, provide a philosophy for the overall order of Islamic life and form the basis for the evaluation of any social, cultural, and informational policy (Shuaib, 2021). Radio and television are very important because they shape the thoughts and values of all segments of society, especially those who are far from educational centres (Bakenne, & Salawu, 2025).

Based on this, if positive Islamic concepts, moral standards, awareness of religious injunctions, and messages for the reform of society are disseminated through these broadcasts, it will contribute to the intellectual stability of society, the survival of Islamic identity, and the realization of Sharia objectives (Abdul Rashid &

Hassan, 2022). On the contrary, if these media outlets open the way to the dissemination of worthless entertainment content, pornography, or extremist ideologies, this not only conflicts with the principles of Islam, but can also harm the moral, psychological, and intellectual well-being of society. Therefore, radio and television broadcasting must be based on the principles of responsibility, trust, and Islamic ethics.

Similarly, Islamic jurisprudence provides three important principles in evaluating media content: purity of intention (*Ikhlas*), legitimacy of purpose, and permissibility of means. That is, if the goal is to spread religious consciousness, but the means or method leads to immorality or violence, then this action is considered unlawful from a religious perspective. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate the production, broadcasting, and management of radio and television in a way that maintains a balance between Sharia objectives and the dissemination of the values of Islamic civilization. According to contemporary research, evaluating broadcasting content from the perspective of *Maqāṣid Al-Shari* can be an effective strategy that ensures the legitimacy of the content, clarifies the direction of its social impact, and facilitates adherence to ethical standards (Shuaib, 2021; Abdul Rashid & Hassan, 2022). This is not only in line with Islamic principles, but also plays a fundamental role in creating a responsible, healthy, and ethical media environment. Therefore, radio and television policymakers need to prioritize the objectives of Sharia so that the power of the media can be used for good, reform, and value creation.

5. Regulating Broadcasting in Light of Afghan National Interests

The regulation of radio and television broadcasting in light of Afghanistan's national interests is a major national, legal, and cultural necessity, which is important for protecting the country's social stability, cultural identity, religious values, and political sovereignty. National interests are a set of values, goals, and priorities of a country that are determined for national sovereignty, security, the well-being of its people, the continuation of cultural identity, and the protection of strategic interests, and are considered legitimate demands from the perspective of international law (Ahmadzai, 2021). This definition states that any broadcasting that harms national unity, religious and moral values, or the political stability of the country can be considered against the national interest. The Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture made an official statement in July 2024 "That the media should adjust their activities in light of the country's national interests and Islamic values, to ensure the moral, cultural, and identity stability of society" (Afghan Voice Agency [AVA], 2024). Similarly, international media watchdogs have also reported that broadcast content should prevent the spread of extremism, violence, ethnic and linguistic discrimination, and social instability (International Federation of Journalists [IFJ], 2021).

While freedom of expression is considered a fundamental right, this freedom should not be outside the framework of national interests but should be maintained in line with the principles of responsibility, morality, and social order. The dissemination of false, biased, or divisive messages through radio and television broadcasts not only damages the credibility of the media but also weakens the atmosphere of trust in society. Therefore, broadcasting organizations must have mechanisms that ensure respect for religious values, reflect cultural diversity, and strive to strengthen national unity. In this regard, the Afghanistan Journalists Center has also expressed concern in its recent reports that if there are no clear, fair, and national interest-based policies for media activities, it will end up against freedom of expression, social order, and national trust (Afghanistan Journalists Center, 2024). Based on these scientific and legal reasons, the regulation of radio and television broadcasts should be based on Islamic values, Sharia objectives, and national interests, so that the media can play an effective role for reform, unity, identity, and progress, and not for deviation and instability.

Discussion

The regulation of radio and television broadcasting is not only a legal obligation within Afghanistan's Islamic and national value framework but is also considered a vital element for social stability, national unity, and moral coherence. The findings revealed that although freedom of expression is considered a natural human right, this freedom must be defined under the umbrella of Islamic values and national interests, and not in a way that endangers the moral foundations of society, cultural identity, or the security of the nation. Therefore, the production of media content must remain faithful to the principles of the Holy Quran, the guidance of the

Prophetic Sunnah, and the objectives of Sharia; especially those objectives defined to protect religion, intellect, lineage, property, and self (Auda, 2021; Kamali, 2021). On the other hand, national interests play a pivotal role in the politicization of broadcast content (Mohammad, & Ling, 2023). These interests are vital to strengthening the identity, unity, economic independence, cultural survival, and international standing of the Afghan nation. In Afghanistan's sensitive political and cultural context, broadcast content that fosters division, hatred, or cultural aggression is considered not only illegal but also a national loss (Barfield, 2020; AFJC, 2024).

Similarly, broadcasting regulation in numerous countries of the Islamic world is based on religious values, national interests, and political sensitivities, and Afghanistan is an important part of this framework. An analysis of Saudi Arabia's media policies shows that the media there is strictly censored based on Sharia values, and any publication that goes against Islamic beliefs, national unity, or social values is severely restricted (Al-Rasheed, 2021). Iran practices a combination of religious authorities and the state to control the media, where the media is governed based on jurisprudential principles, particularly Imam Khomeini's "Wilayat-e-Faqih" theory (Khiabany, 2022). Malaysia and Indonesia, despite having relatively free media, still have specific censorship mechanisms to comply with Islamic principles, and the media is expected to reflect the nation's cultural identity and Islamic values (Noor, 2020). The Turkish government, particularly under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party, has attempted to regulate the media through Ottoman Islamic values, while at the same time maintaining relative freedom of expression (Yilmaz, 2021). Qatar, in the form of Al Jazeera, has promoted international journalism, but its domestic media plays an important role in disseminating Islamic values (Al-Jaber, 2021). These examples show that Islamic countries in the contemporary world are trying to maintain a balance between religion, morality, and national stability.

In jurisprudence, according to Imam Ghazali, "The media should operate within the framework of "the propagation of virtue and forbidding evil", that is, it should only be a means of spreading reform, goodness, and truth, and not a source of sedition or corruption" (Al-Ghazali, 2020). Ibn Taymiyyah "Also values freedom of expression, but this freedom must be limited to the principles of Sharia, and if it goes against the nation or religion, it should be closed" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2021). Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the most prominent figures among contemporary Islamic scholars, believes "That the media must be subject to the "objectives of Sharia," and that freedom is linked to responsibility, not absolute" (Al-Qaradawi, 2022). The views of Hanafi jurists, which have the widest application in Afghanistan's jurisprudential system, place great importance on the principle of "Blocking the Means", meaning that even the means that could pave the way to forbidden things should be regulated (Rizapoor, & Rahimi, 2023).

Accordingly, a suitable media regulation for Afghanistan should be based on a moderate Islamic model that preserves the nation's moral and value system, reflects social, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, and is consistent with international Islamic thought. This balance can only be achieved when broadcasting policy is based on Sharia doctrines, national interests, international journalistic standards, and social participation.

Based on the above information, it is argued that regulating broadcasting to protect Islamic values and national interests has Sharia and national legitimacy (Hassan, et al., 2021). However, the implementation of strict and broadly interpreted regulations raises serious concerns for broadcasting freedom. Namely, strict regulations regulating broadcasting in light of Islamic values and national interests can severely restrict freedom of broadcasting. (Rahimi, et al., 2024). This concern has been repeatedly reported by organizations supporting human rights and freedom of expression. Several studies show that although protecting values is a legitimate right of every state when these values are imposed on the media through broadly interpreted laws, this can limit freedom of expression, public access to information, and the ability to monitor government actions. Self-censorship, pressure on journalists, and fear of suppressing critical journalism are among the consequences that arise from such regulations (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Conclusion

The conclusion is that the regulation of broadcasting media requires that laws be clear, unambiguous, and free from extreme and deviation interpretations, that regulatory bodies be independent, and that media outlets respect

religious and national values while also safeguarding the fundamental rules of freedom of expression. This balance is the only way to ensure both the protection of values and the prevention of the risk of censorship. Hence, broadcasting must refrain from dissemination that undermines Islamic values and national interests. Because broadcasts against them threaten the country's stability, welfare, development, economic, cultural, and social strength, and the fundamental rights and freedom of citizens. Also, society is facing moral and educational stagnation, which in turn negatively affects the psychological state of the individuals.

Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers create a balanced legal framework that respects both Islamic values and freedom of expression. Therefore, it is necessary for policymakers to formulate comprehensive and clear regulations for regulating broadcasting within the framework of the Holy Quran, authentic hadiths, and contemporary jurisprudential principles, and for them to be implemented in practice by relevant institutions. In addition, national interests and values (national identity, language, culture, customs, territorial integrity and national sovereignty, stability and security, diversity and unity among ethnic groups, and justice) should be taken into account in the formulation of regulations and policies. In this case, fair and responsible transparency will be established in broadcasting.

Future studies can examine the actual effects of Islamic broadcasting policies and guide the government on how to make broadcasting more effective, increase the positive impact of public opinion, and maintain a balance in broadcasting policies. In my opinion, this research will be based on these important factors: Public opinion analysis through surveys, focus groups and social media. Has the impact of the Islamic broadcasting policy increased the level of religious awareness of the people? Has it prevented extremist ideas? Has it benefited national unity and social stability? Finally, it is submitted that a balanced, fair, transparent, clear and inclusive legal framework for regulating broadcasting can ensure compliance with regulations while preventing the negative effects of censorship.

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