Exploring the Strengths and Limitations of Development Journalism in Malaysia

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ABBREVIATIONS

UMNO	United Malays National Organization
PAP	People's Action Party
BN	Barisan Nasional (Malaysia National Front Party or Coalition Party consists three major parties, UMNO, MCA, MIC)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
POA	Points of Agreement
ISA	Internal Security Act
OSA	Official Security Act
KTM	Keretapi Tanah Melayu
NST(P)	The New Straits Times (Press)
BH	Berita Harian
ICJ	International Court of Justice
SEA	South East Asia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
BERNAMA	Berita Nasional Malaysia
PPPA	Printing Presses and Publication Acts
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
NUJ	National Union Journalist
MPI	Malaysia Press Institute
SUHAKAM	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
SPH	Singapore Publishing House
CNN	Cable News Network
Rakyat	Common people
RTM	Radio and Televisyen Malaysia
TV3	Media Prima Berhad (Sistem Televisyen Malaysia)

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Abstract

Since decolonization in 1957, development journalism has played a central role in serving Malaysian governments by disseminating ideas on issues concerning that country's national development. Indeed, development journalism is seen as the mainstream form of journalism practice in Malaysia, not only on domestic issues but also significantly, on regional and international issues.

The thesis makes a contribution to understanding the different ways development journalism is conceptualised through an investigation of how and why development journalism is practised in Malaysia.

Therefore, the main aims of this thesis are to analyze the role of development journalism in Malaysia, and how journalists understand and talk about its strengths and limitations. This is done by first, exploring how, why and when journalists/reporters who follow the development journalism philosophy appear to take a harmony-oriented approach towards framing international relations. Second, this thesis identifies what are the contributing factors impacting on journalists in adopting this harmonious reporting approach. In this regard, this thesis offers a comprehensive analysis of development journalism's strengths and limitations as demonstrated in Malaysia when maintaining international relations with its neighbour, Singapore. I thus focus on development journalism practices in the Malaysian context and the general understanding of development journalism in Asian journalism. The empirical analysis identifies whether the media in Malaysia are applying the same concept of development journalism as proposed by Western scholars, or the reverse.

In Malaysia, development journalism has been based on the idea that media organisations are partners and associates with the government. However, my analysis of current Malaysian journalism practices appears to demonstrate that, within the traditional tasks of media, new opportunities are emerging. The thesis identifies factors influencing the idea of a developing free press in Malaysia. In my case study, Malaysian reporting of the Malaysia-Singapore relationship provides an important example of the way the media helps define regional relationships for both countries and is essential to regional stability. By studying the news reporting on the Malaysia-Singapore

relationship, the continuing development role of journalists when reporting the regional news becomes clearer. The ability of each journalist to express ideas or views consistently on the regional issues pertaining to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship is the benchmark of the seeking for harmony that I want to illustrate in journalism practices.

The case study focuses on BERNAMA news online. As the national news agency controlling the flow of international and regional news for Malaysia, BERNAMA has to maintain the credibility of its news reporting, and help sustain the ties of the government with other countries. Apart from this, BERNAMA also has a critical role in defining and shaping the national perception of Malaysian foreign affairs and regional relationships.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in the study: content analysis, textual analysis and in-depth interviews. An analysis of 497 BERNAMA news online documents from 1996 to 2008 is included, to investigate how BERNAMA demonstrates and frames the elements of 'harmonious reporting'. Diplomatic agenda setting by government is also analyzed since it has an impact on reportage, specifically Malaysia-Singapore issues. The comparative analysis of the news reports reveals a trend towards reviewing this important relationship with Singapore, whatever the specific issue being discussed. This trend was more noticeable during Tun Mahathir's premiership of 22 years (1981-2003). The in-depth interviews with Malaysian media practitioners, academics and policy makers present an interdisciplinary dialogue between journalism and political strategies studies that address the diplomacy strategy in managing the regional relationship through the media. The thesis concludes with a summary of what has been discovered about development journalism practices in Malaysia, and a note on what possible changes will occur in the future.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Awan Ismail and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Signed:

Awan Ismail

Date:

Acknowledgements

Preface

In conducting this project, I have relied in part on my journalistic knowledge as a trained journalism student, practitioner and now academic for the past fifteen years. A journalistic background has provided me with insights, but also some challenges in writing this thesis which is concerned with the questions raised by, and explorations of, different perspectives and contexts of journalism than I have encountered previously. My experience and knowledge of journalism have contributed to understanding the challenges and opportunities in the practice of journalism in Malaysia.

My training in the daily routines as a journalist in a newsroom have supplied and exposed me to journalistic routines and conventions; for example, an understanding of how the institutional practices work under newsroom pressures. All journalists face complex issues regarding the ethical conduct of their work, the production of responsible writing, and objectivity. A journalist can shape and frame perceptions, and has the power to affect the world, and furthermore has the ability to influence different groups.

I found that undertaking an academic study has given me different perspectives on journalism, its philosophies and the ultimate outcomes of its practices. However, I have found it helpful to refer to my experience in writing this thesis, particularly when exploring the assumptions of what is known as 'development journalism'.

The thesis is, I hope, evidence of the belief that journalists need to think beyond their professional training – to understand the grassroots of journalism practices and institutional conventions. Media groups or organisations work to different rules in different contexts and cultures, even in democracies. The specificity of the Malaysian news culture as it pertains to the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore is of significance to these two nations. Another current challenge in Malaysia is the growth of civil society and the variety of news platforms now available and these two factors have become additional forces contending with traditional journalism practices.

These phenomena provide an opportunity to recap and understand the role of media at a pivotal point in the nation's history. Despite all these challenges, however, the journey of rethinking journalism has been an enjoyable and optimistic one.

Note: Earlier versions of some sections of Chapters One and Two have been presented and published in the proceedings at the Indonesia International Conference on Communication: Global Challenge to the Future of Communications on 22-24 November 2010, in Jakarta. Furthermore, some findings presented in Chapter Five were presented at the 16th Malaysia and Singapore Society Colloquium: Power and Change in Malaysia and Singapore on 10-11 December, 2010 in Australia National University, Canberra.

Introduction

Journalism practices in Malaysia have been dominated by development journalism. This has come about because of the heritage of colonialism and the needs of a developing country with a multi-ethnic population, and important relationships to maintain within the country and in the region. This thesis attempts to address how development journalism is practised in reality. It outlines the story of a journalism profession, which is changing and becoming more reflexive, and practices which are changing under pressures which will be demonstrated later in the thesis. Development journalism has been the driving factor for media practice and by this I mean that media organizations have been seen as partners with the Malaysian government, working together to address the country's needs. At the state or national level, development journalism has played a central role in helping the government to disseminate ideas pertaining to domestic issues, such as national development. Journalists have been seen as important figures in the national development process.

My work asks the questions: how did a particular form of development journalism become established in Malaysia; how does 'partnership' government and media play out in Malaysia; what contribution does the BERNAMA, the main news source for international coverage, report on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship; and how do media practitioners, academics and policy makers reflect on the practice in Malaysia.

Development journalism practice appears in developing countries where the government's national agenda dominates. It involves all media and government practices and thus creates a complex landscape of news reporting and media practices. In Malaysia, for example, development journalism has been perceived as an old and out-dated media practice. However, this has not been reflected in its real practices where the media is a partner with the government and so this concept is valid even today.

There is also the issue of the insufficiently detailed development journalism studies considering how models of development journalism help construct regional relation. Although development journalism has been practised for sixty years, there has been little study or research done on how development journalism plays out in non-domestic,

issues. There is also a gap in describing the diversity of its practices. There are limited academic studies of development journalism in the literature of journalism studies itself. Research by Xu (2009, pp.365-366) claims that in the past four decades there have only been thirty-four research articles on development journalism published in almost all academic journals in the field of media, journalism and communications.

Most of these studies looked at the application of developmental journalism in domestic or internal issues (see for example, (Mustafa Kamal 2005)). There is hardly any study on regional or external issues, even though the impact of outside news reports on journalism, the Internet and global influences have changed the media landscape, providing more challenges for state-trained journalists and more issues to deal with regionally. Therefore this thesis is significant in filling the gap by studying how development journalism now mediates an important and complex regional relationship between countries. For the purpose of this study, I will look at the Malaysia and Singapore relationship as it is represented by BERNAMA in my case study. This relationship has contributed to both countries' development, and yet, despite both nations' shared colonial history, their relationship can be potentially damaged due to conflicting interests.

My work is going to describe: how development journalism is being practised in Malaysia; the current government ownership of the news platforms and how that impacts on news content; the regulatory environment and political leadership influences; what the national needs were that development journalism was seen as meeting; how journalists write about the Malaysia and Singapore relationship; and what a selected group of media practitioners say about development journalism and think about the future of practices in Malaysia.

Journalism operates under certain constraints all over the world. My thesis argument demonstrates the particular nature of constraints and potential of development journalism in Malaysia. I show how development journalism can be viewed as a communications strategy for the harmonisation of internal and external relationships. For this thesis, my focus prioritises development journalism practices as they are applied in reporting on the relationship with Singapore.

Development journalism, how it operates and connects to government and how it affects and is affected by society at different levels are central to the argument. By studying the news reporting of the media on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship alone, one can analyse the role of journalists in reporting the regional news. The ability of each journalist to express ideas or views consistently on the regional issues pertaining to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship is the benchmark of the harmony I want to illustrate in journalism practices. Journalists have been seen as people who create reality, either through print or electronic media especially in the news format, and they have become prominent subjects of media research. They are becoming one of the important subjects of analysis because the dissemination of news, especially political news, to the public with particular views – be it positive or negative – is coming under pressure from the government and this can jeopardize freedom of the press. Journalists have to juggle between reporting the news based on this political pressure and revealing the truth so that the public benefits.

Therefore, the main aims of this thesis are to analyze the role of development journalism in Malaysia, and how journalists understand and talk about its strengths and limitations. This is done by first, exploring how, why and when journalists/reporters who follow the development journalism philosophy appear to take a harmony-oriented approach towards framing international relations. Second, this thesis will identify what are the contributing factors impacting on journalists in adopting this harmonious reporting approach. In this regard, this thesis will offer a comprehensive analysis of development journalism strengths and limitations regarding how it works in a South East Asian country such as Malaysia in maintaining international relations with its neighbour, Singapore. I focus on development journalism practices in the Malaysian context and the general understanding of development journalism in Asian journalism. The empirical analysis will identify whether the media in Malaysia are applying the same concept of development journalism as proposed by Western scholars or the reverse.

In order to answer the questions above, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are used by adopting three methods – content analysis, textual analysis and in-depth interviews. Content and textual analysis on selected news articles are used to describe the key features of development journalism in Malaysia. The in-depth interviews with

Malaysian journalists and media practitioners present an interdisciplinary dialogue between journalism and political strategies studies that address the diplomacy strategy in managing the regional relationship through the media. The discussion in content and textual analysis has identified the agenda-setting role of media when it is reporting on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. This concept was put forward by Lang and Lang's (cited in McComb & Shaw 1972, p.177) claim:

> The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about, have feelings about.

In this research, news framing and news agendas are used to identify whether development journalism as illustrated in the media contributes to a symbiotic relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. It makes the argument that the importance of the relationship overrides the necessity to establish greater freedom of speech as a future ideal, from a pragmatic need to manage sensitive international relations. Agenda setting and framing helps governments manage the media and social relationships. Especially during times of crisis, agenda setting is an important tool for social and political stability, Rogers and Dearing (1988) and Dearing and Rogers (1996) analyse influences on the media agenda of news sources, gatekeepers, other influential media, economic factors, interest groups, and journalistic values and practices. They also argue that the agenda setting process assigns central roles to media and society in the policy-making process. Therefore, it is assumed in this research that issues discussed in the mainstream media are central to the media and society but not to the political leaders' expectations.

In Chapter Three, I place a different emphasis on the influence of leadership, and political ideologies. The significance of using news framing and agenda setting as part of the analysis framework in this study is based on Pan and Kosicki's (cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007, p.11) insight that "the assumptions that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences. Framing is often traced back to roots in both psychology and sociology". Tracking repetitions of news themes and assumptions about national interests in reporting relationship issues are important analytic tools to understand the impact of such political influence.

The roles of journalists and editors are considered important in framing the news as they decide what is relevant and what should be reported. Furthermore, framing, as argued by Gamson and Modigliani (cited in Chong & Druckman 2007, p.100) can be explained in this way:

> First, a frame in communication or a media frame refers to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g., a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience.

The concept of 'framing' is significant to a study aiming to identify the importance of the news agenda setting, and what can be seen as 'harmonious' reporting, as the main or primary characteristic of Malaysian news reporting. How the media frame the issues through the headlines and the news text is important. How news coverage can actually provide an independent perspective on and have a watchdog role over government, and will be investigated. The relevance of this study is that I emphasize the news frame and the news agenda setting not only for their impact on journalists' routines, but also on what journalists have termed 'the Malaysia-Singapore relationship'.

What can be called 'responsible' reporting by the media is demonstrated through an analysis of the news agenda and news frames regarding Singapore-linked issues. For example, this study provides the news trend analysis that reflects which agenda was highlighted the most. According to DeFleur (2010, p.160), agenda setting theory is about:

> … [a] process of selecting media content and then designing an agenda format for its presentation to audiences has been studied within somewhat distinct issues, or frameworks. One framework – the original and most studied – is the relationship among (1) the organization (agenda) of the overall news report, (2) audience beliefs about the relative importance of the issues encountered in those reports, and (3) how those audience beliefs about relative importance influence the political process (the so-called *policy agenda*). That is, the agenda set by the news media is said to be a major influence on the beliefs of the audience about the hierarchy of importance of the issues and topics reported by the press. In turn, those issues that come to be regarded as important by the public become the agenda of concerns of policy makers. These may be government officials (e.g., political candidates, elected legislators, and judges) or others who have a voice in influencing policy directions (e.g., clergy, spokespersons for social movements, and educators). Thus, the agenda setting process within this framework is a significant part of the political process….X

The news agenda set by the media on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship is perceived to be important because it shapes the character of regional stability.

To answer the research question, the thesis examines the macro and micro levels of journalism, which involve several factors and elements, such as press freedom, media systems, the government's role, and how and why journalists' engage development journalism in their professional practices.

To understand this range of issues, it is important therefore to identify the different political ideologies of Malaysia and Singapore. Any examination of development journalism in Malaysia requires an understanding of how more authoritarian ideologies, for example, are developed, since these kinds of belief-systems may cause dissension between: state ideologies and professional ideologies (media organizations); ethical journalism practices (journalists) and political ideologies (political representatives/individuals); and laws and regulations established by the government. The differences in political ideology and personal beliefs between the leaders of Malaysia and Singapore, have also contributed to occasional tensions in the relationship. Different ethnic groups are dominant in each country: the Malay in Malaysia, and the Chinese in Singapore.

Having clarified the importance of government-media-society relationships, this thesis addresses a more specific topic: how development journalism in Malaysia helps to maintain the regional relationship with Singapore or otherwise. Therefore, it is vital to identify how development journalism impacts, shapes and influences the current state of media reporting in Malaysia especially with regards to regional issues. These issues are explored through the lens of local mainstream media as demonstrated in BERNAMA online news. Selecting BERNAMA as the appropriate news organization is explained in Chapter Three. News headlines and reports from BERNAMA are analysed through a textual analysis to identify how the development journalism model works towards framing international relations.

The thesis therefore begins with a literature search on the normative theory of development journalism in Asian-based journalism. Discussion of the normative theories of journalism will focus on the concept of, and variations in, development

journalism, which includes the debate among various scholars on what development journalism actually means. The analysis refers to concepts of news reporting shared by Western media scholars, for whom the normative theory of journalism is based on "ideas of how media ought to or are expected to operate" (McQuail 1987, p.109).

Chapters One, Two and Three describe the fundamental context of the research questions and develop the argument about development journalism and its operations. Chapter One provides background materials on the different concepts of development journalism by the West and perspectives in the Malaysian context. It deals more broadly with development journalism in Malaysia as a recognized media practice and also takes into account the importance of free press practices as they are perceived by journalists and other stakeholders. By identifying and differentiating the path taken by the Malaysian media, this thesis describes the major issues from the perspective of Asian journalism and harmonious reporting. 'Harmonious', in this thesis, describes news values which work to achieve public agreement or public consensus through routine news reporting. In other words, 'harmonious' is marked by a striving for public agreement in feelings, attitudes, or actions. Further information on the harmonious reporting is in Chapter One.

Chapter Two describes the media landscape, which plays an important role in nation building, democratic practices and how the media works in Malaysia. Here I will discuss the practices of development journalism and issues involved in media serving the state's needs, and how they work by highlighting the struggles and constraints that hinder the media from adopting the Western model of a free press. It also discusses how the news framing, agenda setting and the perspectives of news objectives established by the Malaysian media help to make the regional relationship work. It deals with the underlying issues in the complex Malaysia and Singapore relationship which consists of two authoritarian administrations, and their similarities and differences, as contributing factors to the long-standing regional issues. In addition, news reporting and media practices in Malaysia are potentially divisive and related to the various interpretations of history, and to the historical context of Malaysia itself.

Chapter Three discusses the case study on regional relationships. How the news framing, agenda setting and the perspectives of news objectives by the Malaysian media

help to make the relationship work. Apart from that, this chapter then deals with the underlying issues in the complex Malaysia and Singapore relationship which consists of two authoritarian administrations, and their similarities and differences, as contributing factors to the long-standing regional issues. In addition, news reporting and media practices in Malaysia are potentially divisive and related to the various interpretations of history, and to the background of Malaysia itself. My account includes describing the way that the colonial regimes influenced Malaysia's socio-economic structure and how those influences had been reflected in the style of news reporting and media practices. It is also important to understand the current social, economic, political and major media players in Malaysia.The use of BERNAMA news online is outlined and demonstrated in this chapter.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven present the methods and findings. Chapter Four provides the first part of the results and analysis of news trends from BERNAMA news online on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. It provides the first evidence of 'harmonious' reporting on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship through the media coverage.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the textual analysis on the current state of reporting styles, and the case study on news reporting of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. This chapter investigates how the media plays a role in regional relationships, how it is controlled by the state, and how it works in a country in ways that reflect the influence of leaders.

Chapter Six and Seven discusses the third part of the findings from the in-depth interviews, and provides empirical evidence of the understanding of the respondents about development journalism, and how the media works in Malaysia. It also analyses the respondents' perceptions of how the news reports Malaysia and Singapore's relationship. This chapter considers whether the problems in current news reporting and media practices in Malaysia are a common problem in any news reporting and media practices globally, regardless of how free a country is. From practitioner insights, the media landscape appears as more complex and challenging than first imagined. Their comments reflect their professional struggles, and their engagement with new ideas about journalism practices. This chapter provides some suggestions about strengthening

news reporting and media practices in a democratic setting, and considers whether development journalism will grow or otherwise decline.

In my conclusion, I argue that development journalism has played a formative role in mediating Malaysia's relationship with its most important neighbor – Singapore. The practices are changing, however, and in my final argument I suggest ways in which journalism might function in Malaysia in future.

Therefore, as part of the larger argument of this thesis, it is vital to conduct a comprehensive analysis which incorporates an account of history, political systems, nature societies and cultures, regional relations and media organizations. It is important to analyse regional news reporting which portrays the relationship between Malaysia and its regional neighbour. Consequently it is important to understand the relationships between media, editors, journalists, politicians and political organizations and not to undermine the importance of laws and regulations in guarding the media content and conduct. This study is not only important to Malaysia and Singapore but also for the scholarship of journalism practice. It is possible that this notion of journalism practices may provide some insight into a comprehensive understanding of existing development journalism practices in Malaysia.

The thesis aims to take account of these differences in its exploration of what journalism is doing in Malaysia, and may do in the future. However, the current status of the media in Malaysia reflects other complexities such as pre and post-colonial history, leaders' influence, politics, laws and regulations, and social and economic impacts on the style of news reporting and its media practices. Thus, the thesis includes discussion of the news that reports the Malaysia-Singapore relationship.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEBATES ON DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM:
THEORY AND PRACTICES

> So long as the press is conscious of itself being a potential threat to democracy and conscientiously limits the exercise of its rights, it should be allowed to function without government interference. But when the press obviously abuses its rights by unnecessarily agitating the people, then democratic governments have a right to control it (Mahathir 1981, p.19).

In the quotation above, Mahathir was concerned about the press functioning responsibly in a democracy. He saw his government was right in controlling media if the press stirred people up for no good reason. This is an influential view of press function in Malaysia as the thesis will show, but this, and the concept of development journalism, have been interpreted differently particularly by critics of the latter.

In this chapter, I discuss the different notions of development journalism and how this concept has been formed and works in theory and practice. Different notions and terms as used by scholars have drawn attention to various aspects of press legitimacy in development journalism. In Malaysia, for example, the concept of development journalism has been based on the idea that media organizations are partners and associates of the government. This idea of partnership has been challenged by the different traditions of Western journalism and the comparison can reflect negatively on Malaysian media practices.

In this chapter I assess the different debates about development journalism from Western and Asian perspectives in which most of the clashes rooted. The Asian values which have been inculcated in Asian journalism are deeply embedded, and create differences, in concepts of democracy, press control, watchdog role, press freedom and news objectivity of development journalism. Nevertheless, while there is a good philosophical basis in development journalism, I argue that the idea has the potential to create government propaganda. First, I will discuss the history of development journalism – how it started and why. Then I will discuss how the initial concepts of development journalism proposed by the West differ from that inherent in Asian development journalism. This has led to debates between the advocates and critics of development journalism. Later I will argue how the good intentions of development

journalism have been propagated by the government to suit its own needs and enable it to retain power. This can be demonstrated by studying the case of Malaysia.

1.1 A Short History of Development Journalism

Development journalism was introduced in Asia in the late 1960s (Chalkley 1980; Md. Salleh 2002). During that time the idea of communication for development or development communication was popular, especially among the new independent nations where journalism was believed to have an important role in development (see for example, Ogan et al.2009, p.656). Development journalism became popular in formerly-colonized nations such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Venezuela. They all had histories of diverse news principles and practices.

The concept of development journalism, as claimed by Stevenson (1994) and Gunaratne (1996), actually emerged at a workshop for economic writers in the Philippines in the late 1960s. Chalkley (1968), a Western journalist, suggested to participants at the workshop that journalists should alert news audiences to development problems, and find ways to possible solutions. Without intending to introduce it as a new kind of journalism at that time, Chalkley (1980, p.215) presented development journalism as "a new attitude towards the treatment of certain subjects in relation to development, designed to serve ordinary people and not the elite". This means that development journalism started with the media's intention to focus on development issues in society. The initial idea was not so much on working with the government or the ruling elites but being free to report how society was developing.

Although development journalism was first promoted in the Philippines, it was not been accepted by most mainstream journalists in that country, and in the mid-1980s development journalism had lost its momentum when most journalists reverted to traditional and libertarian Western approaches (Shafer 1998, p.50). This is because Shafer (1991, pp.16-28) saw that development journalism did not enhance the press's watchdog function, and claimed that it was a tool of the Marcos regime in the Philippines. In the Western world media organisations are expected to at least play their role as a watchdog.

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1.2 Critiques of Development Journalism

Since the original idea of development journalism was to focus on society and update people with development information, this kind of journalism has been widely practised in economically developing countries. However, many scholars argue that development journalism has no fixed terms of practice, as different countries practice variations of it. The various definitions of the term 'development journalism' show the complexity, differences and relative similarities of news reporting and media practices in rapidly developing countries. With the emergence of development journalism practices in most developing countries, it has been said that media ideally operates to serve the national agenda and those of governments. In some contexts (for example, nation-building periods) the term refers to the communication process that is used to serve the development goals of the government. Using all forms of mass media, the development journalism model promotes what an 'authoritarian' government wants to develop or create (more discussion on this in Chapter Three).

Ogan (1982, p.10) argues that development journalism is defined as "the critical examination, evaluation and report of the relevance, enactment and impact of development programs which demands that the mass media be independent of government". Furthermore, Ogan (1982, p.10) maintains that development journalism should be a critical evaluation of government development programs or act as a watchdog on the government. To paraphrase Dominic (2002, p.80), development journalism is meant to serve society with a socially responsible press that incorporates part of the original libertarian approach combined with some new elements. As claimed by Fair (1988), development journalism actually gives journalists the social responsibility of helping to advance their country towards modernity.

However, some scholars argue about the central role of development journalism, saying its function is not to serve the government but to be independent of it. Shah (1996, p.143) argues that development journalism is central to many discussions of mass communication and development in Third World countries, and there is a need for development journalism to be re-conceptualized, because the "deliberations about its validity and usefulness have been bogged down in arguments structured by Western notions of press freedom". This issue of the free press cannot be avoided. It is also

argued by Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.65) that the 'noble conception' of development journalism serving the ruling elites has been corrupted in various situations. Therefore, development journalism in the Asian world also refers to the government and elites' news, rather than promoting the citizens' voice. The important conflation of development journalism and government control hinders seeing the local differences. This local difference is led by economic growth, which has resulted in tapering of development journalism into commercially-oriented ownership patterns.

In reality, development journalism is highly influenced by diverse social, economic, cultural and political conditions of a country as described in India by Vilanilam (1975, 1984), in Bangladesh by Verghese (1976); and more recently the example of development journalism as practised in China (Chen 1991). Different countries seem to practice different kind of development journalism. For example, Vilanilam's (1975, p.40) research analysed the content regarding development news in four major Indian newspapers, and identified significant differences in news coverage, with less attention paid to developmental categories of family planning, housing, economic activity, education and literacy, employment and labour welfare, health hygiene and medicine, rural and urban development and social change. He also found that news stories in these newspapers focused more on political and government activity and less on development news. With these global variations in development journalism practices, it is important to understand how development journalism works in developing countries with different local realities.

So how does development journalism differ according to local realities? Romano (2005, p.2) insists that development journalism matches the prevailing political culture. She argues that in a society with different views, development journalism practices may not share the same directions: politicians, media academics and journalists began to promulgate their own theories about development journalism, with each theory based on very different assumptions about democracy and the role of journalism in democracy. If that is the case, development journalism may have many roles to play in different nations with varying democratic practices. According to Xu (2009, p.358) there are five key components of development journalism:

- To report the difference between what has been planned to do and what in reality has been achieved as well as the difference between its claimed and actual impact on people (Aggarwala 1978);

- To focus not "on day-to-day news but on long term development process" (Kunczik 1988, p.83);

- To be independent from government and to provide constructive criticisms of government (Aggarwala 1978; Ogan 1982; Shah 1992);

- To shift "journalistic focus to news of economic and social development" while "working constructively with the government" in nation building (Richstad 2000, p.279);

- And to empower ordinary people to improve their own lives and communities (Romano & Hippocrates 2001).

However, Xu (2009) found that there are differences in development journalism based not only on different understandings of its practices (government, society, free press and journalistic values) but also differences based on the contextual origins and schools of thought. Furthermore like other theories or models, development journalism was, and is still, facing struggles and misconceptions. As suggested by Ahmad Murad (2001, p.55), "the misconceptions in the debate on development journalism are not new. However, these problems have identified development journalism as a 'new' (old?) brand of journalism". Waisbord (2010, p.151), for example, refers to development journalism as an 'unfitting for developing countries'. He also argues that development journalism is an obsolete term in modern times. Another scholar, Aggarwala (1980, pp.26-27) has also argued about the role of mass media and the frequently-heard phrases of 'development news'. He claims that "the non-Western countries were lacking development news in their national and international media: denounces development news as a camouflage for government control or management of the news. In the process development news and development journalism have received undeserved mauling".

Gunaratne (1978, pp.3-7) further describes development journalism as an integral part of a new journalism that involved "analytical interpretation, subtle investigation, constructive criticism and sincere association with the grass-roots" (rather than with the elites). Gunaratne and Mohd Safar (1996, pp.98-99) argue that development journalism was not compatible with either the liberal concept, which defined the function of the

mass media as providing information and entertainment, or the authoritarian concept, which stifled 'criticism of political machinery and the officials in power' and imposed a 'top-down approach to problem solving'.

In contrast, Western perspectives maintained that the role of development journalism is defined negatively by the concepts of lack of objectivity and balance. Bowd (2003, p.124) argues that "the typical Western approach to development journalism encompasses a tradition of concern with notions such as 'objectivity' and 'balance', and with the journalist as bystander, reporting on events and issues in an unbiased, impartial manner, although all of these notions are highly contestable". Bowd (2003, p.124) also argues that this model of development journalism has been incorporated in country or rural newspapers, such as in Australia, and this defines their significant difference from city newspapers. In fact, "in some respects, it may have more in common with forms of journalism that do not fit the mainstream Western pattern than with the journalism practised in Australian cities". Bowd (2003, p.126) asserts that the journalist's role and its perceived relevance and importance have the potential to affect society through news coverage:

> Development journalism emphasises the media as a partner in the task of nation – building, alongside the people and the government. The journalist is part of the process rather than a disinterested bystander from which arises a concern with the consequences of reporting – how it affects news sources and the new audience.

Bowd (2003, p.126) claims that "the country newspapers in Australia emphasize 'localness' which is similar to the concept of development journalism when its focus is on domestic news". This resulted from the efforts to move away from and reduce reliance on the global media 'machine', and which reflects the centrality of the nation and its development in the news agenda. Based on Bowd's arguments, it appears that development journalism exists in some form in Western countries, in that it deals not with national politics, but with local issues. She also argues that while there are signs of development journalism working at the local news level in Australia, the values of objectivity and balance are important to responsible journalists.

To extend this discussion, Sussman (1978, pp.76-78) has a different view on development journalism. He argues that "development journalism is a failed concept by referring to it as a 'backward idea whose time has come' in Third World countries".

Development journalism is seen as a threat to minorities, and a barrier to the development of free politics and journalism. This is based on Sussman's (1978, pp.76-78) assumption that only Western models of media-government relationships value press freedom and that the media in Third World countries are strictly controlled and manipulated by political elites. This is true in Malaysia where media are being controlled and used by the political elites or ruling power, as has been argued by Zaharom (2002), Zaharom and Wang (2004), and Mustafa Kamal (2000, 2005).

Does development journalism prevent progress or otherwise? Waisbord (2010, p.150) has criticized the current practices of development journalism which highlight 'positive news' about what government programs have achieved, since this "was antithetical to the aspirations that journalism should report 'non-elites' news about the concern and demands of ordinary folks", this was the primary principle of early development journalism practice. Both Sussman (1978) and Waisboard (2010) agreed that development journalism can be perceived as offering a certain degree of press freedom depending on the issues reported which relate to the news agenda set by the media and/or government.

Furthermore since "dialogic and critical journalism wasn't congruent with calls for the press to promote social harmony and integration" (Waisbord 2010, p.150), the idea has been fostered that development journalism is a practice which embodies Communist ideals, by putting the media in the service of government so that it can dominate ideologically. In other words, development journalism in Waisbord's (2010, p.151) description is an attempt to readdress Communist ideology in a different package and became integrated into authoritarian structures. However, Waisbord (2010) also suggests that other notions, such as the idea that journalism should embody unique local values, need to be critically considered too. In this case, one of the unique local values in Asian journalism is the concept of harmonious reporting.

1.3 Harmonious Reporting in Asian Journalism

The concept of harmonious reporting in this research emerges in the form of different approaches that influence readers through the media's influence. Harmonious reporting is persuasive reporting. News is – within the context of development journalism – a

powerful tool but it needs to be framed according to the needs of the society. Persuasive news is workable if the news impacts on its readers' beliefs and attitudes. However, the acceptability and implementations of this approach need to be considered to ensure a strong relationship between the government and the media regardless of domestic, regional or international conflicts.

Massey and Chang (2002, p.991) discuss Asian values[1] in the style of reporting in Asian countries as seen in 'harmony' where it can be conceptualized as an "Asian news work norm as reporting that is free of provocative and inflammatory words, phrases, and information". They studied the coverage of haze issues from 1997 to 1998 in three newspapers in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Haze is dust or smoke resulting from uncontrolled forest fires that cause air pollution and reduced visibility. This environmental problem has been one of the most controversial issues in these three countries. Massey and Chang (2002) claim that editorial approaches to the haze news were influenced by the 'non-confrontational' frames of reporting and did not aggressively highlight this politically sensitive issue, an aspect of reportage that is important to Western journalism. Asian journalism is opposed to this style of reporting by Western journalists. However, this contradiction has imposed a significant style of writing, which is known as 'harmonious reporting' which generally refers to how far does the news reporting accept not only the cultures that racial groups share but also to ensuring peaceful living in Malaysia. Racial harmony is fundamental to a country's unity. It is important that different communities in Malaysia or any other country learn to live in harmony together so that they can prosper. Racial harmony has been the distinguishing trait of Malaysian society since independence.

Nasution (1996, p.53) asserts in his study on the social and culture of journalism values that media organisations in Asia share the same standard of news reporting which is inculcated with Asian values, i.e. harmonious and supportive reporting. It is a reporting style that "avoids emphasizing conflict and shows respect for national leaders and authority". Based on the concepts provided by the scholars noted above, the concept of 'harmony' in this research emphasizes the style (techniques) of writing, implies the

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[1] The discussion on Asian Values has not disappeared despite Western scholars' disregard of the concept but the respondents in this study comment on the importance of Asian values. Asian Journalism is a reflection of the shade of democracy practices chosen, based upon socio-cultural context.

expectation on the impact of news articles. Nasution's research focuses on leaders' expectations of what can be resolved during conflicts and confrontations. It seems that the Asian style of reporting, such as harmonious reporting, is the most realistic way to mute conflicts, particularly since the concept of harmony in Malaysia media rests on maintaining social stability. Shakila (2001, p.40) asserts that:

> Driven by the notion of 'development journalism', the press was to promote positive news about government policies and projects and discourage what was deemed unnecessary political bickering and criticisms from the opposition which might jeopardise 'national interest'. This nationalist ideology of promoting economic development, solidarity between the country's many ethnic and cultural groups and, consequently, national stability that was, and still is, being promoted by the mainstream media is instrumental in shaping and popularising the politics of consensus among the rakyat (citizens) as well as the media practitioners.

Harmonious reporting aims to reduce tension and ignore hidden agendas or expectations from both sides. Harmonious reporting as one element in development journalism practices is demonstrated by the of selected news articles in Chapter Six. As argued by Nasution (1996, p.58):

> Harmony can be conceptualized as an Asian news work norm as reporting that is free of provocative and inflammatory words, phrases, and information. It is reporting that avoids emphasizing conflict and shows respect for national leaders and authority.

Massey and Chang (2002, p.989) view harmony as "a key Asian value that ought to be conveyed through Asian journalism". However, this kind of reporting could be influenced by other factors, such as the nature of media organizations, and influenced by politicians and other powerful individuals.

The former prime minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamed, and that of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, have been acknowledged as strong advocates of the premise that "the modern, economically strong Asian society is best built on a foundation of traditional Eastern beliefs, not transplanted Western values" (Massey & Chang 2002, p.992). This principle has been supported by some respondents who think that both leaders rejected the Western free press and believe that the standard of their media reporting included Asian beliefs as required. The leaders of Malaysia and Singapore argue that these news reporting and media practices serve their countries the best. George (2006b, p.80) asserts:

> Singapore and Malaysia occupy a central position in the debate on Asian values and Asian journalism. This is partly due to prominent stands taken by their former prime ministers, Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamed respectively. Both have presided over media systems that are profitably run on a commercial basis, but which are closely supervised by the government, and do not function as independent checks on power. Far from being coy about the absence of a free-wheeling press in their countries, they have argued that their media systems represent a workable alternative to the Western model, and are better suited to their societies....

Asian values, however, overshadow news reporting in that there is an absence of conflict and by being more supportive of the values of nation building. This value has been articulated through how the news is reported. It may suggest applicable cultural values to other Asian societies as a workable alternative to a liberal free press. Massey and Chang (2002, p.990) ask if there are any Asian values in Asian journalism. If so, what are these values? Asian values may be related to the cultural practice of managing sensitive issues in multi-racial societies. Asian cultures are 'polite'[2] as people are brought up with so many dos and don'ts, beliefs, customs, religions and races, see for example, Friedman (2000), and Hua (1983). Reporters' style of writing is descriptive and less straight forward since they attempt to write within the culturally accepted boundaries, without provoking any controversy. However, sometimes politeness is not workable in certain cultures.

1.4 Freedom and Responsibility

Despite the reputation that Asian cultures enjoy 'politeness', the media practitioners in the survey discuss the ways in which they remain nationally 'responsible' and are thus aware of avoiding issues of racial, religious tensions. They demonstrate a measure of freedom to report which is achieved through various writing techniques. This argument will be supported by data analysis in Chapter Six.

Bayuni (1996, p.39) argues that there is a value system among Asian editors, and these values are different from their Western counterparts. This value system has been viewed as a guideline in Asian journalism by Massey and Chang (2002, p.989) who identify its following features:

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[2] In most Asian countries the term 'polite' refers to using a form of words which is inappropriate or rude for example, calling parents with the first name Asians normally address their parents as Ma/Ibu/Amma for mother and Abah/Papa/Appa/Ba for father. Another example concerns Asians respecting their elders through their actions. In Malaysia, it is rude to walk right in front of the elders without bowing first to show respect for them.

- freedom with responsibility
- communalism and consensus
- harmony, or maintaining social stability
- filial piety, or devotion to parents and family
- respect for order and authority

Inoguchi and Newman (1997, p.2) in their paper presented to a conference on the future of the Asia-Pacific Region, explain the importance of these values, indicating that:

> ...group orientation is also associated with values such as self-effacement, self-discipline and personal sacrifice to the greater good. This is integral to perceptions of public morality, harmony and social dynamism. Respect for family ties, elderly, frugality, filial piety, hard work and team work are further elements of this matrix. With the right leadership it is a framework for economic prosperity, progress, harmonious relations between citizen, and law and order.

These accounts of Asian values seem to contradict normative ideas of press freedom. According to Means, 'Asian values' means communal loyalty, trust of government, and avoidance of individual or collective responsibility for the wider public interest (Means 1996, p.104)

Further, the values of respective leaders can restrain some freedoms of the press. As stated by Massey and Chang (2002, p.991), "the Asian value of press freedom with responsibility can be handily transformed into a government's justification for what it sees as necessary controls on journalistic liberties". Malaysia journalistic liberty is still far from personal independence as the immunity on the arbitrary exercise as the practitioners often relates to the shared knowledge and values of a society which are influenced by ethnic and cultural ties. For example, a negative or critical report of other cultures is not allowed because many countries in Asia such as Malaysia are multi-ethnic societies. This seems to indicate that the Asian media are still struggling to juggle these two concepts –cultural values and press freedom.

Mohd Safar (1998, p.59) argues that people who define the press in Western terms will find difficulty in understanding the press in Malaysia. The understanding and meaning of press freedom is perceived differently and this is due to the fact that journalism practices in Malaysia are a mixture of Western and Asian values and traditions. It is important to look at the milestone events of media operations that explain the history, structure and dynamics of the media landscape in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and

multi-religious society. Gunaratne (2006, pp.13-17) has a similar thought to Safar where he asserts:

> The process of journalism in Asia's 'free press' countries in particular is very much cognitively open to the powerful presence of West-centric journalism in their environment. However, broadly speaking, Asian journalism can never be the mirror image of Western journalism because of the social-cultural distinction between the independent-individual in the Western sense and the individual-within-networks in the Eastern sense. In the contemporary world, where Westernization has imposed itself in the grab of globalization, no country can avoid the influence of West-centric journalism.

Gunaratne (2006) argues that journalism in Asia to some extent has been influenced by Western journalism. The above citation provides challenges and opportunities for understanding how Malaysian journalism works and is formed within the framework or context of development journalism, a free press and harmonious or non-critical reporting in Malaysia. For example, there was a news story reported in *The Australian*[3] on 27th July 2011 using the word 'crazy' in their headlines and sub-headlines: "The Queensland government has labelled as 'crazy' the Gold Coast council's decision to cut ties with its retail water utility, three months after allowing councils that choice" (Barrett 2001). This is very different from the Malaysian style of reporting where the Malaysian media would never use the word 'crazy' because it reflects a lack of civility or good manners. Another viable example is in *The Australian's* 28th July 2011 headline, "Gillard and friends move from GetUp to shut up" (Allan 2011). It is very unlikely that the Malaysian media would publish a report on the failure of political policy positions by using such an ill-mannered phrase.

As such, I argue that the significance of harmony and conciliatory factors are the major elements that construct the framework concerning the news reports on Malaysia and Singapore issues. However, a study on Asian journalism by Natarajan and Xiaoming (2003, p.300) found that "being Asian does not automatically enable Asian journalists and media to present news about Asia in a way significantly different from their Western counterpart". In Malaysia, depending on what is being reported, press freedom is negotiated to support 'harmony' in reporting. Harmonious reporting is embedded in Asian journalism and linked to the concept of press freedom with responsibility. Loh and Mustafa Kamal (cited in Balraj 2006, p.92):

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[3] The Australia is a national daily newspaper.

The Western style of journalism is discouraged as it is deemed to be contrary to Malaysian values. In fact, Western journalists are seen to abuse their right to freedom of expression and this, in turn, shows Malaysians that the controls in Malaysia are not out of place.

However, Massey and Chang (2002, p.991) argue that "journalism in Asia is influenced more by Western, or universal, news work norms than by Asian values". Similarly, Wong (2004, p.25) argues that the approaches in Malaysia and Singapore are no less viable than those of the Western liberal press due to their compatibility with Asian cultures' postcolonial histories. By investigating press freedom, development journalism practices and the prevailing 'harmony', 'maintaining social stability' and 'bias elements' in news reporting, Wong (2004), and Massey and Chang (2002), conclude that the media are still bound by government restrictions. Again, their overall findings highlight the non-adversarial role of media in supporting the government through news reporting.

However, with the rise of the Internet the adversarial role of media has been challenged by an avalanche of alternative media platforms such as blogs and websites. The issues of media ownership have become significant to this new type of media. Being too free does not provide better solutions either. For example, the Internet might encourage people to dishonour or insult particular individuals. Schultz (1998, p.7) is alarmed at the impact that the Internet is having on social discourse:

> …at a time when the scale of the news media has never been vaster, its reach greater and its timing quicker, control is no longer be held so tightly…In ruminations about the global media industry, the complexity of contemporary political and public life, and the alarming concentration of media ownership, it is easy to lose sight of the reality that the media is at its most influential when it is local. The global media may swamp us with homogenised stars, heroes, villains, disasters and crises that provide a rapidly changing backdrop for more prosaic, yet no less urgent, reality of our lives. At the level of the city, state or nation the best of the news media is able to explain us to ourselves, highlight our shortcomings and provide the insights that enable new solutions to emerge.

The media is facing more challenges and struggles with the rise of new media. Although there is some movement from development journalism practices to public journalism, the media is still trapped in the web of commercialization and ownership. McChesney (2000, p.301) argues that "public journalism may in fact be assisting in the

process of converting journalism into the type of consumer news and information that delights the advertising community".

McChesney (2000, p.300) concludes in his book *Rich Media Poor Democracy* that "the original movement for 'civic' or 'public journalism' was based on the orientation to reduce 'sensationalism' and 'blatant political manipulation' of mainstream journalism". This challenges the ideal of journalism practices of serving the society without being prejudice or bias in news reporting. McChesney (2000, pp.300-301) posited that:

> Unfortunately, the movement completely ignores the structural factors of ownership and advertising that have led to the attack on journalism, working hand in hand with the very corporate chieftains who benefits by the status quo.

According to George (2006b, p.81), these alternative media should not be neglected as they have the capacity to affect society as a whole. He contends that the media have been transformed extensively due to the rise and impact of the Internet and describes Asian journalism practices as "order and harmony emphasized over conflict, and respect for authority over dissent". Unfortunately, there is no agreed journalism model applicable to contemporary Asian societies (George 2006b, p.81). He further argues that if societies want the Asian journalism model, they still need to refer to the Western press model and incorporate Asian values into it. It is important to note that George (2005) focuses on the positive goal of nation building and how Asian values emphasize consensus and harmony, particularly where (George 2005, p.906) argument is based on the conceptual aspects of Asian democracy and values:

> The governments have drawn upon the legitimating power of elections, which have at least been free and fair enough to attract the continued participation of all major opposition parties. Of course, the two states' illiberal features constantly pressure their legitimacy. While they do not deny that civil and political rights matter, they usually frame such claims as Western in origin, excessively contentious, and opposed to Asian values that are said to emphasize consensus and harmony. 'Asian' democracy, for which former prime ministers Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia and Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore were key spokesmen, stressed economic and social rights instead. Both governments add that they are in favour of moving towards greater political openness, but insist that such reform must be incremental and carefully managed. Hegemony is also constructed around the idea of nation building. The idea evokes a sense of collective purpose, to fight common threats and work towards common goals. The main threat is that of social discord in their multi-ethnic societies. The positive goal of nation building is rapid socio-economic development.

While George argues about democracy, he does not outline the necessary Asian values in the development journalism. He, however, agrees that 'consensus and harmony' are the two values in Asian democracy that have been practised in Malaysia and Singapore. With all the obstacles in both countries, politically and socially, there is no doubt that they are moving towards more open political democracy but with some caution given the potentially unpredictable outcomes, for example in the BERSIH 2.0 rally in 2011 which demanded free and fair access to media, among other claims (Mustafa Kamal 2011).

However, in Asia, the context of a free press reflects the reality that the concentration of power over media sets limits on any open criticism or critical news reporting in the media. The media's power in Malaysia is constrained by its own rules and regulations which are similar to Western countries, for example Australia[4] because all media organisations and their outlets are subject to regulation worldwide. Using Malaysia and Singapore as a case study, I contend that there is room for recognition of press freedoms in development journalism in different contexts of reporting. This is because a free press in the West is different to a free press arrangement in Asia.

1.5 Media Democracy and Free Press Practice

Freedom of the press is considered part of the democratic process and the press functions that make that freedom a reality in liberal democracies. Democracy is a set of practices enabling consensus in a free society. I agree with Schmitter and Karl (1991) who argue that democracy cannot be separated from these two important elements - the ruler and the society without which democracy would not be a successful system. Schmitter and Karl (1991, pp.75-88) argue that:

> Like all regimes, democracies depend upon the presence of rulers, person who specialized authority roles and can give legitimate commands to others. What distinguish democratic rulers from nondemocratic ones are the norms that condition how the former come to power and the practices hold them accountable for their actions.

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[4] Media in Australia is under the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) which covers broad areas like ownership and control. See http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/media_regulations.htm#The_Concept_of_Control. The Malaysian media is controlled through licences which come under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. Available:http://www.skmm.gov.my/index.php?c=public&v=art_view&art_id=30.

Schmitter and Karl (1991, pp.79) describe the definition and functions of modern democracy as abstract yet potentially offer varieties of institutions:

> Modern democracy, in other words, offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values – associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual. All are integral to its practice. The defining components of democracy are necessarily abstract, and may give rise to a considerable variety of institutions and subtypes of democracy.

Chomsky (2002, pp.9-10) argues that there are two different conceptions of democracy:

> One conception of democracy has it that a democratic society is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in the management of their own affairs and the means of information are open and free....An alternative conception of democracy is that the public must be barred from managing of their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled

Media organisations or groups could make democratic expectations fit in many different ways. Gurevitch and Blumler (1990, p.270) argue that media functions include surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying the most relevant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, provide incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved in the political process, and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence. Thus, certain highlighted news, such as sports news, can make readers ignorant of more important issues such as an economic crisis or political scandal.

It has been argued that a democratic media should report critically and the society should be provided with the right information or alternative ideas or opinions because the importance of media lies in how it is judged by the public. If not, people will lose faith not only in the media but also in their leaders, and both reputations will be tarnished entirely. The media has a 'check and balance' role and can improve democratic practices through accurate news reporting. However, in this study, 'balance' is not the main criterion being studied. Since the norms of a free press model are clearly situated within a democratic media in Malaysia, a liberal model of a free press seems to be difficult to achieve even media practitioners aspire to it (see Chapter Six on respondents' feedback).

Van Dijk (1995, p.10) asserts that the media has the power of persuasion over the public and this could provide different types of pressure and influence regarding any events highlighted by the media:

> Applied to the study of mass communication, this approach claims that in order to understand the role of the news media and their messages, one needs to pay detailed attention to the structures and strategies of such discourses and to the ways these relate to institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and to the audience, on the other hand. For instance, topics or quotation patterns in news reports may reflect modes of access of various news actors or sources to the news media, whereas the content and form of a headline in the press may subtly influence the interpretation and hence the persuasive effects of news reports among the readers. Conversely, if we want to examine what exactly goes on if it is assumed that the media manipulate their readers or viewers, we need to know under what precise conditions, including structural properties of news reports, this might be the case.

Meanwhile, O'Heffernan (cited in Derek 2007, p.18) argues that the media's power works as a mechanism of influence:

> ...[the media's] power results from their ability to locate and reveal positive and negative information which, under certain circumstances, can severely damage policies and careers or increase the likelihood of success. Insiders perceive that both positive and negative information could increase the visibility – and thus the vulnerability – of policy officials, but that negative media coverage had the strongest effect.

However, democracy also depends on the free flow of accurate, responsible and trustworthy information. What we have learned from many theories of democracy is that an informed citizenry is essential in order to build a strong and independent society. Entman (1990) argues that to become a sophisticated citizen, there is a need of high quality of independent political journalism which encourages democracy to exist. However, there are dilemmas for democracy which could lead to the media's failure to serve the society to its best ability. According to Kellner (cited in Faridah 2010, p.2), these informed citizens "need to have access to information. In other words, the viability of democracy is dependent on citizens seeking out crucial information, having the ability to access and appraise it, and to engage in public discussions about issues of importance".

These arguments suggest that an ideal democracy is based on policies and news reporting and media practices implemented by the government for the benefit of society. One benefit is freedom to access all information. Democratic practices also affect news

reporting and media practices, people's liberties, the government, and the political system. In shaping democracy practice, the media helps to reflect and build democracy in society. One important practice is to ensure free access by readers to the news and information. It has been argued by Oon (1998, p.195) that "without information about politics, economics and wide range of public policy issues, people cannot take informed decisions in the political arena". Access to news and information has led to improved public services, community networks and political engagement. For journalists, accessibility of news and information may enhance their competencies, leading to society's empowerment and capacity to influence political decisions.

With free access to news and information, the articulation of public opinion may promote democratic practices. Both society and journalists have roles as watchdogs of government. According to Tiffen (1994, pp.53-67):

> …a crucial democratic test for the news media is the extent to which the main currents of opinion in society are represented in the news. The media are the major forum of public debate, and though in the name of news values, entertainment, and profit, they shy away from the responsibilities this entails, it is crucial that the parameters of news judgement are enlarged in ways which increases access and diversity.

Keane (2009, p.741) has warned people about the arrival of new media as the mechanism of 'monitory inventions':

> The new journalism is formulaic and gets bored too quickly; it likes to bow down to corporate power and government press briefings; and there are moments when it is responsible for circulating disinformation around the globe a thousand times before accuracy is booted up…For in spite of everything, red-blooded journalism helps keep alive the old utopias of shedding light on power, of 'freedom of information', 'government in the sunshine' and greater 'transparency' in the making of decisions…Given that unchecked power still weighs down hard on the heads of citizens, it is not surprising, thanks to the new journalism and the new monitory inventions, that public objections to wrongdoing and corruption are commonplace in the era of monitory democracy.

It was further argued by Keane (2009, p.715) that a watchdog's role can be implemented through the process of monitory democracy:

> Governments proved that they could also act as guide dogs, by fostering monitory democracy through new inventions designed to share power with civil society and its citizen representatives. The stated aim in most cases was to create new channels of representation designed to supplement the role of elections, political parties and legislatures. The guide-dog inventions were typically the result of skirmishes between civil society and government. Citizens often pressed for these monitory

institutions because of unhappy experiences with governments prone to lying, trickery, bullying and violence. Government often conceded demands for their creation for quite different motives, ranging from broadening the base of fiscal and political culpability for risky policies prone to end in a mess, through to the belief that closer public engagement makes for more 'informed' decision making and better solutions to public problems when governments act as rudders and not rowers of state institutions.

However, the Western idea of a free press is that the media may report on any issues (economics, social issues, cultural issues and politics) freely without restrictions. A free press acts as a check and balance on both individuals and institutions: the government, the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, business, the civil service, the police force, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It plays a crucial role in building a just and democratic society. A free press is important not only for its role as the 'fourth estate' where it acts as a watchdog, but because it promotes individual freedom of speech and expression. Hence, the idea of free press practice implies a relatively high level of freedom. I write 'relatively' because there is no absolute press freedom in this world. Even in the United States (US), a democratic country with a constitution, there is no guarantee of total or absolute freedom in their press practices. However, it is important to note that the meaning of 'freedom' in the context of press or media practice is very subjective. In other words the level of press freedom may differ between countries. For example Malaysia argues that there is 'freedom' in its press practice which in a form of monitory democracy that suits to its multicultural and multi religious society but other countries, especially in the West, may not agree. This has been criticised by Mahathir (2011, p.35):

> many of them (the West) think that we (Malaysia) should uphold liberal democracy modelled on their own national practices, forgetting that our social, cultural, religious, ethnic and economic composition is completely different from theirs. ….we (Malaysia) stubbornly prefer to adhere our own cultural traditions and moral codes and to practise democracy not as a reckless free-for-all, but in a form that we consider suitable for a potentially unstable multiethnic country.

A free press, in any country, may be influenced and affected by a number of factors such as government power, economic values and societal needs. Like other journalistic practices, those of a free press can also be affected by the stability of the government and the involvement of political individuals. The context of development may include an element of authoritarianism where government or elites control the freedom of the

media. However, Lent (1977a, p.18) argues that the media must accept this predicament:

> ... because Third World nations are newly emergent, they need time to develop their institutions. During this initial period of growth, stability and unity must be sought: criticism must be minimised and the public faith in governmental institutions and policies must be encouraged. Media must be cooperate, according to this guided press concept, by stressing positive, development-inspired news, by ignoring negative societal or oppositionist characteristics and by supporting government ideologies and plans.

Lent (1977b) argument on this guided concept is very significant to Malaysian media practice. For example, since Malaysia (formerly known as Malaya) gained its independence in 1957, the media have been used to guide of develop the nation. Most of the news reporting stressed the positive and generated fewer criticisms of the government. This guided press concept has been very useful in building society's faith in government policies to this day.

However, this is contrast with what Mahathir argues in his opening speech during the Second Conference of ASEAN Ministers in Kuala Lumpur on August 1, 1991[5]. Mahathir (1991) argues that what the government should be doing is to give "guidance without converting a democracy into a guided democracy" and that the democracy must come with responsibilities:

> Democracy confers on the people rights and freedom of action. But rights and freedom are not free-standing entities. They must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility. For a democracy to succeed the people must therefore be appreciative not only of their rights but also their responsibilities. This can only come about through a process of formal and informal education regarding democracy, which we all know is an alien concept. It is in the area of informal education that information ministries, agencies and departments of Governments have to play a big role. It is the duty of Government to give some guidance without converting a democracy into a guided democracy. The line between merely guiding and being a guided democracy is difficult to draw. Too little guidance may result in irresponsibility, too much may negate democracy.

The same stand had been taken by his successor, Abdullah Badawi, who agreed that sometimes if there is too much freedom exercised then democracy will be destroyed.

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[5] Retrieved from: http://www.mahathir.com/malaysia/speeches/1991/1991-08-01.php on 9th September 2011.

However, Abdullah's approach was more lenient than his predecessor's, Mahathir. The influence of different leadership styles will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

1.6 Malaysian Development Journalism

In line with the acceptable working standards or principles which are situated in development journalism practices, it is important to promote a positive change based on recognisable benchmarks for the media so that national unity is promoted. It is also important to build democratic practices, contribute to the process of nation building and support belief in a liberal, tolerant and democratic society. Arguably, development journalism stretches, engages and constitutes the concept of Asian journalism due to its incorporation of Asian values.

In Malaysia, for example, there exists a context of a desire for 'fewer confrontations', and for traditional ways of achieving a more harmonious society. The belief in harmony is relevant to Asian values that exist in the writing/reporting style of development journalism. Empirically, this claim has been supported by Massey and Chang (2002) who contended that Singaporean and Malaysian national news media tend towards the 'Asian' ideal type and the word 'harmony' is often singled out as a key Asian value that ought to be communicated through Asian journalism (George 2006b). Massey and Chang (2002, p.994) further argued that countries like Malaysia still hold to Asian values on reporting news, based on harmony, supportiveness and understanding. They also found that the media organisations significantly support the government through their news reporting, and that they are not adversarial. For example, in Malaysia the development journalism approach is used to maintain national unity through responsible reporting where media outlets must obey certain government restrictions.

However, there are certain values in the development journalism approach that extend to free press values in certain issues, like fostering national development and social improvements. This approach can be complicated and confusing, especially when it comes to determining the extent of press freedom in a country at particular times. An example of this is the news reporting on multi-ethnic issues where the focus is on positive news rather than negative news because the latter could instantly spark racial

conflict. For instance, news which reported an Indian who killed a Malay or a Chinese person could easily spark tensions among these three main ethnic groups.

Most of Malaysia's mainstream media focus on the so-called 'development projects by the government' when they should also concentrate on local people's perspectives regarding these same projects. For example, the controversial bridge issues between Malaysia and Singapore were mostly highlighted by the Malaysian media and it reported the government's point of view when media organisations should have given more attention to the affected communities.

In contrast to the argument made by Ogan (1982) and Dominic (2002), I believe that my study shows that the mainstream media organizations in Malaysia aim to fulfil their expected social responsibilities, and at the same time, promote social stability and racial harmony. The media is seen as attempting to balance their competing roles of advising, supporting and criticizing, as they mediate between government, and society. In the Malaysian context, journalists sometimes find the practice of development journalism is not easy to embrace as professionals and hard to understand. This is because journalists at times are independent, and yet on the other hand, have to work with the government on national issues. Development journalism practices in Malaysia allow criticism of government but at the same time the media has its own obligations and responsibilities towards nation building. However, these components or principles whether they benefit society, the journalists or the government, highlight that one of the main objectives of development journalism is to make the world a better place in which to live.

Therefore, in reviewing the notions of development journalism practice in Malaysia, many have discussed the limitations of media practitioners from having full freedom, for example Balraj (2008), Zaharom and Wang (2004), Massey and Chang (2002). The burden is considerable on journalists. Not only do they need to be fair and truthful in reporting the news, they also need to be responsible with their writing. If reporting or writing jeopardises national security and stability, the government may impose more media laws and regulations to safeguard what it sees as the public interest. For instance, Malaysia has established several media-related laws and regulations, such as the Printing and Publishing Act, the Broadcasting Act, the Internal Security Act and the Multimedia Act. Since Malaysia's independence in 1957, the media has been governed

by these laws and regulations. The practices of development journalism tend to be camouflaged by the government to maintain its power and influence in the name of nation building, and economic and cultural development. This is further proven in the analysis in Chapter Six where most of the respondents claim that the government has used nation building as their main agenda to develop the country.

In addition to these restraints, media management in Malaysia also does not encourage the growth of critical reporting which might violate the government's reputation. For example, news reporting always involves a third party as the source, as some informants would need to be more careful. As described by Serfaty (1990, p.46):

> Officers who are working with the government agencies are afraid to give information to journalists as they are afraid they will be held responsible if their statement or opinion becomes controversial. Every information or statement has to come from their superiors.

This is where any analytical attempts on critical news reporting or investigative reporting can come to a dead end. It also shows that style of reporting has its own practices and protocols even though bound under certain press regulations.

As argued by Hoo (2000) and Mustafa Kamal (2000), media in Malaysia tend to avoid issues which might inflame racial tensions, which could be seen as a responsible practice in development journalism. This practice is in line with a prime objective of disseminating information to the public, especially on national agenda issues and economic development. Syed Arabi (1989, p.60) states that in the early stages of the country's development, radio was extensively used to inform the people about floods, the country's development plans, and the progress of emergencies, as well as to forge national unity. Nearly three decades later, the government continues to use development journalism, to maintain its power and influence, and to aid national political, economic, and cultural development in the name of nation building. Therefore, development journalism is seen as supporting these factors in Malaysia.

The idea of development journalism in Malaysia is to have journalism play a central role in assisting the government to disseminate ideas on issues of national development. Development journalism has been regarded "as a mechanism of control and problem

solving" (Mustafa Kamal 2000, p.100). In the Malaysian context, it is perceived to be similar to that in other developing democracies. Some scholars such as Waisbord (2010), and Mustafa Kamal (2000) argue that development journalism and a free press cannot exist together. However, studies by Wong (2004) have identified that development journalism practices in Malaysia still hinder the mainstream media from being free. Wong, KK (2004, p.25) asserts that the Malaysian general election in 1999 showed that development journalism practices are more applicable to Asian countries like Malaysia and Singapore than Western free press practices. Nonetheless it is still uncertain whether development journalism practices will promote the progress of a free press in a country like Malaysia. He argues that "the development journalism approach is not considered as a hindrance to press freedom or democracy of regularly held political elections that empower elected leaders imposed right of influence over the press" (Wong, KK 2004, p.25). Hence, nothing could be less assured. Even a public and free election will not guarantee a freer press.

Wong, KK (2004) also argues that Malaysian media is actually controlled by the government. However, he believes that democratic electoral practices will legitimize and determine the freedom of the press. Nevertheless, he identifies two major challenges for the media in Malaysia, based on his Asian journalism perspective. Firstly, the ownership of Malaysian media by political groups, or government liaisons, could tarnish the trust and relationship between the media and society. Secondly, the media in Malaysia could make an attempt or commitment to avoid or minimize any bias in their reporting. However, he concludes that in many cases, mainstream journalists in Malaysia are not free when it comes to reporting news on political elections and tend to support the political party in power. These questions inform my approach to the research object in this thesis.

Having said that, it is yet to be proven that the Malaysian media really works from so-called Asian values and beliefs in their style of reporting, especially when dealing with the long-standing issues with Singapore. This study attempts to prove that news reporting on regional issues especially Asian region such as Malaysia and Singapore is subsequently accompanied by Asian values and beliefs as well.

Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that nation states are unique and very dynamic, and therefore development journalism needs to be studied specifically and individually. Following on that point, development journalism at times brings confusion to journalists, as they need to understand the accountability[6] of their writing to different groups. Development journalism approaches differ at a regional level when it comes to reporting the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. Wong, KK (2004, p.28) asserts that:

> The consensus-oriented Asian value system provides the underpinning for Malaysia's and Singapore's development journalism by emphasizing the importance of providing news and views to serve the larger good of society. Journalists take their cue from the government on what constitutes the larger social good because the ruling political party represents the majority of the citizens who elected them through regularly held elections. Instead of the watchdog, adversarial role, Asian-based development journalism emphasizes media's partnership with the government, equating press freedom with press–government harmony.

Therefore, there is a need to rethink the role of development journalism in promoting and maintaining peace and harmony internally and regionally in the context of Asian journalism which deals between freedom and responsibility. Maintaining peace and harmony is highlighted in Chapter Two as part of the process in nation building concepts which have been propagated by the government to suit its own needs.

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[6] The relationship between freedom and accountability is further vexed when the politicians who create and enforce accountability standards do not see the public interest as separate from their own partisan goals. The result is an enduring democratic dilemma that often turns press freedom into a political shield against imposed standards of public accountability (Bennett 2010, p.105).

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS IMPACTING ON MEDIA PRACTICES IN MALAYSIA?

> The media, political parties, non-government organisations as well as individuals must be sensitive to issues related to religion, race, culture and language and must not instigate issues that threaten peace and security (Lee, HG 2006, p.47).

The acceptability of development journalism has been seen as important in a developing nation, as argued in Chapter One. The media has been associated with the government and working within its stipulations. The relationships perceived to be significant to the news reporting and media practice in Malaysia are as follows: media and nation building; media and the state; media roles in democratic practices and other challenges; media politics, commercialization, laws and regulations; journalists' roles; and media ownership. In this chapter I discuss how the media works in Malaysia and how development journalism is being practised. In order to understand these, one has to look back at the history that shaped its current practice and knows who is the audience and who is the owner of that media. Only then can one understand how and why Malaysia adopted its version of development journalism.

2.1 How the Media works in Malaysia

Paradoxically, media organizations in Malaysia are seen as working together with the government for the good of society within certain 'boundaries', such as obeying regulations, commercialization and ownership rules, whilst negotiating for more freedom of the press. Because most media outlets are owned by the government, this does not give the respective media organizations, journalists and individuals 'immunity' in relation to the news that appears. 'Immunity' in this context refers to press accountability and freedom from influence. Therefore, it seems contradictory because press freedom, as argued by Gunaratne (2006, p.13), primarily means the 'immunity' of the communication outlets – such as newspapers, books, magazine, radio and television from government control.

There is a complex relationship between government, media and Malaysian society. One of the major challenges is that government control over the mass media in Malaysia continues to restrain media freedoms, particularly when the government is

believed to own many shares[7] in the country's private media. Since most media organizations in Malaysia are owned or controlled by groups with political interests[8] if not the government itself, 'immunity' is far from the true situation. Although the government promised that there would be no censorship with the rise of new media (for example the Internet) during the establishment of its Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project[9], media and society in general are still bound by many other rules and regulations which I will discuss later in this chapter. Furthermore the Malaysian press reiterates its belief in the principles of *Rukunegara*[10] – the national ideology and its aspirations – by acknowledging the duty of the press to: develop national unity; promote democratic practices; contribute to the process of nation building; and support belief in a liberal, tolerant and democratic society.

In submitting to the five pillars of *Rukunegara*, Malaysian journalists are expected to uphold the principles of the press in order to foster Malaysian national unity according to the press practice known as *Tatasusila Kewartawanan* (Canons of Journalism)[11]. According to these codes, Malaysian journalism concentrates on harmony, nation building and national unity. This code of practice is connected to the national ideology of *Rukunegara,* which emphasizes national unity (Syed Arabi 1989).

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[7] The ownership of New Straits Times Press and Utusan Melayu Press gives UMNO control of the major newspapers in Malaysia. New Straits Times Press publishes the national dailies such as *Berita Harian* and *Harian Metro* and the English dailies, *New Straits Times* (NST), *Malay Mail*, *Business Times*, and the Chinese language daily, *Shin Min Daily News*. Weeklies published by NSTP include *Berita Minggu*, *New Sunday Times* and *Sunday Mail*. Utusan Melayu Press on the other hand publishes dailies such as *Utusan Malaysia* and *Utusan Melayu* and weeklies such as *Mingguan Malaysia* and *Utusan Zaman* (Wang 2001).

[8] For example, Kamaruzaman Zainal, the Group Director for news and current affairs of Media Prima television networks is also one of the group's board of directors, and was the press secretary for Abdullah Badawi (former prime minister) for several years until 2003 (Media Prima Berhad 2007).

[9] The Multimedia Super Corridor, also known as the *MSC* in Malaysia, was introduced by Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1996. The establishment of the MSC program was crucial in accelerating the objectives of Vision 2020 and for transforming Malaysia into a modern state by the year 2020, with the adoption of a knowledge-based society framework (Jeong, 2007).

[10] *Rukunegara* are the national principles or ideology which nurture the ambition of Malaysia to achieve unity, preserve a democratic way of life, create a just society, exercise its people's own culture, and build a progressive society through science and technology. It comprises five pillars or common values and beliefs: (i) belief in God, (ii) loyalty to king and country, (iii) upholding the constitution, (iv) rules of law, and (v) good behaviour and morality.

[11] *Canons of Journalism* (retrieved on 1 August 2008 from http://www.nujm.org):
- It acknowledges its role in contributing to the process of nation building.
- It recognises its duty to contribute fully to the promotion of racial harmony and national unity.
- It recognises communism, racialism and religious extremism as grave threats to national well-being and security.
- It believes in a liberal, tolerant, democratic society and in the traditional role of a free and responsible press serving the people by faithfully reporting facts without fear or favour.
- It believes that a credible press is an asset to the nation.
- It believes in upholding standards of social morality.
- It believes that there must be no restrictions on the entry of Malaysians into the professions.
- It believes that the press has a duty to contribute to the formation of public policy.

The media organizations in Malaysia are not only restrained by journalistic codes of ethics (the aforementioned *Canons of Journalism*) but also in terms of their function in society. Their most pervasive role is as purveyors of information. According to Merrill (2002, pp.18-24), they have the potential to eradicate wrong impressions and stereotypes and reduce tensions; at the same time, they also can cause fears and anxieties within a society or nation. The media's and journalists' roles become increasingly important with the advent of complex psychological warfare scenarios (for example, where terrorism issues are manipulated by some media outlets) and mounting global tensions. Through the media, journalists can accomplish more than just understanding and influencing public opinion. Even through a healthy regard for reporting facts and ethical practices, media organisations or outlets cannot ensure that public participation in government policies will be positive or negative.

Ideally, the media can help articulate and regenerate public opinion in democratic societies. This elevates the importance of the media as a catalyst in countries' ongoing development, but there are issues that tend to complicate their responsibilities. Faridah (2010), for example, argues that media outlets should determine their roles according to society's needs but at the same time not to neglect culture, business and journalists' contributions towards responsible news reporting. Faridah (2010, p.3) asserts that:

> In most developing nations, the roles of the media have been reoriented and adjusted to local needs. Much of the media's role, particularly the mainstream media, is tied closely to government objectives. In Malaysia for instance, the mass media (especially the mainstream) are not only required to inform, educate and motivate the masses towards the developmental goals stipulated by the government, they are also expected to go along with the government's policies in order to survive in the media business. Newspapers and other media are expected to help the government foster a spirit of understanding and strengthen friendship and unity between people. The diversity of culture, race, language and ethnic groups is most distinctively portrayed in the mass media. Generally, in their pursuit for ethical and responsible reporting, journalists need to contend themselves within the parameters that allow them to function effectively as information providers while avoiding grey areas where they are not certain....

I generally agree with Faridah's argument on the media's responsibilities because there are times when journalists and media organizations in Malaysia must work within this diverse cultural context. Referring to a multi-cultural country like Malaysia, the media are seen to be such a significant medium for maintaining harmony. I further argue that the Malaysian media must be judged against all factors implicated in its development:

the implementation of media and nation building; media and the state; media roles in democratic practices and other challenges; media politics, commercialization, laws and regulations; journalists' roles; and media ownership. Concerns also arise among scholars and practitioners about the importance of the commercial aspects of journalism. It could be argued that the media in Malaysia has been playing a socially responsible role in helping the government to develop the economy, especially following the economic downturn in 1997. For example, issues on the increasing unemployment rate were reported thoroughly and factually by the Malaysian media. It was neither positive nor negative coverage because the economic downturn was a global issue and not merely reflecting Malaysia's internal politics.

The mainstream media's agenda of nation building in Malaysia is a continuous process. For example, the media helped the government promote the Malaysian Plan (currently known as the Ninth Malaysian Plan) by continuously reporting on the plan's advantages and disadvantages. The media's significant role in contributing to nation building was commented on by Datuk Abdullah Badawi in his speech in 2006:

> ... the success of implementation (of the Ninth Malaysian Plan) does not only rest on the public sector; other institutions such as the private sector, civil society, Parliament and the media all play vital roles. Indeed, the collective effort of all these institutions will determine the level of our achievements in economic growth as well as social progress[12].

2.1.1 Media and Nation Building

In building the nation, the media in Malaysia focuses more on current and relevant issues decided by a newspaper's editorial in line with the prime objective of nation building and national interest to disseminate information to the public. Media reports were generally supportive of the national interest and government after independence in 1957. Karthigesu (1988, p.767) argues that:

> Part of the power structure built and transferred to the new government and designed to provide the same service that it provided for the colonial government,

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[12] The Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), a blueprint for the direction of the Malaysian economy for the next five years from 2006-2010, was launched by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in Parliament on 31 March 2006. The 9MP period is an important mid-point in the country's drive to achieve developed nation status by 2020. See www.parlimen.gov.my/news/eng-ucapan_rmk9.pdf.

namely to safeguard and strengthen the authority of government [with a] built in partiality towards people and parties in power.

Apart from supporting the government, the media objectives have been established to serve the needs of the country. Zaharom (2000, p.140) argues that:

State control over Malaysia's media, particularly television, has been evident right from the beginning. When television was first introduced into the country in 1963, it comprised a single channel national network, under the control of the Department of Broadcasting (RTM) which, in turn, was one of the three departments under the control of Ministry of Information.

State control over the media in the cause of national unity and conformity occurred in the first year of Dr. Mahathir's government in 1981. All the laws relating to the media were ultimately determined by the government. Mahathir (1981, p.19) asserts that:

So long as the press is conscious of itself being a potential threat to democracy and conscientiously limits the exercise of its rights, it should be allowed to function without government interference. But when the press obviously abuses its rights by unnecessarily agitating the people, then democratic governments have a right to control it.

This is consistent with the Ninth Malaysian Plan and the national mission in ensuring Malaysia achieves its vision by 2020. Vision 2020 was created to provide directions for Malaysians as clearly outlined in the nine strategic challenges (Ahmad Sarji 1993, p.14)[13]. As stated in the third challenge, the aim is for Malaysia to foster and develop a mature democratic society. It is also expected to uphold the policy of achieving a democratic society, one that is mature and prepared to face economic challenges in the future. This is seen as important to maintaining national and social unity. Mahathir (2006, p.2) has argued that:

The first of these is the challenges of establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair

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[13]

1. Establish a united Malaysian nation made up of one Malaysian race;
2. Create a psychologically liberated, secure and developed Malaysian society;
3. Foster and develop a mature democratic society;
4. Establish a fully moral and ethical society
5. Establish a mature, liberal and tolerant society;
6. Establish a scientific and progressive society;
7. Establish a fully caring society;
8. Ensure an economically just society, in which there is fair and equitable distribution of the nation's wealth, and
9. Establish a prosperous society with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

partnership, made up one 'Bangsa Malaysia' with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.

For this reason the Malaysian media has been employed to interpret this edict to society by producing/publishing special issues that aim to provide policy explanations. The way that the Malaysian media operates is also influenced by society's comprising of multi-ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese and Indian. This factor is crucial to the process of nation building because Malaysian society is composed of these three main ethnic groups. It is therefore important for the media to take part in ensuring harmonious social relationships. According to Mustafa Kamal (2000) and Hoo (2000) the Malaysian media landscape has been influenced by this issue since the ethnic riots of May 13, 1969. This incident was entirely influenced by racial issues and jeopardized the economy, politics and harmony of the country. After the incident, in the name of nation building and national unity, the role of the media in Malaysia was revised and the media associated itself much more strongly with the government. This was a watershed moment for journalists. Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.100) observes that:

> …the importance of the mass media, particularly radio and newspapers, has gained prominence given the government's preference that they should be useful tools of national development, an approach that is very much informed by a functionalist notion of the media and society. It is generally assumed that the function of the mass media is to help the government impart information and disseminate its policies for the betterment of the population in general.

Public harmony has been prioritized ever since the racial incidents of May 13, 1969. A state of emergency was declared and the Parliament was dissolved. Following this incident the government realized the importance of good 'harmony' among its ethnic races. It has not only been ritually expressed in the mainstream media but also in the alternative media such as *Malaysia Today*[14]. As Zainon (2010) argues that:

> Many has agreed that Malaysians should also treat May 13 as a lasting reminder of the danger of disregarding Merdeka Constitution and of playing about with the sensitivities, customs and traditions of the country's various ethnic groups.

The relationships between the media and nation building were further enhanced by the concept and practice of 'development journalism' (Mustafa Kamal 2000, p.99). The media in Malaysia has long been involved in development journalism and was created as such in order to serve the national agenda, especially since Malaysian independence

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[14] In Malaysia, the alternative media is also known as the new media (Internet based) which refers to non-traditional media such as online newspapers Malaysia Today and Malaysian Insider.

in 1957. In other words the media has been used in making this transition from a traditional society to a modern one while gradually becoming a partner of the government; Schlesinger (1991, p.216) argues that the formations of relationships between media, state and nation lie in the nexus of interdependence which is often being challenged. The triangle of media, state and the nation as he describes, constitutes forces that are 'mutually antagonistic'.

Malaysia has adopted development journalism in its news reporting and media practices to ensure that government aspirations are aligned with the nation building process. In this context, the Ministry of Information regulated all government messages since independence in 1957. Development journalism is thus seen as a workable mechanism in delivering the government's messages to society. It has been argued that the concept of development journalism serves the ruling elites' interests, and that therefore only positive pictures of the state have been highlighted by the news media (Mustafa Kamal 2000, p.100). For example, most of the news services in Malaysia support government actions and portray political (government) leaders as gracious, compassionate and responsive to the nation's needs. The press is not encouraged to criticize government projects as this may "divert people's attention from development issues and concerns" (Mustafa Kamal 2000, p.100). One of the examples of government concerns is that the press highlights government involvement in the welfare and interest of the Orang Asli (the indigenous or aboriginal people of Malaysia), especially their health and education (BERNAMA 2011).

While nation building is important, it may discourage the media from practicing some kinds of press freedom, such as critical, analytical and investigative reporting. This has escalated into a dilemma for journalists – whether to endorse all government actions, good or bad, or to take a critical stance on political, social or economic issues. Some scholars and interviewees in this study also consider that it may be time for the media in Malaysia to shift from its conventional roles to more open practices, and this means freedom of reporting to help society. As argued Abdul Razak (2000, p.79) by :

> Media shift to becoming an 'independent variable' whenever the 'consequent variables' change with increasing public knowledge and intensity of attitude and motivations for modernization. In other words, rising people's expectation and demands for more and better public good will assert pressure for social and

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political changes. Likewise, media become an 'intervening variable' whenever the antecedents – prevailing political and economic systems – are no longer sufficient to meet the consequents – public demand for social betterment. Media then play the role of a change agent or both, change and mirror agents of social and political reforms.

The juggling of various roles has had positive and negative effects on most media organizations in Malaysia. They are seen as needing to shift their paradigm to a more critical, but still responsible, type of reporting. As the mass educator or change agent, media groups are yet to be tested on this challenging role, especially in covering national and regional issues. Society, in this situation, seeks the truth and, as noted by Romano (1996, p.158), journalists have broader roles, not only dealing with the wider society and the government, but also with their own functions in contributing to nation building.

2.1.2 Issues Involved in Media Serving the Malaysian Government's Needs

The media plays a vital role in communicating with society. The role of the media in Malaysia, as a partner to the government, has not changed much over the decades, especially in providing one-sided reporting. The status of mainstream media in Malaysia involves an imbalance in reporting society's demands especially with regard to rights and hostile actions by the media have been a perceived as a problem in maintaining a steady relationship between the media and society. Ideally, in the liberal model of press practices, the media should be 'free' and autonomous in serving society. With all the constraints outlined above, Malaysian media is now moving towards this liberal model as new media such as online social media grows. The new media are more independent and provide reporting that takes in two or more viewpoints.

Media power may be measured in relation to a country's democratic practices. The four theories of the press – The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist – developed by Seibert, Peterson and Schramm (cited in Gauthier 1999) have contributed to the growth of media and political systems in developing countries. Theories of the press have long dominated journalism research and these theories have reference points in most developing countries. However, Engesser and Franzetti (2011) state that the relationship between media systems and political systems should be

combined to reflect the social and political structures of society. They formulate their hypothesis in such a way that certain dimensions and variables shape this interdependence between national media – and political systems based on four dimensions: freedom, diversity, centrality and tradition. They found that at the macro level, limitations can be seen in government ownership of media companies, censorship, or governmental influence over media. Engesser and Franzetti (2011, p.283) describe that the extensions of freedom of the press are actually limited by these facts:

> The relevant for comparison of media systems and political systems are also the governmental capabilities to limit the freedom of the media: censorship, occupational ban, or governmental media ownership, etc. One can state that political systems can be seen from a political science's perspective as functional systems, which interact with other social systems. One important system among these social systems is the media system.

Considering the findings by Engesser and Franzetti (2011), there is no doubt that the leadership style of the government plays a prominent role in determining the kind of media system that operates. It is therefore legitimate to analyse leadership, power and the needs of society to see if there is any transformation in news reporting and media practices in Malaysia from government leader to government leader. This is where I argue that the history of separation between Malaysia and Singapore led to different political ideologies and leadership styles and became one of the forces that shaped and influenced the relationship between these two countries.

The Malaysian government encourages the media to conduct social responsibility in everyday journalism practices. As stated by Seibert, Peterson and Schramm (cited in Gauthier1999, p.200), freedom "carries concomitant obligations; and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obligated to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society". Based on the above justification of press freedom, media democratization in Malaysia is said to be influenced generally by the government's control of the laws and regulations concerning ownership and commercialization of industry. In other words, factors such as media ownership, commercialization, and the range and variety of the media also contribute to the legitimate use of media power in Malaysia. Mohd Azizuddin (2004, p.343) argues that media or press control can be found in the form of community opinion, consumer action and professional ethics. Press

control means not questioning the policies of the relevant government authorities. Thus, the right of free expression under the guise of social responsibility is not an absolute right. The right to free expression, as argued by Gauthier (1999, p.201), must be balanced against the private rights of others and against vital social interests. This responsibility to protect society is the duty of private companies and government. However, these tasks can be manipulated to benefit the government and curb people's freedom through media ownership (Mohd. Azizuddin 2004, pp.343-344).

Realizing their power to channel ideas, thoughts, messages and criticism to others publicly, more media outlets are opening up and allocating space to disseminating ideas, especially now that the Internet is a global force. Many sensitive human rights issues, including politics, have been widely discussed in the media. For example, the online site Malaysiakini.com has been discussing and criticizing political conflicts openly, and so have many blogs since 2007 and 2008 (Fauwaz 2008). These two years represented the breakthrough of greater media variety emerging in Malaysia. Chinyong and Pasuni (2010, p.51) describe the contributions of independent online media in the context of the March 2008 general elections:

> Insofar as the new media is concerned, communal politics has also been played out on that terrain, oftentimes drowning out voices (or blogs) calling for a more pluralist and inclusive brand of politics. Indeed, communal fault lines remain sharp despite laments by bloggers and contributors to independent online news portals against the racial undercurrents of Malaysian society. This becomes abundantly evident when one scrutinises new media reportage and discussions on two specific developments since March 2008 that speak to the defining features of Malaysian politics sketched above.

These developments may seem to contribute to the democratization of the Malaysian media system. However, in reality the media is not totally free to cover certain issues, especially those linked to politics and sensitive social issues affecting government and the nation in general. According to Lloyd (2005, p.214):

> The media tell us, a crisis in society: a crisis of withdrawal of engagement and of trust. Implicitly and explicitly, we in the media put the responsibility for that on public figures; usually politicians. We should, in the pursuit of our own ideals, look at ourselves as actors, as well as continue to act as investigators. The development of such a centre or centres, and with it the development of a journalism which was analytical of itself as well as of other powers, would be a large contribution to the continued freedom of a society which cannot be free without free media, who wish to understand, and assist the rest of us to understand, what freedom is.

Thus, the media could be seen as coerced to accept a certain concept of social responsibility. For example, the freedom of mainstream media in Malaysia to write on controversial multi-ethnic issues has been curtailed as it could harm the country's sense of unity or harmony.

The relationship between the media and the state is increasingly important to the development of civil society. Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.8) assert that:

> One cannot understand the news media without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society, among other elements of social structure.

As discussed by Syed Arabi (1989) and Oetama (1989), the complex relationship between the media and society introduces some major challenges to media development in a given country. However, they do not explain in detail regarding how political interests affect media roles and how society responds to these effects. Political parties and the relationships between economic and political interests affect society and this could influence the way a government reacts towards a certain public policy. For example, individuals in Malaysian society are assumed to use public opinion and are published in the media and this has the potential to elevate issues, and thus pressure the government to engage with them immediately. In order to meet the issues raised by many social problems, government has to understand the importance of public opinion, and work with it. Syed Arabi (1989), Oetama (1989) and George (2006a) discussed these societal expectations and how the media can serve society, where the media needs to understand the meaning of freedom and democracy to be above the interests of power and believe in its own ability to act in the public interest. Besides all the obstacles faced by the media, they are entangled in their own web of practices, and at the same time confront other external problems and challenges.

However, the expectations of society may still be met by the media which offers more variety in content while still being controlled by powerful individuals. This refers to the ownership of several television stations and print media, collectively, known as Media Prima Berhad - and operating under one roof. This has been identified by Craig (2004, p.17):

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> New media technologies may allow the proliferation of media outlets and diminish the power of media barons. The Internet has already influenced the global media landscape, although the emancipatory potentials of new media technologies are sometimes overstated. Forms of pay television, for example, may provide a multi-channel environment but they may also entrench the power of existing media owners and not facilitate greater degrees of public debate or a greater variety of media content....

The above point on multi-channel media outlets is that new technologies serve to diminish tight government controls by offering more variety. Simultaneously, society may explore other media such as online media which is assumed to offer much better balanced reporting, especially political issues. The press needs to be clear about who it serves. Media groups have to juggle their relationships with the multi-ethnic society and the government at the same time. The media may still work for the benefits of society and at the same time maintain relationships with the rulers or political elites. Media democracy and press freedom have always been linked to social responsibilities. The Malaysian media, in general, has been informative. However, the ruling powers in Malaysia have had a deleterious effect on the role of media as a power distributor. As argued by Zaharom and Wang (2004, p.249), Malaysia's political and media systems are "heavily controlled, with little room for dissenting opinions". This is supported by Wang (2001, p.74) that the media is controlled and left with no choice but to work ostensibly for the citizen:

> …there is a tight relationship between the press and the political parties in the ruling coalition. There are several implications here. One, the party-owned newspapers, as it was illustrated, gets their cues from the powers that be. The allocative control of the media by political parties allows them to decide on the scope and nature of the media content. This is particularly blatant during periods of crisis of hegemony. The press in a situation of control becomes inept in playing the adversarial role of watchdog. Consequently, this situation makes it difficult for citizens to exercise their right to information and their right to making informed choices.

While Zaharom's and Wang's (2000, p.115) arguments above reflect the different perspectives on the Malaysian media, their arguments do not take account of holistic news reporting in a cultural setting, but focus more on political news reporting. As noted by Hoo where Malaysian news reporting is bound by certain government restrictions, "the media has to adapt to the political system in which they are operating". Abdul Razak (2000, p.79), on the other hand, contests the idea that the type of press should reflect not only the political structures but also the social structures within which

it operates. The bond between the media, the political system and the state in a country, be it democratic or not, is undeniable and thus can never be taken for granted.

2.1.3 Media Roles in Malaysian Democratic Practices

The media plays a role in how democracy is practised in any country and this democratic practice is guided through rules and regulations imposed by the government. Democracy is a historically – based concept but has changed over centuries in line with the development of political practices throughout the world. Media democracy involves free press practices and media systems. The practices of media and democracy in Malaysia and some other Southeast Asian countries have been discussed comprehensively by Abdul Razak (2000), Mustafa Kamal (2000), Hoo (2000), and Loh and Khoo (2002). They have analysed how the media works in different political environments.

Even though democracy is perceived to offer a better life and is viewed as 'problem solving' (Abdul Razak 2000, p.79), it also contributes to the articulation of society's views in the public domain (Mustafa Kamal 2000). For example people in society can raise their views and opinions through the media. The media and democracy have a complex relationship; it is a two-way process. For example, at the macro level the media may be influenced by a country's history and its democratic practices. At a micro level the media may be examined for the truth or prejudice revealed in its reporting styles. Craig (2004, p.21) states that "the etymology of 'democracy' refers to 'rule by the people', but beyond that there is much debate, conjecture and political struggle over the meaning of the term: many very different political systems around the world profess to being democracies". Malaysia, for example, professes to embrace democracy in its media practices; for example see Mahathir (1994) and Mahathir and Ishihara (1995).

The actual role of the media in a democratic nation is also limited by the forces and influences acting on it (Abdul Razak 2000; Hoo 2000; Mustafa Kamal 2000). There might be more flexibility in some countries than the others. For example, the media and democracy in Malaysia operate on a 'thin line'. Therefore, the media in Malaysia is far from being democratized as it is constrained by other forces, such as government

controls, individual political power, media systems, media landscape, economy, and socio-cultural landscape.

Media outlets in liberal democracies are free to report without influence, and to publish information about society or the government. However, media democracy in Malaysia is different from the West, politically, culturally and economically. One obvious difference is the multi-ethnic factor and this cannot be ignored, particularly when Malaysia's development has been predominantly shaped to meet the needs of this multi-ethnicity. For example in Malaysia, the ethnic identity and religiosity is reflected in the national identity card. As stated in the Constitution of Malaysia Articles 153 (1), the special position of the Malay; and Article 160, 'Malay' means a person who professes the religion of Islam[15]. This contrasts strongly with other countries, for example Indonesia and Australia, where the nationality is written as Indonesian and Australian respectively and there is no identification of ethnicity and religiosity.

Malaysian media outlets are often confused by the government's interference and influences and there is no way out since the media is part of the political system. Journalists cannot change the fact that the media need to work closely with the government. The media needs to deal with social issues and at the same time adapt to government regulations. Even if the media exists for the public good, it is often intertwined with regulations which make independence harder. This may contribute to the historical difficulties in gaining a degree of media freedom. For example, in Malaysia, since the mainstream media groups are mostly owned and controlled by the government, they are likely to be described as the voices of the government. According to Wang (2001) and Zaharom (2000), this means that they only speak for and think like the government. This demands that they provide only positive feedback as a response to any news reporting of government activities. Media groups and reporters have been marginalized in their relationships with the state.

In contrast, according to Nelson (2007, p.173), the philosophy of democratic practices varies in many countries and all countries in effect are subject to different laws and regulations:

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[15]Laws of Malaysia Federal Constitution, available: www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed.../wcms_125966.pdf.

> In countries such as the United States and Great Britain the philosophy is that a well-informed citizen is able to make wiser decisions, therefore, a free press helps to construct a better society. Nevertheless, the practice of a free media varies from country to country. Even though the media in democratic societies enjoy freedom, they are in fact in all countries subject to a number of laws and regulations. Most press laws tend to be restrictive rather than granting rights to journalists….

Media freedoms have been fought for because the media or press have been seen as an important key player in the government, and the political, social and economic system in general. Any regulation on the media or press is a delicate system of checks and balances where it has to be very subtle in controlling the media system as a whole. However, pressure on the government increases as society begins to realize the importance of press freedoms, where media groups can disseminate information without fear or favour. One pressure results from the existence of multi-ethnic issues. The media were given guidelines on the internal sensitivities of Malaysia's multi-ethnic population and what they meant for national security[16]. The media in Malaysia does not have full freedom of expression. As mentioned by Faridah, (2002, pp.52-53) "freedom of expression in Malaysia comes in somewhat different forms" because it needs to consider the entire demographic, with a complex background of ethnicity and religion. Malaysian scholars like Faridah (2002) agrees with A. Samad (1991, p.29), a Malaysian journalist, that "the press are given ample opportunities to express their views but the right to free expression must be balanced against the larger interests of the nation". Both of them shared similar views on the importance of national unity where Faridah (2002, pp.51-65) cautions that:

> ... they (the media) must be carefully used to guide the minds and opinions of the public in the desired direction. Perhaps most precarious is the way in which the Malaysian government rationalizes its control over the media. Several of the reasons given have to do with the internal sensitivity resulting from Malaysia's multi-ethnic background and national security. Amongst development-oriented priorities that have always been the platform for national development plans are national unity, economic and political stability, work ethics and the inculcation of proper values. Hence, the role and performance of the mass media are the direct concern of the government, especially in times such as the present when the nation is beset with numerous social, economic and political challenges.

Living in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, means focussing on the values of national unity, such as Malaysia, and here the press faces different kind of struggles in

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making sure that the national development plan succeeds. Goonasekera and Ito (1999) and Moses (2002) and also argue that rules and regulations have been imposed in order to control the media/press especially when it comes to multi-ethnic reporting.

In the latest survey by the Freedom House (2010), Malaysia has been identified as a 'Not Free' country in terms of its press freedom. This index of freedom shows that Malaysia has limitations on freedom of expression, due to many firm laws and regulations such as the 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) (see further discussion later in this chapter). This law requires all publishers and printing firms to obtain an annual permit[17], and gives the Prime Minister or another relevant minister the authority to revoke licences at any time without judicial review: "The PPPA has been used to shut down or otherwise circumscribe the distribution of media outlets that published material deemed antigovernment, against the national interest, or 'sensitive' issues" in Malaysia (Freedom House 2009, 2010).

However, it has been argued by Freedom House (2010) that "Malaysia is not an electoral democracy. The party that wins a plurality (large number) of seats in legislative elections names its leader prime minister. Executive power is vested in the prime minister and the cabinets". Malaysia has "received an upward trend arrow due to the opposition's significant gains in general elections, greater pluralism and discussion in the media, and the peaceful conduct of major public protests" (Freedom House 2010). The score shows an increasing of freedom and some improvement compared to the Mahathir era 2002-2003 (his government last for 22 years). This shows that the trend of press freedom in Malaysia has fluctuated depending on in the leader in power. However, Malaysia, in general is still 'partly free' in the press freedom index due to the laws and regulations imposed on its media organizations.

It was also argued by Welsh (1996, pp.882-903) in her Asian survey studies[18], Malaysians agree to media control and a close relationship between government and

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[17] Laws of Malaysia (reprint) Act 301 (13) and validity of licence and permit Act 301 (12) where Malaysian media operates under a publishing permit system, and empowering the government to shut down media outlets at will. Available: http://www.agc.gov.my/Akta/Vol.%207/Act%20301.pdf2

[18] For example, out of the 86% of respondents who support press freedom, only 40% are willing to speak on sensitive issues - racial, religious or cultural. Meanwhile, 52% are willing to criticize the government on certain issues. When discussing media control by the government, 69% agreed on the media-government relationship. However, 51% of

media through shared ownership. Nevertheless, the media should also prioritize freedom of expression by being more critical of the government.

Journalism in Malaysia plays a critical role in implementing democracy. It began when many, if not all, journalists fought for independence in the spirit of nationalism. For instance, Pak Sako (Ishak Haji Muhammad) and Ahmad Boestamam were – amongst others – two Malay journalists, who were also known as nationalists because of their great involvement in the independence struggle[19]. The implementation of democracy in Malaysia is not only influenced by its nationalist journalists but also based on the society's right to receive all information freely. Information should be provided by the media to society and this is a key indicator of a free society. There is no doubt that information is power. Those who own information also own the power to control many things. A journalist is the means by which society obtains information about the wider society. This role demonstrates an ability to redistribute power according to the information received by people in society. Journalists should abide by some ethical practices not to abuse the power that is given to them. McNair (2009), for instance, perceives journalism as something that represents democracy in action. However, according to McNair (2009, pp.238-239) as the five roles of journalism in a democracy are contested by many people, and they may not be dominant perspectives in non-Western countries:

- Journalism as source of information in deliberative democracy
- Journalism as watchdog/fourth estate
- Journalism as mediator/representative
- Journalism as participant/advocate

Romano (2005, pp.2-8) emphasis is quite different, she specifically describe about how journalists in developing nations described how journalism might serve development goals as :

- Journalists as nation builders
- Journalists as government partners

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urban respondents and 40% of rural respondents perceived the media as not critical enough of government, while only 27% felt that the media has played its role responsibly.

[19]Ishak Hj. Muhammad (1909-1991) was a former president of the Malay Nationalist Party. He was a prolific writer and his pen-names were Hantu Raya and Pak Sako. He was an editor for *PelitaMalaya*, the MNP-backed newspaper. He became a National Laureate in 1976 for his contribution to Malay literature (Sharifah Sophia 2010, p.176).

- Journalists as agents of empowerment
- Journalist as watchdogs
- Journalist as guardians of transparency

Here it is evident that Western and Asian journalism perspectives differ. For example, the practitioner's role in Asian journalism emphasises nation building and to work with the government. In contrast, as argued by Gunaratne (2006, p.3), "all the Western theories of democracy generally deal with power, equality, freedom, justice and interests. Not all these concepts are congruent with Eastern thinking". He stresses that many of the Western notions of liberal democracy have been resisted by most Eastern countries. Only to a certain point to Eastern countries adhere to Western notions of democracy. However, the political involvement in the process of strengthening liberal democratic concepts is different as both cultures perceived that social systems are functional systems.

In this study the focus is on the transition of democratic practices in Malaysia over two decades ago and whether it is relevant to the nature of government today. According to Means (1996), Case (1996) and Case (1997), this country practises a different approach of democracy which allows limitations in which opposition groups can operate. As a federal state, Malaysia incorporated democratic practices from the British Westminster system in its Federal Constitution. This form of democracy is a result of the social structure in Malaysia and reflects its multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious nature. For example, the three main races in Malaysia – Malays, Chinese and Indians – have their obligations to the ruler: "The paramount ruler's powers are similar to those of the British monarch, including discretion in the appointment of a prime minister and in the dissolution of parliament. Generally, the monarch acts on the advice of the prime minister and cabinet, who wield effective power[20]".

Democracy in Malaysia balances civil liberties and social stability, especially prioritising social stability among the races. Ahmad Murad (2001, p.40) asserts that society cannot exist without expressing, reflecting and identifying itself. Societies cannot exist without being conscious of their existence. Gauhar (cited in Ahmad Murad 2001, p.40) says that media groups, whether they are free or controlled, are constantly

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[20] Constitution of Malaysia: Part IV The Federation, Chapter 2, The Conference of Rulers, available: http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/malaysia.pdf.

engaged in providing facilities for writing, reading and speaking. Ahmad Murad (2001, p.40) further argues that "when we talk of freedom of the press, we are in fact talking about the fundamental needs of human beings to express and discover themselves […] by limiting freedom of expression, a community restricts the scope of the development of its creative potential". Therefore, freedom of the press is now a highlighted issue in Malaysia and valued significantly in a modern political democracy.

In contrast, in a modern political democracy, the concept of a 'procedural minimal', formulated by Dahl (1982, p.108) suggests the following criteria:

1) Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2) Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3) Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4) Practically, all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government.
5) Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined.
6) Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
7) Citizens also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups

In Malaysia democracy differs from the Western model and Inoguchi and Newman (1997, p.5) define that difference as follows:

> ...the Eastern Asian democracies differ from this rather romanticized democratic ideal. Most have evolved through hard or soft developmental authoritarianism to some form of democracy, in the sense of having elections, universal suffrage and political parties. Yet in some cases they appear to be based upon a different social premise. Strong government invested with the responsibility of upholding collective needs, an absence of many liberal democratic practices, and longevity of political elites seems to be the norm.

Most South East Asian countries seem to re-elect the same political elites for very long terms, and this differs to the Western model of democracy. For example, Malaysia has been ruled by the *Barisan Nasional* since 1957 and similarly, Singapore has been dominated by the People's Action Party (PAP) for fifty years. The Golkar Party of

Indonesia, with the support of the military, has won all the elections since the present political system was established in 1975. However, Golkar is not in power anymore in Indonesia. The media has been playing a major role in these re-elections by supporting the political elites who are not only in power but also know how to maintain it.

Gunaratne (2006, p.3) describes "two main traditions of democracy – the evolving liberal tradition and the civic republican tradition". Democracy in Malaysia is about reducing internal, external and ethnic conflict and risks. The nature of democracy describes people's rights, the provision of equality and people's right to vote, and encouraging political journalism. Meanwhile, Schmitter and Karl (1991, p.87) describe democracy as "the emergence of political institutions that can peacefully compete to form governments and influence public policy, that can channel social and economic conflicts through regular procedures, and that have sufficient linkages to civil society to represent their constituencies and commit them to collective courses of action". Unfortunately, that is the side of democracy developed over centuries elsewhere, and it does not reflect the reality of democracy practices in Malaysia. McNair (2009) suggests that the ideal understanding of democracy is the orientation of autonomy power for the people and also the government. McNair (2009, p.238) asserts that:

> In practice, of course, many democratic choices are founded on prejudice and ignorance. People vote for all kinds of reasons, as is their democratic right, and not always on the basis of rational thought or careful deliberation. But from the normative perspective the democratic ideal is one of informed choice, to which the outputs of political journalism are key contributors.

Niven (2005, p.248) asserts the importance of political journalism by asking: "How do media operate to bring us the political coverage we receive? This is, of course, a fundamental question for understanding not only our media but our politics". Both McNair (2009) and Niven (2005) argue that by increasing political journalism and critical reporting, this could encourage better democratic practices.

The former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, argues that Malaysia has a particular form of democracy and that the government is responsible for shaping democratic practices. In this case, Mahathir perceived that a democratic government has the duty to interfere in and control the media regarding the limits of their reporting. Mahathir (1985, pp.214-215) claims that:

It is assumed that power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely, by what magical formula is the media itself, with all its awesome power, exempt for its inexorable tendency? The media must be given freedom but the freedom must be exercised with responsibility…So long as the Press is conscious of itself being a potential threat to democracy and conscientiously limits the exercise of its rights, it should be allowed to function without government interference. But when the Press obviously abuses its rights, then democratic governments have a duty to put it right.

However, Raja Aziz (1990, p.24) argues that in a democracy "no government can claim to be a credible government if it seeks to operate in secrecy. A government in a democracy must be prepared to account for its actions and to subject its acts and policies to public scrutiny and discussion".

Can this model of democracy, where rulers control development journalism, practices with a preference for harmony, gather a social consensus and deal with problems and confrontation? The government partnership model in some countries at some stages faces rejection or resistance. For example, the democracy rallies by the Red Shirts in Thailand represent society's demand for fair and balanced treatment of people and institutions, and the possibility of new elections. There have been calls for the king to intervene, for the Prime Minister of Thailand to resign, and for new elections. Sections of society have called for the reform of democracy in Thailand. However, "despite the bloodshed, the prime minister refuses to resign[21]" (Schearf 2010). In this context, Malaysia is practising a form of guided democracy with a regulated media in a multi-cultural society. Thailand is facing the same struggles in protecting its federal constitution and monarchy. However, Malaysia, so far has been successful in maintaining its stability and harmony except for a few racial incidents such as the ethnic riot of 1969.

It is claimed by Romano (2005, p.5) that the "philosophy of journalism as a partner or arguably, a handmaiden of government was widely censured, even by those who had founded the original development journalism concept". A former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, argues that journalists should be free to report. However, this is not the case. Anwar (1995, p.42) says that development journalism was misused "to its extreme, so much so, that even mild criticism of the ruling elite and

[21]Referring to democracy in Thailand, journalists must play their role as intermediaries between government and society. However, the idea of journalists becoming partners with the government may jeopardise their readers' trust.

critical attitude is viewed with fear, suspicion and sometimes contempt". According to Anwar (1995, p.42) the media in Malaysia is being abused and controlled in order to maintain social harmony, enforce journalists' ethical conduct and restrict them in their reporting with rules and regulations.

2.2 Other Challenges and Struggles

Apart from the primary roles of media in developing and contributing to nation building, and the relationship with the state, journalists have several challenges and struggles which need to be dealt with. This is especially in respect to their roles in society, where at the same time they experience restraints due to laws, regulations, aspects of commercialization and media politics.

2.2.1 Journalist Roles

Journalists in Malaysia face many diverse opinions regarding their professional conduct as they are bound by obligations to the profession, responsibility to society, and their roles as a government partner. Gans (2003, p.21) states that "as a profession, journalism views itself as supporting and strengthening the roles of citizens (society) in democracy". However, Gans (2003, p.21) questions journalists' aims: "much of the audience is interested in keeping up with the news rather than being politically involved citizens [...] In addition, journalists have their own troubles, and are confronting their own disempowerment". Journalists in Malaysia are reminded of their obligations to abide by rules and regulations, and their commitment to abide by the code of ethics of the Press Council and Journalists' Union. While the Press Council operates as a non-governmental organization (NGO), journalists are protected by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ)[22], formed to negotiate on journalists' behalf and terms and conditions of employment. For example, one NUJ objective is to secure the complete organization of all working and professional journalists, and to promote the industrial, social and intellectual interests of its members (Oon 1998, p.190). However, these ideal objectives[23] may not be achieved if the government nominates its own people to head the union. This could lead to a conflict of interest.

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[22] Available: http://www.nuj.org/
[23] Among the objectives of NUJ are (Oon 1998,p.190):
  – to secure the complete organization of all working and professional journalist and to promote the industrial, social and intellectual interests of its members;

However, the debate about journalistic values is not totally based on the practice of acceptable journalistic practices. It is important to understand underlying problems in these practices which include professional conduct but also the influences of ownership and leadership. Gans (2003, p.21) suggests that limitations on journalists' roles are the product of owners' control of media organizations. Journalists are expected to deliver news in the framework of making profit for their organizations. Gans (2003, p.21) claims that:

> Some journalists and media critics fear that in the long run, the conglomerates will not only homogenize the news but also slant it to supply favourable publicity for the other firms in the conglomerate.

While this point may be valid, the question of how a professional code of ethics could help journalists to reveal the truth in their reporting remains. Mohd Rajib and Faridah (cited in Faridah 2010, pp.9-10) argue that the professional journalists' code of ethics in Malaysia is meant to 'minimise harm'. Therefore the "act of determining the use of appropriate words in the news and news headlines should be one of the crucial tasks undertaken by journalists who call themselves ethical professionals". It is important for journalists to be free but at the same time they need to be ethical in their conduct. Is there a need to realign these ethical values with the role of media in the government-partnership model?

Gans (2003, p.88) argues that the role of journalists is vital:

> ...under some conditions, the absence of journalists could lead to autocracy or chaos. Watchdog journalism can contribute information to help public officials honest and, at times, even encourage them to be more responsive to their constituents. The journalist theory of democracy has it right, however; their main power is to inform to citizenry. Others will have to persuade the citizenry to be better informed.

- to defend the freedom of the press, to deal with the professional conduct of its members and to maintain high ethical standards in journalism;
- to regulate relations between employer and employee, members, and between members and other workers, and to endeavour to adjust any difference between them by amicable and conciliatory means;
- to further, financially or otherwise, the work of purpose of any lawful association or body having for its objects the promotion of the interest of labour, trade unions and trade unionists;
- to promote the material, social and educational welfare of journalists in any lawful manner;
- to provide legal assistance to journalists in connection with their employment;
- to provide such benefits as victimization pay and dispute pay to journalists;
- to promote legislation affecting interests of journalists;
- to undertake the editing, printing, publication and circulation of any journal, magazine, news sheet or other printed literature for the advancement of the objects of the Union or the promotion of the interests of journalist; and
- to establish a benefit fund and to draw up rules governing such a fund.

Scholars like Gans (2003) draw attention to the significant role of journalists. Journalists in a democracy should work within or along the boundaries of their ethical professions. Currently, journalists are often challenged by their sense of ethical conduct, such as to adhering to the media owner's guidelines. However, this could be done by increasing journalistic involvement in society through analytical reporting because they represent the point of reference for society. In Malaysia the absence of analytical reporting and lack of journalists' involvement is not new. It was argued by Hanitzsch (2007, p.373) that "although many journalists in the West do outspokenly celebrate their adversarial stance, any such attitude might be difficult to detect among news people in other cultures". This is true especially in some Asian cultures where Hanitzsch (2007, p.373) asserts that "an adversarial understanding of journalism may conflict with a preference for consensus and harmony, in other contexts, tight press restrictions might prohibit journalists from openly challenging those in power".

In the context of Malaysia, journalists in media organizations are guided by their owners where they are given directives or rules to operate. Although the media practitioners and media organizations highly committed to achieving a free press, they still have to face many obstacles especially those from media owners; in Malaysia's case this means the government. It is a challenge to the media practitioners in Malaysia to achieve a liberal democratic media when they could not question those in power. This political influence would best describe the reporting style as noted by Wolfsfeld (1997, p.76) that "journalists have certain routines frame used for covering political conflicts based on their definition of what makes a good story".

Journalists in Malaysia have been criticized by many Western scholars as not being objective and balanced in their reporting and that this is reflected in development journalism practices. Malaysian media outlets, according to Heuvel and Dennis (1993, p.149), "have a relatively 'tame' media environment with relatively passive or 'protocol' press". The style of media reporting for local and regional news is similar to that of 'harmonious' reporting. The limits of press freedom are managed through laws, rules and regulations that control domestic and regional reporting, no matter how objective individual journalists aim to be.

According to Richardson (2007, pp.86-87) "nobody could ever convincingly argue that news reporting (even 'objective reporting') is valueless". It was further claimed by Hackett (1984, p.237) that "the facts are separated from values and journalists act as neutral channels through which messages pass". Therefore news reporting is inevitably value-laden-and, on occasion, is fundamentally biased – but this does not stop coverage from being journalistically objective. To explain how this can be the case, Dunlevy (1998, p.120) suggests that we explore journalistic objectivity "by observing what journalists do when they are being objective". Apart from this, there are many other aspects of journalism structures such as news reporting discourse which implicitly influences the news itself and the public's acceptance of the news being described as accurate. The public is concerned about the truth and therefore, the influence of public policy could be detrimental to the country's national security.

However, it is important to note that Entman (2010, p.112) argues that "in practice, 'objectivity' seems often to yield a kind of stenographic passivity on the part of journalists that allows the side with the greatest manipulative skill and power over outcomes to dominate framing". He further notes that news 'objectivity' is part of the news framework constructed by journalists and this could be identified through the slant news takes, which leads to biased and unbalanced reporting. Entman (2010, p.112) asserts that:

> As a generalization, then, one-sided framing (slanted news) that arises from active and independent journalistic evaluation of facts could be compatible with the original goals of objectivity. However, slanted news caused by emphasizing the frame pushed by the most skilled media managers irrespective of facts would generally fail to uphold the original aims of objective journalism. In any case, facts generally do not line up entirely on one side, and democracy thus benefits from framing contests. If journalists employed a more self-conscious understanding of the cognitive psychology of message construction and information processing, and in particular saw themselves as striving to construct balanced frames more than merely covering a given day's news, they might be able to offer audiences more consistent frame contests and fewer instances of unwarranted one-sided framing (i.e., slanted news).

The idea that journalism will always be journalism regardless of what practice it takes has been discussed by many scholars. Yet, journalism's primary responsibility as argued by Voakes (2004, p.30) is "to provide accurate information, not to campaign for social or political causes, and to remain independent of other institutions and community-service projects". Woo (cited in Voakes 2004, p.30) also claims that "objectivity needs

not require detachment; a journalist can care deeply about the subject being reported without taking sides".

Ahmad Murad (2001) points out that being objective means being sanctioned and that objectivity is part of the freedom given to the media by the relevant authorities. However, he also claims that being objective does not offer a freedom to the media. Ahmad Murad (2001, p.47) argues that:

> Why be objective, or not be objective? In any society-Western or non-Western – the press institutions are an integral part of society and that of the dominant political, economic and social spheres of that society. It is state apparatus. It is legally sanctioned. It is culturally sanctioned. It is culturally legitimized. Some may expect the press to be adversarial. However, its freedom is still within the parameters set by the state. It is the state that has the monopoly of sanctioning freedom.

This also leads to the role of journalists in development journalism[24] which to maintain racial harmony and stability in society, as will be shown in my thesis. This point can be supported by studying the role of journalists committed to this ideal. Romano (1998, pp.64-65) asserts the disadvantages of development journalism, focussing on journalists' roles particularly, journalists who deviate from officially sanctioned discourse, [who] are regularly accused of stirring social divisions, agitating interracial tensions and endangering the stability of the nation. It is important to consider the journalist's role in development journalism. Hester and Sukkar (1989) argue that development journalism cannot be separated from the journalist's role in society. According to Hester and Sukkar (1989, p.57) journalists have a role in changing society:

> The journalist in the developing nation is caught up in the process change. By the very definition of "developing", we are looking at the changing not a static process. The developmental journalist consciously sees herself or himself as an agent of change.

On this point, Romano (1998) study on Indonesian development journalism and my study on Malaysia's have some similarities, in that journalists are considered to play an important role in unifying society, especially when it is a multi-ethnic one.

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[24] Some people do not acknowledge the existence of golden era of the press. However, the top-down approach to development practiced in Malaysia has often led to the criticism that, in fact, governments in Malaysia have exploited development journalism for the benefit of Barisan Nasional and its political interests.

2.2.2 Laws and Regulations

The Malaysian media is governed by several pieces of legislation. There are forty-five laws relevant to the newspaper industry, such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act (1984) (to regulate the use of printing presses, the printing, production, reproduction and distribution of publications, and the importation of publications from abroad). The Sedition Act (1984) and the Official Secrets Act (1972) prevent journalists from accessing information in any official document labelled as secret; and the Internal Security Act (1960), permits police under Section 73(1) to detain any person up to 60 days, without warrant or trial and without access to legal counsel.

Rodan (2004, p.21) describes Malaysia as one of the countries that "imposes security laws and official secret acts to intimidate journalists and editors, besides the annual licensing laws with which they need to comply. This is a perennial problem for publishers and distributors alike". Rodan (2004, pp.21-22) adds that in Malaysia the government even controls the media through ownership:

> Government control over local radio and television was achieved more smoothly through state-owned monopolies that came under the rubric of civil service whose upper echelons had become integrated with, rather than independent from, the ruling party. This method of taming domestic media in Malaysia in many respects mirrored those already discussed of Singapore; as did the rationales for them that centred around ideas about threats posed by communism and racial disharmony.

Political parties within the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional, are directly involved in commercial ownership of newspapers. Wang (2001, p.86) asserts that "the ownership and control of most of the mainstream media by close allies of Barisan Nasional (BN) provided space for them to explain and disseminate their perspectives, as well as to discredit the opposition". This is supported by Kua (1990) who agrees that the Malaysian media (electronic and print) are politically organized because various organs of the mass media are owned, controlled and monopolized by the economic/financial interests linked to the component parties of the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

Laws and regulations demonstrate the degree of control and ownership on the media organizations. Details of this type of media control are elaborated on by Dunnet (1988, p.18):

> The role of the press, as of trade, was to support the government in its efforts to build up the strength of the nation. The press existed only under tolerance of the government. It therefore had an obligation to put forward the government's view and avoid undue criticism of the government, even though it operated as a private enterprise. Privately owned newspapers have no more press freedom than the state interprets as beneficial to the state.

Ownership of the media is critical to the question of what kinds of journalism Malaysia can support. Media or news organizations have long been recognized as a crucial link between culture and politics. In the political theorizing of the last century, newspapers and other vehicles of publicity were seen as indispensable to democratic government (C. Wright Mills in Horowitz 1963, p.611). Politics is one of the principal arenas in which culture is "the structures of meaning through which men give shape to their experience" unfolds (Ericson, Baranek & Chan 1991, p.35).

The news media companies are important players in the political arena, helping to construct ideologies which make autonomous politics possible. Politicians and journalists share in the construction of ideology by framing the public culture in terms of the 'five Ws' – who, what, when, where and why. It is possible to practise democracy in a polity in order to ensure that participatory government works and this may contribute to shaping the democratic citizen and a better media system. Engesser and Franzetti (2011, p.289) define a better media system as when the newspapers diversity through high and low media concentration. For example, in their research, Mexico seems to be better that Japan because Mexican newspaper readers can choose from a relatively wide range of titles.

Anwar (1995, p.42) mentions that there is a need to "develop and fortify the institutions of civil society, enhance the workings of truly representative participatory governments, promote the rule of law rather than of men, and foster the cultivation of a free and responsible press". Kua (1990, p.17) believes that better democratic practices could produce more press freedom which has been denied for so long in Malaysia. It is no coincidence that the biggest circulation newspapers in Malaysia are owned by the political parties of the Barisan Nasional. Raja Aziz (cited in Kua 1990, p.35) supports the view that control is the desire on the part of those in power to prevent criticisms of their misconduct and incompetence from reaching the public, and to put forward, as far as possible, only their own version of events. Kua (1990, p.18) claims that the

government is using the public media network as its own private news bulletin network. Instead of being the watchdog for Malaysian democracy[25], justice and rationality, the various media organs have simply echoed the "official line". The media in Malaysia cannot escape their function of being organs for the government, and most of the media is indirectly owned by it. Given these circumstances, the media cannot really work on the platform of freedom and needs to abide by the country's laws and regulations.

2.2.3 Media Politics

The undisclosed relationships with political organizations (political parties) delineate and contribute to the structure of Malaysia's media and politics. The Malaysian media landscape is dominated by one large corporation - Media Prima (60 percent of the share owned by the elites) – which owns most of the print and broadcast media. Legendary journalist A.J. Liebling (cited in Julian 2009) said that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one". Albert Camus (cited in Cooke 1990), the famous French writer and journalist, stated that "a free press can, of course, be good or bad, but, most certainly without freedom, the press will never be anything but bad". There is no way for the media to perform independently, unless there are different models of ownership. In Malaysia the media has to work with their owners' political and economic control. Craig (2004, p.21) claims that democracies are constituted within the context of realized political discussions:

> The contribution of the media to politics, and to political communication more generally, is a constitutive feature of politics: democracies are founded on discussion and the communicative actions of politicians, and all citizens define and assign values to themselves, others and the community.

However, it is necessary to understand how politics and economics work in a democracy, as noted by Kantola (2007), Rogers (2004) and McNair (1999, 2006). Kantola (2007, p.257) argues that "when the election result is in conflict with the economic reformers, financial journalism becomes a tricky task and the reasonable voice of journalism is used to establish the order between the discourse of economy and democracy". It has been stressed by McNair (1998, p.109) that although "there is identifiably excessive concentration of ownership in a particular media sector, the

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[25] The system of democracy in Malaysia is criticised by many. However, the government press is now working fairly with the opposition, for example, with the groups who fought for the press freedom. Dato' Ambiga Sreenevasan is a Malaysian lawyer who served as the President of the Malaysian Bar Council from 2007 to 2009.

workings of the information marketplace may militate against the straightforward translation of proprietorial influence into editorial bias". In Malaysia's case most of the local media organizations are owned by the political parties or individual elites. Offering a different perspective regarding political and economic influences on the media, Abdul Razak (2000, p.79) argues that prevailing political and economic systems no longer meet public demand for social betterment. This point suggests that the media plays various roles and this has had positive and negative effects on most media organizations in Malaysia, because they must be changed urgently to provide more critical news reporting, especially on the current administration, and to broaden the coverage of political issues. However, this alteration does not ensure that journalists' self-regulation is successfully practiced or they refuse to be part of it.

As pointed out by Nelson (2007, p.174) with reference to Malaysia and a few other countries including Singapore, journalists' self-regulation and self-censorship arise from active enforcement where the media in these countries have removed the need for obvious government interference. In contrast, Bernard Rubin (cited in Kua 1990) argues that self-censorship by editors and journalists is the worst form of repression in Malaysia. This in turn deters investigative journalism. In other words, the Malaysian media system as described above does not welcome investigative journalism. In addition to these restraints the management style practiced in Malaysia does not encourage the growth of investigative journalism. This is because officials, especially in government agencies, are afraid to give information to journalists for fear they will be held responsible when or if the issue becomes controversial. Every piece of information or statement has to come from their managers or appointed spokespersons and is tailored to suit their masters, in this case the government. This is why any investigation attempts often prove futile.

The May 13, 1969 riots led to constraints on all media freedoms when the government prevented all publications for a few days after the incident (Vengadesan 2008). Media reporting was restricted because the government believed it would create more tension. The incident led to the suspension of newspapers and establishment of a National Operations Council (NOC). The country was ruled by a decree under the NOC and this was done in the name of racial harmony. Furthermore this led to the setting up of a Department of National Unity which was announced on the basis of 'national ideology'

or *Rukunegara*. The 1969 controversy led to a new phase of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia, on the basis that the media should work towards building the nation and sustaining harmony among the races (Kua 2007, p.23).

As a member of ASEAN[26], Malaysia promotes and encourages peace and harmony among its counterparts. To maintain these international relationships, Malaysia has implemented many political strategies in its communications on foreign affairs. This political communication ideology, directly and indirectly contributes to shaping Malaysian society culturally and politically.

Political commentary and judgement by media organizations ensures that the coverage of foreign affairs is consistent. Various media industries have been established to support the economy and Malaysia's relationships with its neighbouring countries. For example, as mentioned by Schultz (1998, pp.95-116) "tension between the paradoxical ambitions of the media profit and public good – are played out in a range of ways within news organizations, between the news media and other political institutions and society in general". Freedom House (2010) suggests that investigative reporting in Malaysia is "generally inhibited by the threat of expensive defamation suits, dismissals, media closure, and unannounced interrogation by the Ministry of Internal Security for any 'mishandling' of information. Moreover, a history of political influence in coverage of certain issues has fostered a culture of self-censorship among traditional media". For example, using the Printing and Publications Act 1984, the Internal Security Ministry suspended two Chinese-language daily newspapers in Malaysia, *China Press* and *Guang Ming Daily* for two weeks after publishing the Danish cartoon showing the now infamous caricature of the Prophet Muhammad[27].

In Western political communications today the role played by the mass media has also evolved.   Over the past quarter of a century, the media has gradually moved from the

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[26] Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung stated that "we [ASEAN] should also continue to promote and facilitate deeper engagement and more constructive contributions of ASEAN partners to addressing issues related to regional peace and security". He added it was necessary to further enhance the role of ASEAN as the primary driving force for dialogue and cooperation on regional political security issues with a view to maintaining regional peace and stability (ASEAN Secretariat 2010).
[27] The Danish cartoon controversy started when the daily newspaper in Denmark, *Jyllands-Posten* ('The Jutland Post')
   published an article titled "Muhammeds ansigt" ("The face of Muhammad") which provoked the anger of Muslims worldwide (Belien 2005).

role of reporting on and about politics, 'from the outside' as it were, to that of being an active participant in, shaping influence on, indeed becoming an integral part of the political process. Gurevitch, M. and Blumler (2004, p.84) claim that:

> This kind of intervention is especially visible during election campaigns, since the political functions of the media and especially of television assume greater visibility and significance during periods of intensified political communication. But it is by no means confined to election communication. Taken together, these developments have resulted in the increased dependency of both politicians and voters on the media and the messages they provide. In other words the center of the new political system appears to be the media.

The Malaysian media policies in the news reporting, institutions, professionals, products and audiences, as mentioned by Zaharom (2002, p.91), need to be studied within – and as part of – wider processes within societies which, in turn, are principally by – products of and driven by capitalism, and are full of contradictions and inequities. As described by Hanitzsch (2007, p.275), "when market orientation is high, journalism gives emphasis to what the audiences want to know at the expense of what they should know". However, allegations of political bias are common in a world where media groups perform to their master's command, through commercial pressure or regulations. These in turn lead to an unhealthy commercial media environment in Malaysia.

2.2.4 Commercialization

Commercialization and regulations, as argued by Zaharom (2002, p.91) are two factors that demonstrate the centralized political authority over the media. The media in Malaysia has become part of the revenue stream that supports printing and publishing expenditure through advertising. This is where government controls exist because most of the commercial funding comes from the government. Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.98) has a different perspective on commercialization and posits that "the policy of privatization earnestly being pursued by the government is in part responsible for the growth of the media industry in the country". In other words, commercialization could contribute to development journalism practices where funding and support come from the government. In some cases the government's monetary support is carried out through proxies. For example, one of the frontline parties in the *Barisan Nasional* (BN) in Malaysia, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), is also a major shareholder in Utusan. Gomez and Jomo (1999) claimed that since 1981, *Barisan*

Nasional (BN) has consistently promoted Bumiputera capitalism. Building on this theme, the Malaysian media is very far from practising impartial reporting especially on sensitive and controversial issues. It is done in the interests of safeguarding Malaysia as a multi-cultural society.

To suit the multi-ethnic needs of media consumption, Malaysia has a range of information and media formats. It offers a wide variety of print and electronic media, including increasing numbers of online newspapers and Internet news. It provides various types of information in different languages and this represents the character of Malaysian society. For example, there are different languages of newspapers in Malaysia such as *Utusan* and *Berita Harian* are in Malay language, *the Star* and *the New Straits Time* in English, *Nanyang Siangpau* and *SinChew Jitpoh* in Mandarin and *Tamil Nesan* in Tamil language. These ethnic language newspapers are vehicles that voice the aspirations, hopes and fears of the racial groups they represent (Hoo 2000, p.118). Yet, the diversity of media, even those catering to different ethnic groups in Malaysia, does not mean that there is a recognizably free press. This is what Zaharom (2000) refers to as "more of the same" where there are many forms of media to serve each ethnic group but the content, rules and practice are just the same. Despite representing specific interest groups, newspapers are still bound by the same press regulations and laws imposed by the government, such as the Printing and Presses Publications Act (PPPA)[28] (1972), the Official Secret Act (OSA), the Internal Security Act (ISA)[29], the Sedition Act (1984), and many other regulations (Hoo 2000; Lee, MNN 2000; Mustafa Kamal 2000). With all these laws and regulations, the media in Malaysia faces a dilemma, especially when the media relies on commercialization. Commercialization is needed to expand publishing businesses and to support printing and promotions expenditure, and most funding probably comes from proxies of the government and political individuals (see Chapter Three for further details).

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[28] Under this statute "all mass circulation newspapers in Malaysia need to have a printing permit, granted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, before they can be published. A new permit needs to be applied for every year. Section 13A of the amended Act totally empowers the Home Minister to reject applications for a printing license (popularly known as the KDN) and to revoke or suspend a permit. The Minister's decision is final and cannot be challenged in a court of law" (Zaharom 2000, p.145).

[29] ISA: The 52-year-old act has been condemned for misuse, detention without trial and violating basic human rights. Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak announced the repeal of the ISA following pressure from the public and civil groups. It was later replaced with the Security Offences Act, which opponents have labelled as "the New ISA". When tabling the new bill, Najib said that it would not affect those currently detained under ISA.

Advances in technology and the popularity of the Internet have led to an increasing number of online newspapers. The media in Malaysia now faces a big challenge: whether to adhere strongly to development journalism practices or move – without knowing the potential outcomes – to a freer press. The media that 'represents' or covers more positive news on the opposition parties is known as the alternative media and it has recently grown quickly. This form includes some widely read websites such as Malaysiakini.com, Harakahdaily.com and others. More than forty websites are claimed to have been used to slander the government and its leader (George 2006a, p.84). According to George (2006a) this increase in online newspapers and websites showed a potential for an equal balance of power between the coalition party and opposition party at the beginning of Abdullah's[30] tenure as Prime Minister. However, according to external reports the government has occasionally repressed online newspapers and websites since 2007 and "the government's campaign to silence online critics climaxed in September, when three high-profile arrests were made under the Internal Security Act (ISA)" (Freedom House 2010).

> While the decline in newspapers' circulations is undoubtedly significant, the suggestion here is that newspapers are no doubt to 'vanish' or disappear. Newspapers are changing and adapting their contents, style and design in response to the challenges they confront in the increasingly competitive and fragmented market for readers and advertisers posed by other newspapers, but additionally by the new media platforms of the Internet and mobile telephony, which deliver news, blogs, text alerts, news updates, podcasts and user-generated content (UGC) to 'readers' at a greater pace, in more accessible formats and when readers demand them.

However, the decline in newspaper circulation is more than just about falling readership. Other reasons for decline are readers' rejection of news that lacks balance and people's questioning of professionalism in journalism practice itself. This is an obvious ethical issue and it has implications for the role of balanced news in a democratic society and why newspapers are important. Franklin (2008, pp.4-5) raised three questions in his debate on the newspapers' 'diverse' and 'shifting' responses which demand constant answers: "What is a newspaper? What is a journalist? What is a newspaper for? Franklin's answers to these questions refer to Rushbridger" (cited in Franklin 2008, p.5):

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[30] Abdullah was Prime Minister between 2003 and 2008.

[1] primarily to tell society about itself, to act as a pollinator of information. To be a conduit between subjects and rulers, citizens and legislators, legislators and citizens, citizens and citizens…Of course, [2] newspapers sought to entertain as well. [3] And they were also there to challenge power – to hold it to account. And in this country, as elsewhere, there has been for 200 years or more a tradition of robust, unfettered comment… But – in the story we told to others in our attempts to win our freedom of speech, not to mention additional privileges and protection – there was at its heart the civic value of news telling.

Elaborating on what Franklin (2008), meant by 'shifting' in the newspapers, this means transforming a business's orientations in how it disseminates news and information, uses editorial priorities, increases revenues with good business strategies and upgrades journalists' skills in the information age. Franklin (2008, p.5), claims that:

These shifting, as well as constant, elements in the understanding of what constitute a newspaper signal continuity rather than any rupture with the past, and they will inform the discussion and analysis here.

The debate above has highlighted the challenges facing news print in democratic society and the domination of the business model. Therefore, circulation issues have been seen as part of the media power that influences society. Scholars argue that the news actually performs and shapes the reality of our minds. The basis of media power is at a supra level which performs as the frame of realities. Similarly, as Lipmann (1922, p.284) stated that "the world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, [and] imagined". This was further supported by Johnson-Cartee (2005, p.148) who stated that "news content helps shape our political and social reality, for such content contains the political mosaics from which we choose to construct our own personal realities". As such, the news framing and the news agenda on racial and political issues in Malaysia have been constructed to fit the harmonious and stability of the country. The news content for this reason cannot contain any sensitive issues that relate to racial and ethnicity in Malaysia.

2.2.5 Media Ownership

Media is an expensive business to run and most media organizations are owned by elites. In the case of Malaysia the elites are normally the government or the politicians themselves. As the owners of these media organizations, the press normally is obliged, directly and indirectly, to follow these owners' needs. For example, news coverage often involves and promotes the owners' portfolio or associates' companies. This economic constraint on the press has prevented an effective, independent, and critical

form of journalism/press from emerging in Malaysia and many other countries especially in Third World countries. In Malaysia the media operates under two different entities: the government and private organizations. Radio and Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) is owned by the government while other television stations belong to private organizations; see for example, Zaharom and Mustafa Kamal (2000), Juliana (2006), and Wilson (2002).

However, most Malaysian media groups work very closely with the government. For example, "60% share of the *Utusan Melayu*, one of the mainstream newspapers, is owned by UMNO, the political party in Malaysia, since 1961" (Mohd Safar 2004, p.255), while other major newspapers, such as *The New Straits Times* and *Berita Harian*, are owned by a government proxy. *The Nanyang Siang Pau* - a leading Chinese language newspaper in Malaysia – is owned by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Malaysian Chinese political party; and *The Tamil Nesan* – a leading Tamil language newspaper – is owned by the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), which is the Malaysian Indian political party see for example Zaharom and Wang (2004). Apart from the print media, electronic media such as RTM1, RTM2, TV3, NTV7 and 8TV are no exceptions to Malaysia's laws and regulations. It is no exaggeration to say that the media is owned and controlled by the government and most shareholders are individuals with government links, if not politicians[31]. This pattern of media ownership could lead to malpractices in a democracy. Ideally, in the free press model, media organizations should function as independently as possible and play a watchdog role while upholding their integrity as independent agents. The roles of government officials, political individuals and journalists may shape public opinion. It is important to make sure that accountability practices are not absent.

Summary

This chapter explains traditional media outlets in Malaysia are being challenged by the lack of credibility in their local news reporting which subsequently reflects the conditions of international reporting. Thus traditional media operatives need to enhance their roles and gain more public trust instead of focusing only on receiving revenue. At

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[31] For example, some of the shareholders in the giant media organization in Malaysia - Media Prima Berhad which owns most of the free television channels such as TV3, NTV7, 8TV and CH9 – does have links to the government, if not politicians. Available: www.mediaprima.com.my.

the same time development journalism is seen as having to ensure government support and avoid social disharmony. Therefore, a move to a free press model, especially in the traditional media (television, radio and newspaper) has been threatened by the centralized control of the media (Hoo 2000; Mustafa Kamal 2000; Syed Arabi 1989). Malaysia's media cannot therefore be 'opened up' to allow critical or anti-government opinions too quickly, and cannot be given more space than before in delivering ideas and thoughts. The media is associated with political power and state control and this has led to criticism about news reporting and media practices (Mustafa Kamal 2000) .

Media organizations in Malaysia play a crucial role as a partner of government and this has created a dilemma for the media and the society it represents, because it is not easy for the media to juggle this relationship. Moreover, the media has been historically affiliated with the country's emerging democratic practices. This chapter established an understanding of development journalism's applicability to how the media works in Malaysia, and how regional relationships such as with Singapore has been influenced by the government and leadership ideologies as represented in the media.

CHAPTER THREE

A CASE STUDY ON THE MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE RELATIONSHIP: HISTORY AND MEDIA ISSUES

> The pattern of news coverage that defines the media's agenda results from three key elements: exchanges with sources that provide information for news stories, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves, and journalism's norms and traditions. The latter is at the core of the three factors of influence because the press itself is the final arbiter of what goes on the news agenda, of which events and issues will be reported and how they will be reported (Valenzuela & McCombs 2004, p.97).

Before beginning the case study in detail, this chapter will explain the contextual background regarding why development journalism practices play an important part in managing countries' relationships. In this context, development journalism is not only seen as part of nation building or serving society, but is an extension of the regional relationship. Development journalism exists to shape certain objectives such as the media having to address the policy agenda to the people when it comes to regional issues. Development journalism addresses how journalists work to create an environment of free reporting in Malaysia on regional relations. The current situation of media reporting in relation to Singapore demonstrates that the style of Malaysian media reporting shows a degree of 'harmony'. It also demonstrates the form that Malaysian practices of media democracy take as alluded to in the earlier chapters. It is important to identify what really shapes the regional news reporting in Malaysia – what other pressures and influential cultures are being imposed on editors, journalists or media organizations? The style of news reporting on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship will possibly affect editors and journalists. This will be one of the contributing factors to the complexity of the news content. News agenda setting takes place globally in different contexts, and my concern in this chapter is to show how it works in the Malaysian context through BERNAMA news.

The online news reported by BERNAMA[32], the Malaysian news agency, provides the best platform for data collection. As a national gatekeeper of the regional and international news for Malaysia, BERNAMA seems to have had a critical role in defining and shaping national perceptions of Malaysian foreign affairs and international

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[32] BERNAMA is the acronym for *Berita Nasional Malaysia* or Malaysian National News. Available: http://www.bernama.com.

relationships. BERNAMA news articles reflect respect for authority and the influences of the country's leadership, thus providing a clear example of development journalism in Malaysia.

3.1 Case Study: The Malaysia and Singapore Regional Relationship

Having described the acceptability and implementation of development journalism as the dominant media practice in Malaysia and some of the challenges it faces (see Chapters One and Two), this case study on Malaysia and Singapore examines the practices of international news reporting. Development journalism grew in the pre- and post-colonial period in Malaysia and this case study examines whether development journalism is relevant in the context of current international/regional news reporting. It is important to discuss how the history of separation between Malaysia[33] and Singapore led to different political ideologies in each country, and helped shape and influence the relationship. This separation led to a division of power between two ethnicities: the Malays and the Chinese. Although both countries have similar leadership approaches in maintaining power and controlling the media, their political and ideological differences seem to manifest different styles of authoritarian government. This is also reflected in practices of news reporting, as will be argued in later chapters.

Rodan (2004, p.17) claims that both countries' governments have used their media in an attempt to establish power structures and use to their advantage the democratic government, the civil society, the multi-ethnic and the multi-cultural sphere. In order to achieve a peaceful society the countries' leaders strengthened their power along ethnic lines; the Malays in Malaysia and the Chinese in Singapore. The history of the separation of Malaysia and Singapore proved to be a major setback for developing media freedoms in both countries. Differences in ideologies between Malaysia and Singapore have indirectly involved the media as a mediator between the two countries. Both countries have used their media instrumentalities to deliver government strategies to manage this sensitive regional relationship. Strategic communication is articulated

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[33] Malaysia's neighbours are: Singapore in the south, Thailand in the north, and Indonesia to the east. Given its strategic location in South East Asia, Malaysia during the Malacca Sultanate, in the seventeenth century, was one of the doors to the region. Malacca was one of the busiest ports for trade and missionary entries and hence contributed to the economic growth of the Arab world, China, and India. Based on this geographically strategic location, Malaysia's regional relationships with surrounding countries were not as close as its relationship with Singapore. This stems from the fact that Singapore was once a part of Malay[sia] before the separation in 1965.

through the media as part of diplomacy and political strategy. Conflicts and issues, such as those of water shortage, reclamation of land and an extra bridge that link both countries, did arise between 1996 and 2008.

3.1.1 Interpretation of History in the Relationship

The most obvious reasons that emerge in the inconsistent relationship between Malaysia and Singapore derive from history. Lily Zubaidah (1999, p.38) claims that:

> Despite the inherent tensions between Singapore and Malaysia, their inter-connected histories resemble the complex relationship of "inseparable twins". The causeways that physically link Singapore with Malaysia symbolise their intimate relationship. While the island republic relies on the state of Johor for its water supply, the latter is strongly reliant on her commercial relations with Singapore to underwrite her booming economy. Many if not most Singaporeans and Malaysians have close relatives and friends across the causeway.

Meanwhile, Liu, Lawrence and Ward (2002, p.7) assert that alternative interpretations of history can function as symbolic resources to justify a different position for a dissident ethnic group, and for the majority group in this case would depend on specific political factors. It is therefore important to first understand the historical background[34] of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore because it shaped the current political situation and the nature of the interests of the ethnic groups involved.

Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya before 1963, was ruled by the British. Malaya at that time also comprised Singapore, Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak but in 1963, when Malaysia was formed, Brunei withdrew from the merger and became a sovereign country.

The British, as the longest ruling colonial power (from 1786 until 1957) in Malay[si]a, helped create Malay[si]a as an independent nation. This was done in several ways, including through the races relocation system which separated three major races – Malays, Chinese and Indians – according to geographical and economic status (Ramlah

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[34] Relations with Singapore were affected for many years by the lingering trauma of separation in 1965. Since 1981, coinciding with the assumption of the prime ministership by Mahathir, the two countries, linked by a causeway across the Johor Strait, have taken steps to mend their differences. These steps relate to the strengthening of ties in economic cooperation, trade, tourism, transportation, and even in the security area. Available: http://elibrary.bigchalk.com/elibweb/australia/do/document?set=search&dictionaryClick=&secondaryNav=&groupid=1&requestid=lib_australia&resultid=51&edition=&ts=4E28E055933EF3F99B3AF0AD3808391E_1266206791820&start=51&publicationId=&urn=urn%3Abigchalk%3AUS%3BBBCLib%3Bdocument%3B28385319

et al. 2009). This 'divide and rule' system gave each race a special area of national development: for example, agriculture became a responsibility of the Malays; plantations of the Indians; and commerce or business of the Chinese. In addition, the Malays, known as the Bumiputera or 'sons of the soil', were given some privileges later guaranteed in the Malaysian constitution (Suffian 1978, pp.2-8). Many administrative policies established by the British have impacted on Malaysia to this day.

On achieving independence the system of government in Malay[si]a was closely modelled on the Westminster parliamentary system. The early administrative system brought in by the British was rigid and bureaucratic, as described by Roff (1994, p.13):

> The government burgeoned administratively into an elaborate bureaucracy, first in the separate protected states and after 1895 in the new federation[35] with its centralized departments for such matters as finance, public works, lands and mines, agriculture, and police. The executive ranks of this bureaucracy were wholly European, and in effect all departments of public life passed under European administrative control.

During the colonial period the British expressed their lack of confidence in the people of Malaya's ability to become civil servants and administer their own country. Roff (1994, p.13), claims that:

> The British, on arriving here, found no Native Civil Service…which could gradually be reformed and disciplined. On the contrary, an English Civil Service had to be created, and many years must elapse before any appreciable numbers of Malays will be fitted to take their due or any prominent place in the labours of Administration.

The same scenario is described by Means (1970, pp.391-420), that the political process during this colonial period was monopolized by the bureaucracy where "politics were not open to public view, and except for a few native leaders who were appointed by colonial authorities to 'advisory councils', public policy was made with the absolute minimum of public involvement". There were few public discussions or much public

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[35] Malaysia as a federation consists of fourteen states, consisting of the Peninsular Malaysia: Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Melaka/Malacca, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Johor; East Malaysia: Sabah, Sarawak (the island of Borneo), and three states under the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur, as a capital city, the island of Labuan in Sabah and Putrajaya. States such as Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Selangor, Pahang and Johor have their own constitution, head of state, and elected assembly representatives, led by a chief minister and the cabinet, and legislate on matters outside the federal parliament's sphere.

involvement at all during colonial times. In fact, the political structure was designed according to the needs of the dominant races in Malaysia.

Means (1970) suggests that the multi-ethnic society during that time also contributed to the design of a bureaucracy geared towards authoritarian administration. Means (1970, p.391) further describes:

> The system depended upon public apathy, a general level of social contentment, and a passive acceptance of the principles of 'benevolent bureaucratic authoritarianism'. The traditional political of China (Chinese), India and of the Malay sultanese all contributed to the basic environment which made it possible for a colonial bureaucracy to rule so effectively and with so little public involvement or opposition.

Means (1970, p.391) also claimed that during "the transition from colonial rule to national independence, public attitudes changed and apathy was replaced by increasing public involvement in the political process".

Malay elites have thus been the dominant forces in the structure of Malay[si]an politics with the guidance of Britain's colonial authorities. Many important positions in the early government were held by combinations of British personnel, Malays, Chinese and Indians. For example, government administration in 1951 comprised three Malays, three British, one Chinese and one Indian (refer to Table 3.1 below). This system was formed prior to independence to guide the locals on how to manage their country.

Table 3.1: Members of the Early Government Administration (1951-1955)

No.	Name of the Members	Portfolio
1	Dato' Onn Jaafar	Member of Internal Affair
2	O.A Spencer	Member of Economic
3	Tunku Yaakob ibni Sultan Abdul Hamid	Member of Agriculture and Forest
4	Dr Lee Tiang Keng	Member of Health
5	Dato' E.E. C. Thuraisingam	Member of Education
6	J. D. Hodgkinson	Member of Industrial and Social Relations
7	J. D. Mead	Member of Housing and Public Works
8	Dato' Mahmud Mat	Member of Land, Mining and Transportation.

Source: Based on Ramlah et al. (2009, p.85)

involvement at all during colonial times. In fact, the political structure was designed according to the needs of the dominant races in Malaysia.

Means (1970) suggests that the multi-ethnic society during that time also contributed to the design of a bureaucracy geared towards authoritarian administration. Means (1970, p.391) further describes:

> The system depended upon public apathy, a general level of social contentment, and a passive acceptance of the principles of 'benevolent bureaucratic authoritarianism'. The traditional political of China (Chinese), India and of the Malay sultanese all contributed to the basic environment which made it possible for a colonial bureaucracy to rule so effectively and with so little public involvement or opposition.

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Source: Based on Ramlah et al. (2009, p.85)

The presence of British government personnel reflects Malay[si]a's gradual transition towards self-government. In the beginning, a few British (as highlighted number 2, 6 and 7) still remained in the administrative system to allow for the transfer of knowledge and skills needed for self-government. Developing a new, independent country was certainly not an easy task. Malay[si]a faced some difficulties and experienced disruptive incidents during its early post-independence period. For example, after its formation as 'Malaysia' in 1963, there were some confrontations with Indonesia in 1963, Singapore was separated from Malaysia in 1965 and the internal riots in 1969 (Ramlah et al. 2009, p.87). These incidents had led Malaysia to reimpose some stringent aspects of colonial rule: authoritarian altitudes and bureaucracy, and limited democracy in the name of harmonizing the state. Nevertheless, Malaysia has been largely stable since independence in 1957, despite some disastrous events throughout the years because "political power in the Malaysian region during most of the nineteen century rested in the autocratic hands (effective or otherwise) of the ruler" (Tregonning 1966, p.71).

The separation with Singapore in 1965 was based on fundamental ideological differences, politics and the status of ethnic groups created during British rule. When Singapore requested separation, Malaysia had no option but to concede after considering the implications. This happened during Tunku Abdul Rahman's tenure as Prime Minister of Malay[si]a. To Malaysians, Singapore resembled the odd half of a pair of scissors by creating problems for the federation. Thus, before it did more perceived damage, both countries decided to separate. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Malaysian Prime Minister at that time, believed that Malaysia and Singapore needed to choose their own ways to resolve their outstanding issues. Amongst the problems created by Singapore that led to the separation were (Ramlah, Abdul Hakim & Muslimin 2004, p.226):

1) a demand on a special status as a centre for industrial, trade and free port
2) a demand on tax privileges from the federal government.
3) a demand on equal rights for all citizens
4) a rejection on monarchy and Malay/Bumiputera privileges
5) an increase in the number of race riots in Singapore
6) Racist sentiments fanned by the People's Action Party (PAP), the strongest political party in Singapore led by Lee Kuan Yew.

Since most of Singapore's requests were democratic ones, especially numbers three and four, Malaysia did not accept them and decided to allow Singapore to leave. Unlike relations with other South East Asian (SEA) countries, Malaysia's relationship with Singapore is considered very 'special' because Malaysia and Singapore (Means 1991) share the same history, culture and traditions, language, economic ties and defence links, and having experienced British colonial rule (Mahathir 2002, p.180). These similarities, however, can sometimes be challenging as both countries seek to achieve and maintain prosperity by competing against each other especially when both countries are controlled by two major ethnic groups: Malays in Malaysia, and Chinese in Singapore[36]. Despite a shared colonial history, economic status and geography, there are differences. Their location on the Straits of Malacca has positioned both countries as the main contributors to the wealth of South East Asia. A decade ago, Mahathir (2002, p.187) claimed that "if commercially and strategically Singapore is important to Malaysia, then the relationship between Singapore and Malaysia must depend almost entirely on the politics of the two nations". However, like any neighbouring countries, these two countries have had a long love-hate relationship and the tensions between both countries remain constant. Despite this situation, Malaysia and Singapore continue to work hand-in-hand in developing South East Asia's economic growth to this day.

Apart from these issues, Singapore has prioritized economic development and has been the 'eye' for the West in the SEA region. Singapore generally has good relationships with Western countries, especially with the United States and Australia. Malaysia practises an Eastern policy while Singapore wants to maintain its credibility with Western nations (Mahathir 2002, p.187). Malaysia according to Chandran (2007, p.170) has a 'Look East' policy in order to practise a proper work ethic, plus good management to achieve economic success. According to Khadijah (2011, p.430), Mahathir's worldview, political philosophy, style and approach were influenced by his life's experiences:

> British colonial rule as well as the Japanese Occupation (1942-45) had a profound impact on Mahathir's worldview and philosophy of politics. Combined with his experience growing up in semi-rural Kedah State (unlike his three predecessors, who had aristocratic childhoods), this contributed to producing an abrasive,

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[36] In all the states, Malaysia is blessed with ethnic diversity comprising Malays, Chinese, Indians and aboriginal groups of people such as Orang Asli, Negritos and Senoi. There are also other ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak, such as Iban, Kadazan, Bajau and Muru.

combative character and a tenacious will, traits that proved to be both strengths and liabilities for Mahathir. Such a makeup also contributed to his penchant for interpreting the global environment in polarized, ideologically laden terms: 'black or white', East versus West, North versus South. These traits helped prompt his rather anti-Western orientation.

However, this separation seems very much influenced by differences in the patterns of multi-ethnic diversity and in political ideologies. Malays are the majority in Malaysia followed by minorities: Chinese, Indian and others. Singapore has a Chinese majority with substantial Malay and Indian minorities. These differences can be seen in terms of democratic practices based on ruling parties, population, ethnicity, media involvement and national ideologies (Mahathir 2002, p.188). Dato' Tan Chin Nam (cited in Saw & Kesavapany 2006, p.88) argues that:

> Singapore and Malaysia are trapped by the legacy of the British colonial rule. However, when this is aggravated by leadership style and the growing differences about the perspectives of their respective future, there is no common paradigm (except those arising from international challenges like terrorism) serving as the basis for constructive collaboration.

In terms of religion Islam is the major faith Malaysia. Singapore practises freedom of religion and does not regard any one religion as the main religion. Differences in thinking, attitudes and culture have sometimes put a strain on the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. Ethnic differences have featured in the political ideologies of both countries, mainly in the form of differences in ethnic composition affecting ideological variations. Historical events appear to be one of the reasons that contribute to the separation and declination of the political ideologies.

3.1.2 Differences in Political Ideologies

Political and leadership factors in any country may contribute to the way news is constructed and structured. Both Malaysia and Singapore, as a consequence of their colonial past, inherited the basic democratic institutions of the British political tradition (Means 1996, p.103). Political ideologies contributed to the growing pains in the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. For instance, Malaysian politics evolved as a result of the earlier grassroots movement before independence in 1957. This point has been addressed by the media in Malaysia as a huge influence on the relationship between both countries.

Different political ideologies derive from different ruling political parties in Malaysia and Singapore. The UMNO (United Malays National Organization) is the largest political party in Malaysia. As a member of the Barisan Nasional coalition, UMNO has played a dominant role in Malaysia since independence. Malaysia has had prominent Malay leaders like Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak and Mahathir. Meanwhile, Singapore was ruled by the People's Action Party (PAP) before the separation, and from 1959 until now. Singapore also has had very strong Chinese leaders such as Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong, and now Prime Minister Lee Hsein Loong, the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew. Lee Kuan Yew has a different view about UMNO. This was described in the speech given during his wife's obituary[37]. Differences in ideologies are not only seen in party names but also in the dominant races: Malay and Chinese.

Leaders in Malaysia and Singapore, according to Rodan (2004, p.2), practise authoritarianism in order to strengthen their hold on power:

> Authoritarianism in Singapore and Malaysia seemed capable of reproducing itself for the foreseeable future. In these countries, the middle class has been more a force for regime consolidation than regime change, while international capital also appeared content to operate within authoritarian frameworks – including international media organisations within which self-censorship had become extensive.

The mechanism of control and establishing the power structure is similar in both countries. Rodan (2004) asserts that authoritarianism fosters government messages and promotes economic objectives. Both countries have implemented an authoritarian administration of their media outlets. Rodan (2004, p.1) claims that:

> Authoritarian regimes are characterised by a concentrations of power and the obstruction of serious political competition with, or scrutiny of that power. The free flow of ideas and information is therefore an anathema to authoritarian rule. Almost by definition, authoritarian regimes involve censorship. This doesn't mean, however, that mass media and other publicly available sources of information and analysis are necessarily discouraged. On the contrary, sophisticated authoritarian regimes harness these to propagate their own messages and to promote economic objectives. Yet in such cases considerable selectivity still exists in what media content and other expressions and information in the public domain are tolerated.

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[37] Part of Lee Kuan Yew's speech during his wife's obituary: "she had an uncanny ability to read the character of a person. She would sometimes warn me to be careful of a certain person; often, she turned out to be right. When we were about to join Malaysia, she told me that we would not succeed because the UMNO Malays leaders had such different lifestyles and because their politics were manually-based, on race and religion" (The Star 2010).

The trend of authoritarian administration is long term. Even two decades ago, Case (1996) and Faruqi and Ramanathan (1998) observed that state power is strong and remains to this day. Faruqi and Ramanathan (1998) assert that the parallels between authoritarian rule in Malaysia and Singapore are strong, with many similar techniques deployed to limit, fundamentally, political competition and the scrutiny of power. Case (1996, p.438) states that Malaysia and Singapore are semi-authoritarian countries and has been described as engaging in liberal participation without electoral contestation. Interest groups and opposition parties are permitted by the government to form but are ignored or suspended in dense webs of patrimonialism or corporatism. Direct opposition to the government's tenure is even more tightly controlled, mainly through the closure of electoral routes to state power (Case 1996, p.438). Moreover, both countries have curbed freedom of expression by enforcing firm legislation on the media, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Faruqi & Ramanathan 1998).

Apart from ethnic differences, Malaysia and Singapore also have different governmental approaches with different political ideologies. While Malaysia practised parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy, Singapore inclined towards a democratic republic. Means (1970, p.392) claims that both Malaysia and Singapore practised authoritarianism under prominent former Prime Ministers: Mahathir Mohamed (Malaysia) and Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore). Both leaders were political rivals and their legacies persist. Despite their authoritarian character though, people in each country still have a high regard for them. In fact, they have been portrayed as important patriots who have contributed immensely to the development of their respective countries. However, according to Means (1996, p.103), Singapore and Malaysia generate a debate, not about the survival of democracy, but rather about 'transitions to democracy' as emerging from 'soft authoritarian'. According to Means (1996, pp.103-117), soft authoritarian refers to limited space for democratic practices and participation in democracy is defined by party systems' ability to manage ethnicity, and the role of the media is subject to elaborate political controls, and becomes a component of national ideology. Slater (2003, p.83) describes "soft authoritarian in Malaysia [as referring] to the Malaysian party-state's key institutions have therefore played a complex and dynamic combination of democratic and authoritarian roles for nearly five decades".

As Means (1996) and Slater (2003) convincingly suggest, Malaysia is gradually moving towards democracy and this transition is very much influenced by complex reasons such as the state's relationship with the media and the public (see Chapters One and Two). As such, this transition to democracy in Malaysia is limited due to the tradition of authoritarian administration. On this theme, both countries practice the same framework of parliamentary government which led to the same political experience and shared federal system. According to Turnbull (1989, p.298) "both states have a framework of parliamentary government but were somewhat authoritarian, retaining colonial emergency regulations which imposed restrictions on the individual". Turnbull (1989, p.298) claims that, "both Malaysia and Singapore had a fairly stable political organization, a good administrative infrastructure, and a reasonably effective and independent judiciary". However, Turnbull (1989, p.298) argues that "Malaysia was the more democratic, with a federal system of checks and balances and a judiciary which acted as a challenge to the emergence of powerful central leadership" compared to Singapore.

An additional, strong reason for the separation was caused by the dominant ethnic groups in both countries; they demonised each other. For example the Malays and Chinese are economic and social status rivals. Moreover, the ethnic character of political power between Malaysia with UMNO (Malays), and Singapore which is dominated by the PAP (Chinese) strained their relationship. Both offered privileges and protections to particular ethnic groups. For example the Chinese in Singapore became the major contributors to its economy while in Malaysia, even though the Chinese were major contributors, had to ensure the Malays having their privileges protected by the constitution.

Achieving mutual tolerance seems to be the key element in this relationship so as not to jeopardize harmony between the two countries. Yet to what extent do both countries tolerate one group's ethnic domination? What if it jeopardizes the sovereignty of a country? The leaders of Malaysia and Singapore strive to establish good political relations with their people, especially their own ethnic group, in order to gain power or maintain the status quo. Both must have good regional and international relationships, especially when dealing with neighbouring countries. Both leaders (Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew) perceived things differently when it came to bilateral, critical issues

between their two countries. Despite all the challenges with Singapore, Malaysia is still experimenting politically, even after 55 years of independence. The two countries could perform better in terms of economic growth and developing a comprehensive relationship. In order to be economically stable, it is important to ensure that the local political and international political situations are stable.

I argue that successive governments have viewed control of the media as an important part of achieving this public good. Media professionals have had to work within the constraints of this political reality and as such have adopted forms of journalism, including development journalism of the so-called 'Asian journalism' model that allows them to accommodate these politics in principle as well as practice. Therefore, this critical public good is achieved through control of the media in both countries.

According to Lin (2003) the media in both countries has been seen as a mediator in discussing other news areas such as bilateral issues. However, reporting on a sensitive issue which is racially motivated is not encouraged. The media in Singapore is controlled by a government-owned conglomerate. Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), and MediaCorp dominate all local print and broadcast media[38]. Both are touted as privately owned entities even though their managements are linked to the government and generally hold a pro-government stance. One member of the current board of directors, Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam[39] was previously a Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore. His knowledge and experience is likely to significantly contribute to decisions about news reporting on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship.

3.1.3 Similar Media Pathways

Media practices in Malaysia and Singapore have shared the same history and have evolved with many transitions, faced many challenges, influence by different rulers' practices and policies. Historically the media in Malay[si]a had been controlled by

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[38] SPH has a 20% stake in MediaCorp TV Holdings Pte Ltd, which operates free-to-air channels 5, 8 and U, and a 40% stake in MediaCorp Press Limited, which publishes the free newspaper *Today*. In the radio business, SPH has an 80% stake in SPH UnionWorks Pte Ltd, which operates entertainment stations Radio 100.3 in Chinese and 91.3FM in English. Available: http://www.sph.com.sg/aboutsph_profile.shtml.
[39] Dr Tan was the Deputy Prime Minister and Co-ordinating Minister for Security and Defence before he stepped down from the Cabinet on 1 September 2005. He helmed the Finance, Trade and Industry, Education and Defence ministries. He stepped down from the Cabinet in 1991 to return to the private sector as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation, before rejoining the Cabinet in 1995. Available: http://sph.listedcompany.com/directors.html.

different colonial masters for example, the British (1786-1957) and the Japanese (1942-1945).

Under British colonial rule and during the Japanese occupation, the media in Malaysia was largely controlled by the state. Newspapers were subjected to licensing and censorship conducted by the British colonial administration (Mustafa Kamal 2000, p.99); see for example, Lent (1977b). The phases of media transition in dealing with government constraints were evident before British colonial rule ended. The first phase began in the early 1800s when the media was used to disseminate the agenda of Malaysia's colonial masters. The first newspaper – *The Prince of Wales Island Gazette* – was published in English in 1805, followed by the *Universal Gazette* 1828 (Mohd Safar 1992; Syed Arabi 1989). As reflected by their names, these publications were there primarily "to serve the business community and the expatriates of the colonial government" (Hoo 2000, p.118). Following these, hundreds of newspapers in different languages were published, but all faced another hurdle when the Japanese took over Malaya. During their occupation in 1942-1945, the Japanese installed privately-owned newspapers and banned all existing publications, resulting in the first rigid censorship of newspapers (Mustafa Kamal 2000; Syed Arabi 1989). The Japanese relegated the existing media to 'cold storage', whilst publishing their own newspapers, disseminating their political propaganda – 'Asia is for Asia' – supporting their sphere of influence and promoting Asian resistance to European rule. This political ideology eventually affected the growth and trends in press practices in Malaya.

After the Japanese left in 1945, the British controlled the press again, and during that time focused on freeing the country from Communist threats (Syed Arabi 1989, p.44). They imposed strict controls as outlined in the *Sedition Ordinance and the Printing Presses* in 1948 as a counter-insurgency measure. In the 1950s the press played an important role in helping the country gain independence. It managed to inculcate a spirit of nationalism in society, and its role changed from serving colonial masters to setting the country free. When Malaysia obtained independence the people of Malaya wanted a Malayan identity. Many Malay journalists become prominent in the fight for independence (Hoo 2000, p.120). Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.99) supports the view that the "press restrictions in the colonial days took on a different garb following Malaya's independence".

Following independence the media developed as the nation itself grew and this led to new challenges. For example, media practitioners brought 'development journalism' into being. Media were seen as part of the government machinery, and became collaborative partners in developing the country. Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.99) argues that "the importance of the mass media, particularly radio and newspapers, gained prominence given the government's preference that they should be useful tools of national development". These phases of transition paved the way for current practices where media organizations work hand-in-hand with the government in order to maintain the country's harmony and stability.

As noted before, the ethnic riots of May 1969 fundamentally changed the media's role as partner of government[40] (National Operations Council 1969). Prior to this particular incident, the media had more freedom when it worked together with the government in fighting the Communists in the late 1950s and early 1960s[41]. However, when the ethnic crisis took place in 1969 the media was controlled by a number of rules and regulations such as the Internal Security Act (ISA)[42] and Official Secret Act (OSA)[43]. In fact, media publications were suspended for two days after the incident by the state government in order to calm the crisis (Mohd Safar 2004, p.274). During that time no media outlets were allowed to write or publish any stories on the incident that could trigger any racial disharmony. The media landscape immediately after the incident remained largely the same. Despite the challenges and struggles faced by the media, the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were important decades, which saw the media being employed by the government to develop Malaysia as a nation. For example, as argued by Ahmad Murad

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[40] This is the official version of the May 13 tragedy issued by the National Operations Council (NOC) – 9th October 1969.

[41] Media role during the period of emergency and post-13 May incident - Available:
http://www.penerangan.gov.my/index.php/en/organisation-profile/history.html

[42] Malaysia's Internal Security Act – ISA 1960 (Act 82) provides for the internal security of Malaysia, preventive detention, the prevention of subversion, the suppression of organised violence against persons and property in specified areas of Malaysia, and for matters incidental thereto. Available: http://www.anfrel.org/mission_data/ISA%20-%20Malaysia.pdf.

[43] Malaysia's Official Secret Act 1972 came into force in 1972, and it is a broadly-worded law that entrenches a culture of secrecy in all matters relating to public administration. It contains a very ample package of broadly framed prohibitions which effectively obstruct the free flow of information from official sources. These prohibitions are backed by severe criminal sanctions and the State is armed with extensive powers which enhance its ability to detect infringements and secure convictions under the Act. The State holds the prerogative to withhold an expansive range of information from public view. This prerogative is placed firmly beyond judicial scrutiny. In addition, the Act grants the State extensive powers to intrude in and interfere with private speech.
Available: http://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/malaysia-official-secrets-act-sept-2004.pdf

(1987, p.104), much of the news content in the 1970s was on national development projects.

It is important to highlight the similar media controls that the governments of Malaysia and Singapore exerted. Prior to separation most of the Malaysian printing operations were transferred from offices in Singapore to Kuala Lumpur: *The Straits Times* in 1956, *Berita Harian* in 1957, and *Utusan Melayu* in 1958 (Mohd Safar 2004, p.231). However, a large number of shareholders remained in Singapore. This caused 'adjustments' in ownership, publication and management (Hoo 2000, p.119). Although the media organizations in Malaysia and Singapore developed in different ways, they still faced similar issues in terms of control, laws, regulations and ownership. Rodan (2004, p.18) believes that the media in Malaysia has the same controls as Singapore's:

> The neutralisation of independent and critical media was integral to the establishment of authoritarian regimes in Singapore and Malaysia respectively; with the initial focus very much on domestic media. There were many similarities in the mechanisms deployed to achieve this, including the use of security laws and official secrets acts to intimidate journalists and editors, as well as annual licensing laws that meant the spectre of official retribution was a perennial problem for publishers and distributors alike.

Issues on licensing and annual permit were seen as suppressing the Malaysian media and it is a controversy that is difficult to avoid. However, Lily Zubaidah (1999, p.50), claims that the media in Singapore face more problems than those outlets in Malaysia:

> ...information is tightly controlled in Singapore and this is likely to be qualitatively relaxed in the near future. Additionally, the Malaysian government has assured international telecommunication firms that there would be no censorship within the vicinity of the MSC, an assurance that is not likely to be extended by the Singaporean government.

Rodan (2004, p.26), claims that political parties in both countries were involved in censorship and control:

> Both the authorities and the major political parties within the ruling coalition thus had available to them a range of avenues through which to discourage critical journalism or close scrutiny of the way political power was exercised in Malaysia. However, the extent to which these were utilised varied according to prevailing political circumstances. In that respect, the regime of controls was less rigid than in Singapore where more constant official vigilance against critics was characteristic. Pockets of resistance to the government's controls still existed in

Malaysia, occasionally probing social and political issues in ways no longer to be found in the city-state.

Therefore, both countries actually share the same mechanisms of media control through the pervasive influence of ownership of media organizations.

3.2 Issues between Malaysia and Singapore

The Malaysia and Singapore relationship – through Malaysian eyes – can be viewed through an analysis of news media coverage of shared issues. Analyses of journalism practices in Malaysia, especially in helping the government to manage the expectations and risks of the relationship, are therefore critical to an understanding of Malaysian news construction of the regional relationship. Apart from this, the government has to focus on issues raised by the media, and this in turn consolidates the pervasive social and political power of media organizations.

The most outstanding issues that have impacted on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship and have been discussed in the media are listed below:

1) Relationship/ties;
2) The bridge;
3) Water shortage;
4) Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih);
5) Defence, security and borders issues;
6) Economic and business;
7) Social and education;
8) Entertainment, culture and tourism; and
9) Others

These issues are explained in more detail below:

Relationship/Ties: This is an important category for historical reasons. The relationship between Malaysia and Singapore began in the fourteenth century according to the Malay Annals[44]. The Annals describe how the Malay Sultanate of Malacca in fifteenth

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[44] Malay Annals. Available: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/533018/Sejarah-Melayu

century was founded by Parameswara, a prince from Palembang who fled from there to Temasek (a former name of Singapore) and later founded Malacca and established a dynasty. During that period, besides Malacca, Temasek (renamed it Singhapura - City of Lion in Sanskrit) was a well-known centre of economic activity within the Malay archipelago where all ships from Arabs, Palembang, China, Parsi, and Europe stopped to trade. Until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Temasek (Singapore) remained a major attraction for export and import of goods. This legacy continued until the nineteenth century. At certain points most of the trade of Malaya was conducted in Singapore. After the British granted independence in 1957, the major administrations in Malaya were gradually moved to Kuala Lumpur. The relationship remained intact even after the separation when both countries implemented their own economic strategies.

When both countries agreed to separate, they developed different views on assets which belonged to Malaya before independence. To maintain the relationship, Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew decided to resolve issues as they arose. Unfortunately, important contentions still remained and especially under Abdullah Badawi and Najib. The Points of Agreement (POA) [45] negotiated by Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew included, as listed by Chandran (2007, p.228):

- The constructions of a new bridge to replace the old causeway.
- Malaysia would guarantee a continued supply of water to Singapore.
- Recent claims on the island dispute Pedra Branca.
- Defence, security and border issues such as the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore air force, the location of Malaysian customs in Singapore territory, and Keretapi Tanah Melayu or Malayan Railway (Keppel Railway road) on Singapore land.

The relevance and significance of POA to Malaysia has still not been realized. Chandran (2007, p.228), suggests that:

> Tun Daim[46] too does not consider the POA to be of 'treaty' status but simply points of agreement between the two Governments signed by him and Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister of Singapore in November 1990. The POA remains unimplemented to this day. The entire strikes an outside observer as highly

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[45] Lee also listed the same issues are tied together with water such as:
- the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore's air force,
- the withdrawal of Central Provident Funds (CPF) by West Malaysians,
- the location of Malaysia's customs, immigration and quarantine facilities,
- the development of the Malayan Railway land in Singapore,
- construction of a bridge to replace the present causeway (Lee 2003, p.6).

[46] Tun Daim was previously the Finance Minister during Mahathir and served the cabinet from 1984 until 1991.

irregular since, apart from KTM official, not a single one of the relevant Governments agencies, including Wisma Putra, was involved in (or even kept informed of) the negotiations and the matter appeared to have been treated like a purely commercial deal.

The Crooked Bridge (also known as the Scenic Bridge): Both countries tried to resolve this economic conflict where the second link created congestion and the issue needed to be resolved immediately[47]. Malaysia and Singapore devised an early agreement (MoU) on the bridge in 1988. When the plan to build a new bridge was scrapped during Abdullah Badawi's administration in 2006, both countries took a stand in order not to worsen their relationship even if it jeopardized both sides' economies. Dato N. Parameswaran, the Malaysian High Commissioner in Singapore, said that "the decision to abort the bridge is not a blow to bilateral relations. Malaysia-Singapore relations are based on strong fundamentals. The decision although unfortunate, will not affect bilateral relations. It will not put a halt to bilateral talks on other outstanding issues" (NST cited in Saw & Kesavapany 2006, p.88).

The water shortage: The water issue has been ongoing since the separation as Singapore needs a water supply and depends on Malaysia for it. Malaysia gave a secure agreement to supply water to Singapore until 2061[48]. Despite the contract, the issue is causing tensions as Singapore claims that Malaysia is using the water issue to hinder it, as described by Lee, PO (2003, p.4):

> Singapore has been depending on Malaysia for nearly forty percent or more of its water supply. The importance of water to the Republic, economically and otherwise, cannot be questioned, and the historical and present role of Malaysia in assuaging this aspect of Singapore's vulnerability has been nothing less than crucial until recent years. The issue of supplying water to Singapore has, at times, been brought to the forefront of the Malaysian and Singapore political arena. This can be traced to as early as 1965, the year when Singapore was separated from Malaysia.

The water shortage is part of the Points of Agreement (POA), which involves issues like Malayan Railway land in Singapore and other outstanding matters.

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[47] In April 1998, the "Second Link" – a new bridge linking Tuas in Singapore with Tanjung Kupang in Johor that the two countries had agreed to build in 1994 – was formally declared open by the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore (Chandran, 2007,p.289).
[48] Two water agreements signed between Malaysia and Singapore in 1961 and 1962 are in force up to 2011 and 2061 respectively (Lee, 2003,p.7)

Pedra Branca (also known as Pulau Batu Putih): The island dispute between Malaysia and Singapore is a longstanding issue. Chandran (2007, p.260) describes issues about the ownership of Pulau Batu Putih as part of a wider border control controversy that both countries referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). After several years of disagreement over the ownership, in 2008 Singapore was given authority to manage the small island. The long battle on this issue embittered the relationship for many years as the islet was seen as an asset by both countries.

Defence, security and border issues: There are also many enduring defence, security and border issues, such as the intrusion of the Singapore air force into Malaysian airspace. These issues have not been resolved for many years even during Mahathir's time and some are still pending today, and recur as media items[49]. Ganesan (1998, p.22) asserts:

> Immediately after independence, Singapore's relationship with Malaysia continued to be turbulent. The tensions were exaggerated by the presence of residual elements of the Royal Malay Regiment stationed in Singapore and existence of a Malaysian naval base (KD Malaya) in Woodlands, Singapore. The Malay regiment was withdrawn from Singapore, but KD Malaya continued to operate with approval from the Singapore government. Singapore's decision in 1967 to set up its own Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) contributed to the deteriorating relationship. The SAF, which received Israeli assistance during its formative years adopted the military doctrine and used the training methods and equipment of the Israelis. Singapore approached Israel, however, only after India and Egypt had declined similar requests. Malaysia regarded with particular suspicion the Israeli doctrine of forward defence to create the strategic depth necessary to deal with military conflict.

Another longstanding issue concerns Keppel Road railway station in Singapore, owned by Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) before the separation. KTM is the main railway operator in Malaysia. The land for the station and the KTM railway tracks in Singapore was granted to KTM on a 999-year lease (The Sun 1997). The dispute began because the station was located at Tanjong Pagar. In the 1960s there was no border security when Singapore left Malaysia. When the two countries established border controls, the Malaysian and Singaporean Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) officers were stationed at Tanjong Pagar for immigration clearance for railway passengers. Road

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[49] **M'SIA-S'PORE AGREE TO GO BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE**, Jan 12 (BERNAMA) Other sources of tension include the price of water Malaysia supplies to Singapore, a prospective bridge linking the countries, the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore military aircraft and ownership of Pulau Batu Puteh Available: http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do

travelers clear immigration on the Malaysian side of the causeway and at Woodlands, Singapore upon entry to Singapore. In this case, the CIQ of both countries operates separately and yet remain at the same location.

Economic and business issues: Economic and business issues have always been major bones of contention. For Malaysia and Singapore these issues started during the economic downturn in 1997. Most South East Asian countries applied to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support their economies. Malaysia, under Mahathir, on the other hand, rejected the IMF and developed its own plan to resolve economic problems. The reasons were complex[50]. Unlike Malaysia, Singapore allowed the IMF to help stabilize its economy. The IMF was seen as a new type of control from the West. The difference in the approaches to the economic downturn strained the relationship between the two countries. It has been claimed that economic competition was not the main issue here. As Lin (2003, p.265) asserts "in the medium term, the size of Malaysia's port business does not pose a major challenge to Singapore as Singapore Port (PSA) has been consistently voted the best container terminal operator in Asia for thirteen years with more than 250 shipping lines calling at the port".

Social and education issues: This refers particularly to education news between both countries and, the project to boost the education sector. However, not many issues have been raised in this category by the media. For example, there was an issue on the statement made by Lee Kuan Yew that crime rates had increased in the state of Johor, and this has evidently increased feedback and responses by political individuals in Malaysia (details of the story see page 139).

Entertainment, culture and tourism issues: This concerns the cultural celebrations, festivals, joint programmes, and Independence Day celebrations observed in both countries, and sometimes jointly celebrated in both countries. During these celebrations

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[50] As the speculative assault on the Asian economies unfolded, Mahathir made clear that Malaysia would not accept IMF help, due to what he claimed were the destructive conditions placed on all IMF loans. However, Anwar, as Finance Minister, announced a budget in October 1998 which was recognized worldwide as "an IMF program without the IMF." Sounding every bit like an IMF representative, Anwar told *The Wall Street Journal* in December 1997, "We have reached a stage where we must undertake further strategic but painful measures to strengthen the nation's resilience so that we can withstand any systemic risks. We'll have to take the tough measures if we want to help ourselves". Available: http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2004/book_reviews/3132malaysia_v_imf.html.

it is common to see many Malaysians and Singaporeans cross the frontier, and visit relatives and friends in both countries.

Other issues: This refers to news on sports and other issues.

Despite the above mentioned issues and conflicts these neighbouring countries have common concerns especially in boosting the regional economy in South East Asia. There is a mutual understanding that the relationship needs to be properly managed and both countries need to put their conflicts into perspective and this means maintaining a symbiotic relationship between the media and the state. It is assumed that the relationship is more than just a government-to-government one in that it involves the media and the people[51]. Lee, PO (2003, p.29) asserts:

> The leadership in both countries would have to deal with the problem in a rational and pragmatic manner in the realisation that their actions today will impact on the future course of ties between the governments and the peoples of both Malaysia and Singapore. Indeed Singapore and Malaysia have reached a level of political maturity to realise that the fate of both countries are intertwined, and that their economies are very much interdependent.

The importance of media news in the relationship has been discussed earlier, including the role news reporting plays in shaping people's perceptions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how media reports such conflicts and why they highlight it in the news. In this case I chose to study how BERNAMA news online reports on these issues.

3.3 Why Choose BERNAMA Online News?

The online news reported by BERNAMA[52], the Malaysian news agency, provides the best platform for data collection. As a national gatekeeper of the regional and international news, BERNAMA seems to have had a critical role in defining and shaping national perceptions of Malaysian foreign affairs and international relationships. BERNAMA news articles reflect respect for authority and the influences of the country's leadership, thus providing a clear example of development journalism in Malaysia. BERNAMA's online news was chosen for ease of access to data, and

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[51] 'Remarks to the Media by Minister S Jayakumar in Response to Dr Mahathir's Statement that Senior Minister had Come to KL and Discussed Price of Current Water', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore*, 28 December 2002. Available: http://app.Internet.gov.sg/scripts/mfa/sections/press/report_press.asp?1735

[52] BERNAMA is the acronym for *Berita Nasional Malaysia* or Malaysian National News. Available: http://www.bernama.com.

because BERNAMA is Malaysia's official national news agency. BERNAMA is the main source[53] and endorsed news provider regarding any news on Malaysia to the outside world. BERNAMA is thus the official news provider on issues pertaining to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. Other national and mainstream newspapers in Malaysia are not permitted to publish the news at the international level. For example, *The New Straits Times*, one of the mainstream media newspapers, subscribes to BERNAMA for local and international news.

Most of the Malaysian media are BERNAMA subscribers, and all news on Malaysia internationally is provided by BERNAMA nationwide. Therefore, BERNAMA has a significant readership compared to the rest of the mainstream media. BERNAMA's readership includes government agencies, government servants, researchers, news agencies, journalists and media organizations. These readerships fit the decision-makers and power elites' profiles[54]. BERNAMA seems to be the link between the Malaysian government and newspaper organizations (Mansor, AS 1983; Mohd Safar 1998). The role of BERNAMA is similar to other international news agencies such as Associated Press, Reuters, and United Press. BERNAMA started its website and online newspaper in 1998 (see www.bernama.com). It has expanded by providing websites in Mandarin and Arabic. The format of this online newspaper is similar to the traditional newspaper and reports current news on Malaysia to the outside world. It has a wide ranging content with special pages featuring special interests, events and organizations.

BERNAMA's major subscribers remain Malaysia's English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil newspapers, including the countries' TV and radio stations. BERNAMA is the leading content provider of up-to-the-minute news, information and photograph updates for newspapers, broadcast stations, global wire services and the internet. BERNAMA is also a major player in the media industry (owning the full range of broadcast media),

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[53] BERNAMA reporting is used by almost all media organisations in Malaysia and also by foreign news agencies and newspapers such as Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Kyodo, and Bloomberg.

[54] To date Malaysia Kini is still the leader in terms of readership hits followed by BERNAMA and Malaysia Today. The Malaysian National News Agency or BERNAMA has its own website which easily registers up to 90 million hits a month. For a news organization that does not have a newspaper, the website serves as an effective platform for BERNAMA to publish its news. The news, which is constantly updated, is read not just by Malaysians especially those living abroad but more importantly by outsiders wanting to keep track of developments in the country. Because of its popularity, BERNAMA is promoting the portal as a center for information for the public and private sectors. Available: http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90002/98666/6929315.html on 10th February 2010.

and is fully owned by the government. It was established as a statutory body, by an Act of Parliament in 1967 (BERNAMA Act 1967) and began operations in May 1968.

My focus is what a study of BERNAMA online news reveals: whether it contains the harmonious reporting elements or otherwise, and how it is perceived by media and policy experts. From this study, harmonious reporting can be seen in the news trend of BERNAMA news and this is further proven in the textual analysis which will be discussed later in this thesis. Apart from BERNAMA's roles as a news agency, it carries out other roles to meet its main objective of reporting the news. These other roles, as stated in the BERNAMA Act (1967) are: firstly, delivering the news to the people when it comes to regional relationships; and secondly, cultivating the spirit of nationalism. These two are mutually exclusive as both contribute to the understanding of a press which delivers the good and bad of news values.

This case study focuses on the online news produced by BERNAMA (Berita Nasional Malaysia), the state-owned news agency which also is also a government instrument. Wong, K (2000, p.128) asserts that among other factors operating to consolidate the pro-government orientation, is the heavy reliance on BERNAMA for material used in news bulletins. Despite issues of ownership and economic competition, the media has been viewed as a major contributor to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. Lin (2003, p.268), claims that:

> The Malaysian media has played an interesting role in negotiations through its coverage of the issues. Although both the governments in Singapore and Malaysia have expressed that these are sensitive issues and should not be negotiated through the media, the tacit approval given for the continued high-profile coverage seems to suggest that the media is used as another channel for negotiation.

Consequently, the Malaysian government needs to shape BERNAMA media strategies so that it maintains regional stability. Three main factors shape the case study:

1. The importance of the structural properties of texts. The persuasiveness of news reports will be analysed in this study, based on the headlines and first and second paragraphs. This analysis of topic and structure will demonstrate how news frames the issues regarding Singapore. In order to understand whether development journalism can offer free reporting of international and regional

news, content analysis and textual analysis of BERNAMA online news have been conducted. Both methods aim to examine the trend and identify the macro position of meaning in the news articles.

2. Apart from structural properties, an analysis of media influence on government and government influence on media are critical factors to consider. As argued by Robinson (cited in Derek 2007, p.15) the factors that contribute to the media government relationship, is that "media pressure would then be understandable as the immediate factor in causing intervention". Since most of the media are owned by the power elites, in the case of Malaysia these elites constitute the government and the politicians. The media have to conform to their demands and such intervention is considered common.

3. The intervention of leaders in the media in Malaysia may also impact on the relationship with Singapore in a different way. This is a more difficult feature for analysis but is important to helping us understand what impacts on the framing of the news.

Points (2) and (3) are tested by an account of an empirical study of journalists and media practitioners' attitudes, documented in the form of in-depth interviews, in Chapter Six. The in-depth interview is used for developing an understanding of the respondent's views on development journalism, freedom of press, how the media works in Malaysia and on the importance of certain issues between Malaysia and Singapore.

Summary

Despite the shared histories, the political structure similarities, there are inescapable issues and differences on economics and political ideologies between Malaysia and Singapore. However, both countries aim to manage their conflicts so that there are good outcomes. It seems that the relationship with Singapore is a crucial one for Malaysia, and BERNAMA's news reports help to define it. The fact that BERNAMA is the main Malaysian reference point for information, both internally and internationally, explains my choice of this agency as the focus of my study.

How has the agenda been set through specific news and issues highlighted especially in the mainstream media like BERNAMA? It is important to understand how BERNAMA

frames the issues on the relationship and to what extent the news has been perceived as an important element that contributes to the harmonious relations of both countries. In other words, the relationship has been portrayed as 'endurance' on the surface by the media, despite the underlying tensions building up through the years[55]. In fact, the news headlines generated by BERNAMA have given different perspectives of the water issue[56].

BERNAMA's role in facilitating the regional relationship will be demonstrated through the first part of analysis content and textual analysis. These analyses indicate the representations from Malaysia's willingness or reluctance in resolving the issues. The analysis will specify the Malaysian government's perspectives on any issues with Singapore. Simultaneously, the issues concerning the Malaysia-Singapore relationship which have been framed by BERNAMA could demonstrate the government's approach and how it deals with Singapore-related issues.

The content analysis of this study will create a greater understanding of the trend and patterns of this relationship. The analysed texts cited from the BERNAMA news online outlet demonstrate the priorities of the relationship. How news impacts on the relationship between both countries will be explained further in analysis in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The next chapter demonstrates the significance of obtaining empirical data from the content analysis.

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[55] PM: "I've Written to Goh on Water Rates", *The Star Online*, 15 October 2002. Available:
http://www.thestar.com.my/services/printerfirendly.asp?file=/2002/10/15/nation/sbwater2.asp&sec=
[56] Let's Continue To Talk Says S'pore, *BERNAMA Online* 31 October 2002. Available:
http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=29797&tid=58&cid=2.

CHAPTER FOUR

BERNAMA ONLINE NEWS COVERAGE ON THE MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE RELATIONSHIP

The key to understanding content analysis and performing it competently lies in understanding the meaning of objective, systematic, quantitative, and manifest content (Stempel 1989, p.125).

The aim of this chapter to develop understandings from the case study of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship as it is shaped through BERNAMA news reports. The case study of BERNAMA online news coverage on Malaysia and Singapore relationship has been chosen to demonstrate how Malaysian development journalism practices harmonious reporting. Despite the fact that Singapore is one of the most developed city states in the world, its media control in the country is central to illustrate development journalism practices. Based on the research done by Cenite, Yee, Juan, Qin and Lin (2008, p. 280) that:

> …the favorable coverage toward the government also points to presence of some aspects of the development model. By following the agenda of the government and casting it in a favorable light, Singapore's dominant newspaper (The Straits Times) exhibited characteristics of development journalism.

Cenite et al. (2008, p.290) also claimed that the Singapore government exercises certain press controls "though strict licensing policies under the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act (2002), and may resort to other laws to control the press". Singapore is thus practising similar media policies and press practice to Malaysia.

Therefore, this chapter presents an analysis of the first part of the findings from the content analysis to understand the news trend as published by BERNAMA and has contributed to the relationship. The content analysis method was chosen to examine the overall trend of BERNAMA online coverage of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. Its main objective are; 1) to identify the trend of news reporting and illustrate how journalists still attempted to maintain harmonious reporting through their writing under different administrations (prime ministers); 2) to identify which issues have received significant attention by the media. Under the analysis of changing government's administration, despite the challenge with the economic factors, political transformation and the social unity, the journalist still get through the dispute and

making national development even stronger. Using the results of the trend analysis concerning selected online news on Malaysia-Singapore relations, a textual analysis was then conducted to describe the how this relationship is presented. Both content and textual analyses use the same type of data. However, the process and procedures are defined differently in order to achieve the aims as set out in the introductory chapter.

A total of 497 news articles on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship were identified in BERNAMA online news from 1996 to 2008. These items were coded according to news issues (relationship; bridge; water; Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih); defence and security and borders; economy and business; social and education; entertainment – culture and tourism; and others). These news issues were identified to describe the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. BERNAMA news articles was selected to assess how the reporting may have helped influence the relationship through trends in the reporting of Malaysian and Singaporean issues. BERNAMA news online items are used as the unit of analysis to identify the news trend. The chapter includes a full account of methodology.

4.1 Why Content Analysis?

Based on the above perspectives on news trend, in this thesis, content analysis method will show the most important issues highlighted and who become the main agenda setters. I refer to BERNAMA as the national news agency and whether it has played a role as the agenda setter through the news trend. As a mainstream media organization, BERNAMA also undertakes its other role as an international news provider. By studying the news context of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship, I identify who sets the news agenda and vice-versa based on the sources. For example, the agenda being set through BERNAMA news may cast a different light on who sets the agenda. Cohen (1963, p.13), argues that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about". Cohen (1963) statement is based on Lippmann's (1922) later idea of the world outside and the pictures that form in our heads. Cohen (1963) suggests that the media may wield direct or indirect influence. Rogers (1994, p.124) has argued that "the amount of news coverage accorded an issue by the media might indeed lead audience individuals to rate such an issue as more important". Based on empirical evidence by

scholars on agenda setting, this study identifies issues that have been perceived as important to the media and government.

Babbie (1998, p.5) defines the quantitative method as a method of describing and explaining phenomena using numerical representation. This method is significant to analyse the news trend and to understand the meaning of texts as an effective medium to shape populations perceptions. Therefore, content analysis is used to analyse and describe news trend quantitatively. Content analysis as described by Berelson (1952, p.18) as a research technique for the "objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication". Meanwhile, Stempel (1989, p.124) argues that "content analysis is a formal system for doing something that we all do informally rather than frequently, drawing conclusions from observations of content". Influenced by Berelson's work, Stempel (1989, p.125) also adds that "the key to understanding content analysis and performing it competently lies in understanding the meaning of objective, systematic, quantitative, and manifest content". Stempel (1989, p.127) also suggests that the procedure of content analysis should include the "selection of the unit analysis, category construction, sampling of content and reliability of coding". A more precise definition is given by Krippendorf (2004, p.18) as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". Content analysis is therefore a systematic analysis which takes certain procedures in order to find any direct outcomes of research and thus this research puts more stress on the sampling used as it aims to examine the trends of the online news, see for example: Janowitz (1968; 1976); Riffe and Freitag (1997); and Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005).

4.2 The Process and Procedures

Using content analysis technique, I focused on selecting issues reported by BERNAMA online with reference to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship.

BERNAMA online news is used in this process with the following objectives:

- To document overall trends of the reporting of the Malaysia-Singapore relationship from news between 1996 and 2008.

- To analyse the major concerns/issues based on the trends shown through online reporting involving different prime ministers, in this case Mahathir and Abdullah.

Samples of articles were taken from the online archives of BERNAMA news articles for a thirteen-year period; from January 1996 to October 2008, based on relevance sampling, as explained below. However, for the purpose of this research, the focus will be on the nine years – 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008 – as a chaotic, yet interesting, period to study[57]. Below is a description of the steps taken for content analysis sampling purposes:

Step 1: Existing BERNAMA news articles taken from the content analysis – Sample size – total of 497 from 1996-2008.

Step 2: Selection based on nine important years (1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008). This selection was based on months with odd numbers such as November, September, July, May, March and January.

Step 3: Out of these six months 154 articles have been identified and selected. This steps is used as next approach for Textual Analysis in Chapter Five.

4.3 The Categories

One of the important things in content analysis is categorization. The category construction for this study is based on the 'relationship' and 'ties' keywords. The main concern on the categorical part of this research is on the political, economic and social issues affecting the relationship of Malaysia and Singapore. It is also based on the search keywords used to search for the news online in the BERNAMA website. As Stempel (1989, p.128) points out, the set of categories should emphasize the objectives of the study, should be functional and the system of categories must be manageable. The categories refer to characters of leaders involve in the issues identified on trends analysis. Therefore, this research adopts non-hierarchical categories. According to Krippendorff (2004, p.305), if "content analysis assign coders with any relevant section

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[57] Chaotic period for Malaysia (1997-1998) refers to the economic downturn and Anwar Ibrahim's controversial trial. The years 2001-2005 saw Malaysia undergo a recovery from the economic downturn and the end of Mahathir's administration in 2003. The years 2007-2008 were also defined as chaotic due to the political tsunami that characterised the election of Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi and the overshadowing Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

of text without restrictions, non-hierarchical representations of the original text may result". This research has been conducted according to the main objectives by defining the critical issues about the Malaysia/Singapore relationship from the news headlines.

This produced a sample of 497 news items which were then coded for the news framing based on nine categories: 1) Relationship/ties; 2) Bridge; 3) Water; 4) Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih); 5) Defence, Security and Borders issues; 6) Economic and business; 7) Social and education; 8) Entertainment, culture and tourism; 9) Others (e.g., sports).

As the study concerned about the relationship issues between Malaysia and Singapore, therefore, data gathering began by applying the search criteria to the news agency website according to subject, date and keywords. These criteria were searched in BERNAMA's general news sections and special sections such as archival news and foreign news. The data describes material on the regional relationship in the media coverage. This sampling process is explained in the following steps:

- Search/record is based on the synonyms words (or expressions) to 'relationship issues' of the online news articles. Therefore, the following keywords or terms for 'Malaysia and Singapore relationships', 'ties', 'relations', 'agree', 'attend', 'bilateral', 'cooperate', 'commitment', 'concern', 'conflicts', 'improve', 'work', 'visits', 'argue', 'demands', 'unsatisfied'. For example, 'commitment' is the same type of 'cooperate'. The keyword remains unequivocal (explicit) with the meaning which makes sense or related to the 'relationship issues'. These keywords were based on the top used words in the news headlines on the Malaysia and Singapore from 1996 - 2008.

- The intention is to see the news trend and which issues are the most significant issues in the relationship. Therefore, the search focusses in news article on identified categories of top issues on Malaysia and Singapore relationship 1) Relationship/ties; 2) Bridge; 3) Water shortage; 4) Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih); 5) Defence, Security and Borders issues; 6) Economic and business; 7) Social and education; 8) Entertainment, culture and tourism; 9) Others (sports).

- Record the total of news according to the issues and the sources of the news. This step involves a compilation of raw data categorized into years.

- Next the data was transformed into tables and figures to indicate a trend. This procedure is part of visualising the content analysis and involves the first steps of quantitative analysis through description and expressions in percentages.

4.4 The Coding

The coding system uses coding forms completed by the coders according to the procedures and steps proposed by Graber (2004). According to Graber (2004, p.53) the "analysis procedure of contents needs a systematic and coherent coding where a coding form is used. Using trained human coders to identify textual elements is still the most common content analysis approach". These were the steps taken for coding procedure in this study:

- Record all news on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship involving political conflict issues (e.g. water, Pedra Branca) in news articles by focusing on identified categories.
- Record the total of news items according to the issues and news sources.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

According to Krippendorff (2004, p.18), "the methodological requirements of reliability and validity are not unique but to make particular demands on content analysis". This research undertakes the reliability test by using two coders - the first coder is myself and the second coder is a postgraduate student in communication studies.

Holsti (1969) coefficient is used to measure agreement between the two coders and ensure an acceptable level of inter-coder reliability (Neuendorf 2002, p.42). The formula is as follows:

$$PA_o = 2A / (n_A + n_B)$$

Where A is the number of times the coders agree, and $(n_A + n_B)$ are the total numbers of coding decisions made by each other. Most study using content analysis typically reported a reliability coefficient of 0.90 or greater using Holsti's formula (Wimmer & Dominick 2010, p.172).

In this study, the inter-coder reliability coefficient for the news directions and news categories were 0.95. The news category reliability coefficient was 1.00. This score is sufficient to demonstrate the reliability of the findings (Wimmer & Dominick 2010, p.172).

In order to determine reliability, 154 articles were chosen randomly and given to the coder according to the categories. This was to ensure consistency of classification of categories. The agreement of categories on the news is based on headlines which clearly mention the issues discussed (refer to Appendix 5 for further discussion of this).

4.6 Findings and Discussions: Content Analysis

The data from content analysis provide empirical evidence for the news trend on the Malaysian media's reporting of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. The general findings from all samples indicate that BERNAMA has framed different issues (agenda) on this relationship. The results of the analysis in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 of BERNAMA online news show that the frame of relationship/ties dominated news reports. Furthermore the data demonstrate a consistent lack of details of controversy and debatable issues in the relationship. Indeed, content analysis indicates that certain agenda frames reveal that the most significant issues are relationship/ties. This appears in news headlines, first leads and second leads of news stories.

The overall trend analysis of news on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship is shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1. This trend was influenced by three important periods in yellow shading: the economic downturn (1997-1998); the transition period (2001-2005); and the general election (2007-2008). These periods were chosen because they represent significant periods many issues characterising them in both countries - politically, socially and economically.

Table 4.1: Total News on Malaysia and Singapore from 1996-2008

	YEARS (RELATIONSHIPS/TIES)		TOTAL NEWS (N)	%
1	1996		41	8.25
2	1997	Economic downturn under Mahathir's administration	35	7.04
3	1998		63	12.68
4	1999		35	7.04
5	2000		32	6.44
6	2001		31	6.24
7	2002		67	13.48
8	2003	Pre- and post-transition period from Mahathir to Abdullah	58	11.67
9	2004		44	8.85
10	2005		15	3.02
11	2006		19	3.82
12	2007	Pre- and post-general election period under Abdullah	26	5.23
13	2008		31	6.24
	Total 1996-2008 (N)		497	100

Table 4.1 shows the number of news stories on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship during these three phases. The largest number occurs during the time of Mahathir. Out of 497 news items during these thirteen years, the highest number of items on Malaysia-Singapore is during the transition period: 67 (13.48%). This period also shows an increasing number of items in 2001: 31 (6.24%) and 2002: 67 (13.48%). However, it drops significantly in the following years - 2003: 58 (11.67%); 2004: 44 (8.85%); and 2005: 15 (3.02%). Meanwhile, in 2005, the data indicates the lowest number: 15 (3.02%), during the pre-Abdullah administration. Before and during the general election under Abdullah's administration, the number of news items on Malaysia-Singapore ties significantly increases to 19 (3.82%) in 2006, 26 (5.23%) in 2007 and 31 (6.24%) in 2008. Thus, the results of the analysis in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 show that more news in this category occurred during Mahathir's prime ministership. The data indicate that in these three periods this kind of news reporting varies according to who was leader at the time.

The first period – 1997 and 1998 – was chosen because, like other countries in the world, Malaysia and Singapore too suffered from the world economic downturn and

faced the insecurity caused by capitalizing funds. It was also one of the most controversial periods in Malaysia when Anwar Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister at that time, was charged with sodomy and corruption, and was sacked from the government in 1998 (Mahathir 2011). Following that, several street demonstrations took place, especially in Kuala Lumpur. Anwar's supporters believed that Anwar was innocent and purely a political victim and this created a state of disorder. Anwar's case not only captured regional but also international attention. Many neighbouring countries, such as Singapore, were concerned about regional security and the political instability in Malaysia at that time.

The second period – 2001 to 2005 – covered the transition of power from Mahathir to Abdullah. The transition of power took place in October 2003. Although the actual transition only began in October 2003, the change had started very much earlier. Therefore, it is important to look back two years (2001 to 2002) before the transition to a very significant period known as the 'pre-transition' years.

And the years 2004 and 2005 were chosen in order to cover this post-transition period under Abdullah's administration. Mahathir had surely planned on his retirement and he waited for the right time to pass the baton to his successor. He planned this quietly as he wrote in his bookMahathir (2011, p.759):

> I did not tell anyone, not even Hasmah (Mahathir's wife). Instead, I prepared letters to the King, the Chief Secretary to the Government and the UMNO Secretary-General in readiness for my public announcement. I wrote the letters by hand as I did not want anyone to see them. I had made up my mind to announce my resignation at the end of the 56th UMNO Annual General Assembly in 2002, when I was to give the closing speech. […] I planned my exit for months. Despite not telling anyone a few friends told me not to resign. […] The only thing I did was to ask my deputy Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi – almost a year before my announcement – whether he was ready to take over. He said he was. But still I did not indicate the actual time I would resign.

Finally, the third period – 2007 to 2008 – was one when the first general election was held under Abdullah's administration. This took place in 2008 and the election campaign news had started to heat up in 2007. However, the number of stories during 2007-2008 was lower than the overall average for the period.

Looking at the news trend in Figure 4.1, we see a totally different number of news on Malaysia - Singapore relations during Abdullah's prime ministership in comparison to Mahathir's.

Figure 4.1: Total News Trend on the Malaysia-Singapore Relationship from 1996-2008
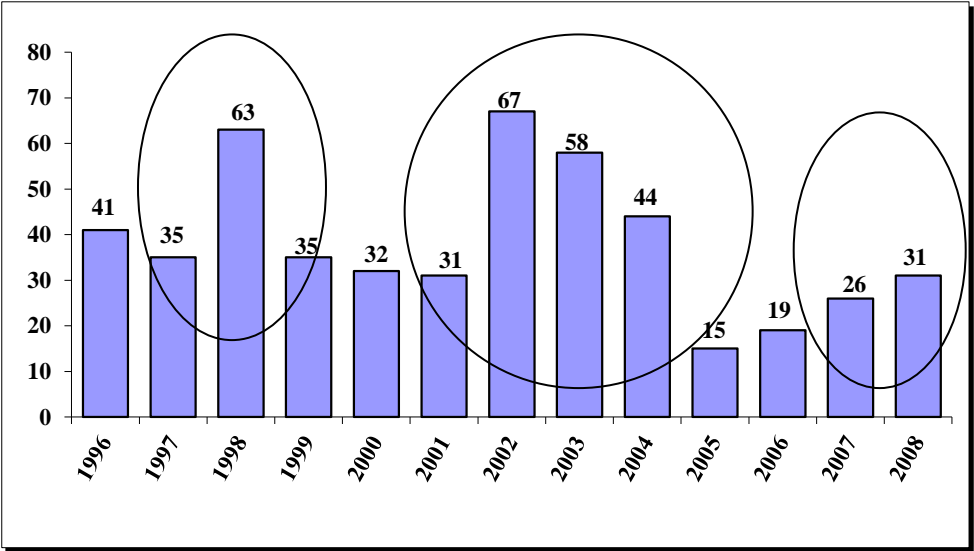
Figure 4.1 shows the number of news – mostly controversial issues – on Malaysia-Singapore. Higher numbers of news were found in 1998, 2002 and 2003. Additionally, Table 4.2 shows most of the news about Malaysia and Singapore concerned the 'relationship' issue: 220 (44.27%); others such as sports: 74 (14.89%); and defence, security and borders: 67 (13.48%). This trend suggests that BERNAMA presents relationship issues as a reflection of the Malaysian government's diplomatic strategies with Singapore.

The data news trends also indicate that, despite the repetitions of issues like the relationship, the bridge and water, more items about the Malaysia - Singapore relationship were published during Mahathir's premiership. The findings also reflect the different styles of leadership of Mahathir and Abdullah[58]. This data show how the political power of leaders can impose limits on free reporting. Mahathir is known as

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[58] Abdullah Ahmad Badawi served as Malaysian Prime Minister from 2003 to 2009.

having been an aggressive and outspoken leader. Reflecting his aggressive leadership style, Malaysia-Singapore relations varied between stormy and frosty, especially when both countries refused to compromise on certain issues like water and the bridge.

During Abdullah's administration, the news trend on the bilateral relationship dropped significantly as issues/conflicts declined in number. The news articles show that many earlier disputed issues had been taken for granted or kept silent about as an easy way out for Abdullah. This resulted from the leadership style of Abdullah Badawi, who was perceived as a mild and calm character compared to Mahathir. Thus the 'roller coaster ride' in the news trends on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship could reflect these opposite leadership styles. The more issues or conflicts between Malaysia and Singapore, the more news items were reported in the media. Mahathir's abrasive persona clearly produced friction[59] between Singapore and Malaysia leading to more extensive news coverage. The findings show that there was more news on Malaysia-Singapore relations during Mahathir's administration compared to Abdullah's.

However, other important issues are significant in the discussion of the relationship, such as defence, security, borders, and others such as sport. As a result the general findings in these thirteen years of news items from BERNAMA are dominated by relationship issues. The results of the analysis in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 of BERNAMA news reports show that 'relationship/ties' are framed as the primary story focus in each representation through thirteen years when compared to other issues or agenda items.

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[59] Mahathir is not the only one who produces friction, as Lee Kuan Yew also provides early episodes of friction, He describes how "Seow's services as a public prosecutor were used to secure the criminal conviction of political opponents of the PAP such as trade unionist Jamit Singh. These events also reveal how Lee's personal interference in the appointments within the judiciary secured for Seow his promotion to solicitor-general. However, these episodes take a sudden twist when the symbiotic relationship between the two deteriorates into a relationship of confrontation. Seow was elected President of the Law Society in 1986 after leaving the public service for private practice in 1980. The confrontation between Lee and Seow began when the Law Society, under the leadership of Seow, began to criticize parliamentary legislation, in particular the proposed Newspaper and Printing Press Amendment. The friction between Lee and Seow increased when the latter stood up to Lee during the Select Committee hearings on proposed amendments to the Legal Professions Act. These events were followed by Seow's involvement in securing the release of the alleged "Marxist Conspirators." The author suggests that the above incidents as well as his desire to contest the 1988 elections were responsible for his eventual detention under the ISA (Seow 1994, p.293).

Table 4.2: Total of News Framed from 1996-2008 by News Categories

	News Categories	No. of News articles	Percentage %
1	Relationship (Rs)	220	44.27
2	Bridge (Br)	7	1.41
3	Water (Wt)	23	4.63
4	Pedra Branca and other island (Pb)	34	6.84
5	Defence, Security and Border (Sand and Land) (Df)	67	13.48
6	Economy and Business (Ec)	48	9.66
7	Social and Education (Se)	13	2.61
8	Entertainment – Culture and Tourism (Et)	11	2.21
9	Others – sports (Os)	74	14.89
	TOTAL	**497**	**100**

Figure 4.2: Total of News Framed from 1996-2008 by News Categories
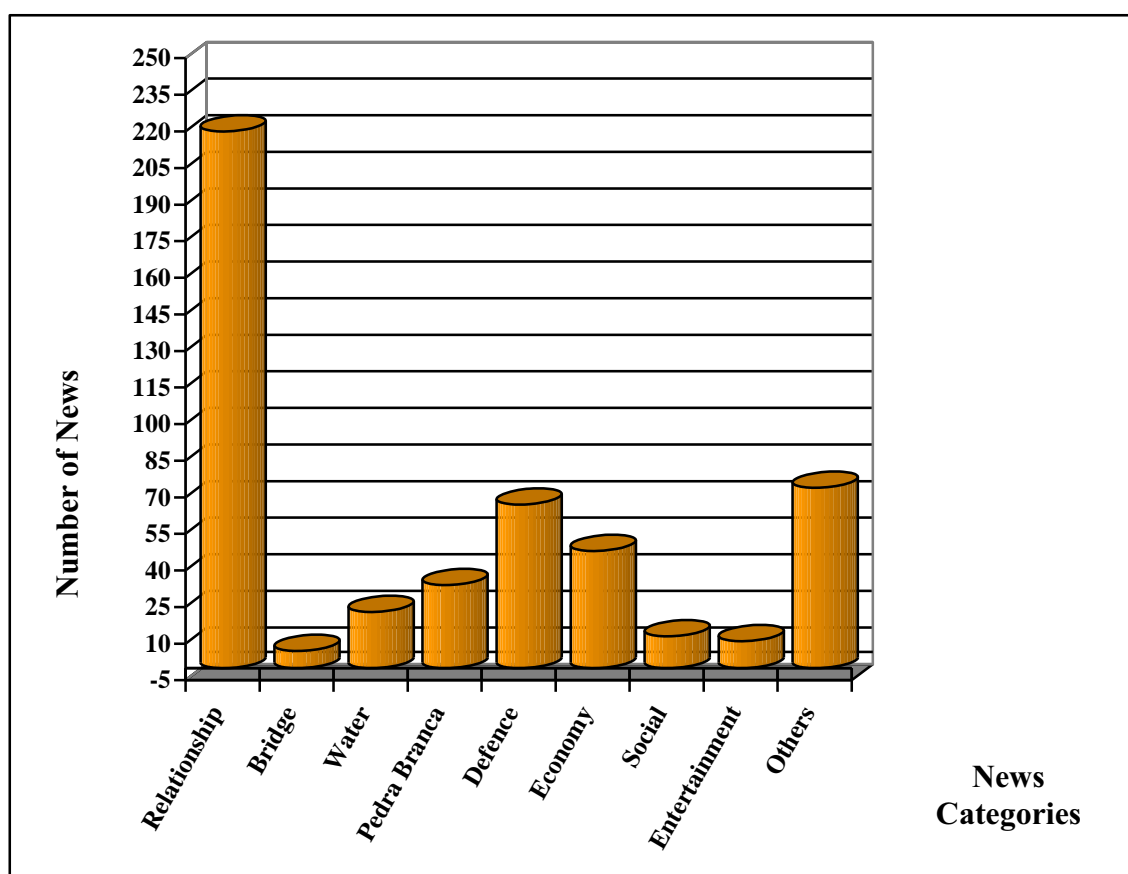
Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 explain how the relationship, such as defence, security, borders, and others such as sports issues have become the main agenda that has been framed by BERNAMA. Despite other issues BERNAMA has used methods to cover other crucial issues by positioning the relationship issues as their main agenda item. This significantly, has shifted the public's perceptions of crucial issues such as water

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and the bridge. Looking at the news framed from 1996 until 2008, the relationship was the main agenda/issue where 220 (44.27%) out of 497 news items have been framed by BERNAMA. The second frequently mentioned issue was 'sports' 74 items (14.89%) and this was followed by 'defence, security and borders' issues 67 news items (13.48%).

In reference to the Malaysia - Singapore relationship it is notable that there was more news on sports during the economic crisis between 1997 and 1998 (examined in more detail later in this chapter) than on other more salient matters. These news agenda were purposely highlighted by the media to move the focus away from the crisis in the minds of both countries' populations. During this economic crisis, the Malaysian media may not have always included information on everything that people needed to know. The media, as a powerful source of information, has for long decided what should be important to tell them. For example, the Malaysian media consistently highlights issues about 'water', together with other issues in the same articles. The repetitious aspect of news reports frames a range of issues important to Malaysian society.

Meanwhile, the results of the analysis of Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 also show that the largest number of news items on 'relationship' occurred in 1998: 36 of 220 news items on the relationship from 1996 to 2008. This is followed by 24 news items in years 2002 and 2004. The 'economy', including business news, achieved the highest number of news items before, during and after the general election of Abdullah party in 2007 and 2008 consecutively. Most items on 'defence' occurred in 2003; 13 of 67 items on 'defence' for a period of 13 years (1996-2003). Besides news on 'relationship', 'economy' and 'Pedra Branca' emerged as the most frequent in 2003 when Mahathir decided to step down. The numbers of items on 'other' issues such as sports scored their highest number during the economic downturn (1997-1998).

Table 4.3: Total News Trend from 1996 - 2008 by News Categories

News Categories	Years												
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Relationship	13	23	36	13	19	16	24	20	24	5	6	9	12
Bridge	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0
Water	2	0	3	0	1	0	10	3	0	0	1	3	0
Pedra Branca	2	0	2	0	0	0	12	13	0	0	0	2	3
Defence	9	3	6	10	2	5	11	13	4	1	1	0	2
Economy	5	1	6	3	2	1	4	3	6	3	2	6	6
Social	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	2	2
Entertainment	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	2
Others	7	8	9	7	7	6	5	4	7	4	2	4	4

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 show a close connection between particular leaders and news content about the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. The news agenda framed by BERNAMA (see Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3) illustrate how certain issues like 'relationship' dominate and at the same time overlook other crucial issues like 'water', 'defence' and 'economy'. Although it may seem that the agenda is set by the press, leaders' influence demonstrates otherwise – the agenda is set by them. The news basically discussed issues like the overall relationship, water and Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih), the bridge, the tightening of economic and business conditions, education, and social issues. These issues were dominant and discussed very much by both countries. The repetitious nature of discussions by BERNAMA on issues with Singapore is demonstrated for the entire news trend provided in Table 4.3. Issues such as the relationship dominated and showed that the conflicts between both countries had to be managed to ensure harmony for the long-term.

Figure 4.3: Total News Trend from 1996 - 2008 by News Categories
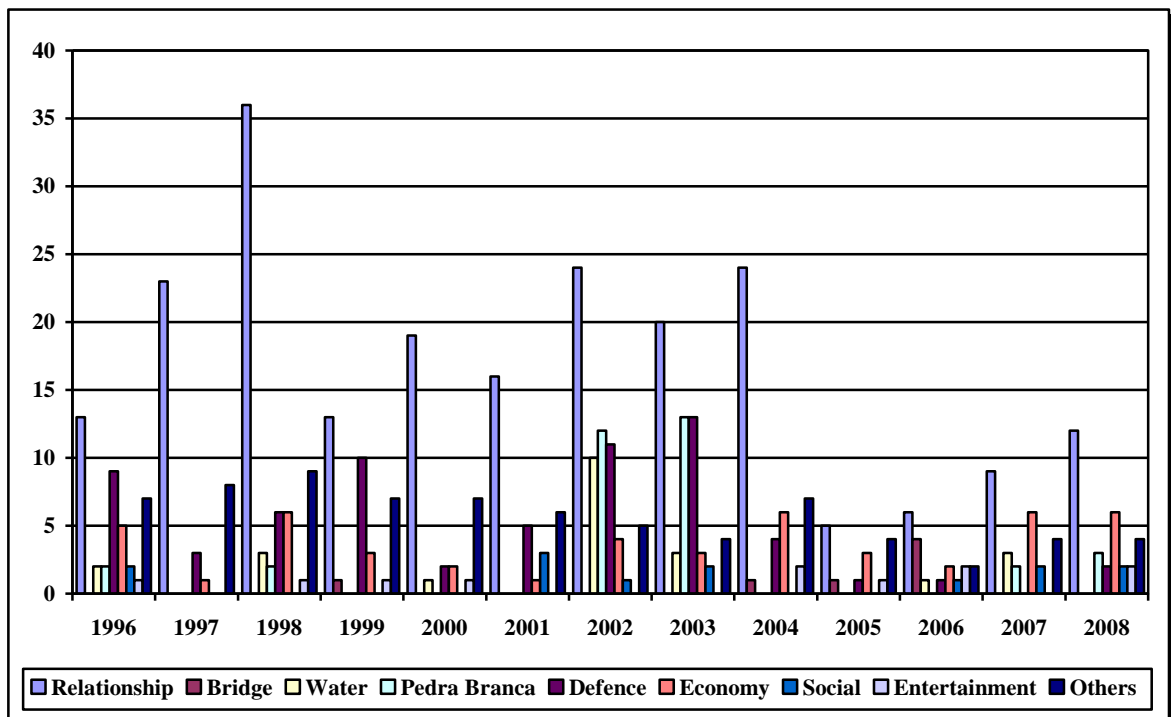
The findings of thirteen years (1996-2008) suggest quantitatively that the data collected in the years 1998, 2002 and 2003 indicate the highest news coverage of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. In those three years issues like the 'bridge' are not prominent at all compared to issues like 'water'. However, neither issue is mentioned in the headlines directly but are discussed in the news articles under 'overall relationship'. Unlike 2002 the 'water' issue is mentioned almost ten times a year in the headlines by BERNAMA. One example from the headlines is: "Malaysia will not lose if Singapore finds other water sources" (BERNAMA, 2002). The inconsistent pattern reporting of BERNAMA in 2001 and 2002 could be due to the influence of different government officers or political individuals. The main source for the news was the foreign minister. For example, statements on the water issue were made by Syed Hamid Albar, the Malaysian Foreign Minister, during that period.

From 1996 to 2008 the news represents the overall status of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. The years 1997 and 1998 were when Malaysia experienced a bad economic crisis and the Anwar issue, while 2001 to 2002 preceded the transition of power from Mahathir to Abdullah. Meanwhile, 2003 was the year the transition took

place. The following years 2004 and 2005 comprised the new government under Abdullah while 2007 and 2008 were concerned with the lead up to and the actual voting in the general election. Those selected years also witnessed tensions and stresses that occurred in other countries, especially in 1997, 2003 and 2008. However, the news trend actually demonstrates the peak periods for Malaysia and highlights how BERNAMA managed its reporting of the relationship.

The roller coaster of the Malaysia-Singapore relationship as portrayed in news articles has different levels of impact on both governments and societies. Using content analysis, I found that the numbers of news items fluctuated, and the highest quantity of online news appears during Mahathir's era especially in the years 1998, 2002 and 2003. From the identified trend, analysis of the news percentage and the major concerns based on the issues discussed in the BERNAMA online news is possible. However, the news trend significantly drops during Abdullah's prime ministership. It is evident that the administrations of Mahathir and Abdullah produce different concerns.

The data shows that the major concerns/agenda of the issues being mentioned by BERNAMA are about the 'overall relationship' and how to tackle the issue with the best solutions for both countries. The 'overall relationship' issue refers to the general news on the whole relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. Some other critical issues such as the dispute over the island Pedra Branca, bridge, water, land reclamation (KTM) and air space became secondary issues, mentioned later in news articles.

4.7 Discussion

Based on an analysis of the findings, the two major factors that had high impact on the news trend are leadership and economic competition.

4.7.1 Leadership

A leadership style is one of the strong factors that influence Malaysia and Singapore's relationship. For example, in Malaysia, Mahathir was seen as a firm and influential leader and these characteristics influenced his upbringing (Khadijah 2011, p.430). Mahathir was also seen as a 'dictator' leader by some people who were not happy with many of his decisions and his blunt voice on the West (Mahathir 2011). Abdullah

Badawi, Mahathir's successor, on the contrary, is respected by many Malaysians for his religious background and ability to be more transparent. As described by Pandian, Rusdi and Mohd. Azizuddin (2010, p.100):

> Abdullah is assumed as portraying a rather open leadership style. There are those who see it as −….it's quieter. More circumspect. There's more introspection at the top; a need, as much as a willingness, to listen, perhaps even more than to speak. There's greater inclusion, more accommodation. Necessarily in these circumstances, and yet so easily depicted as indecisiveness, there's less unilateralism.

There different leadership styles between Mahathir and Abdullah Badawi have certainly influence the Malaysia political relationships with its neighbour countries especially Singapore. The peak of the conflicts between Malaysia and Singapore was during the Mahathir administration. Saw and Kesavapany (2006, p.xv) state that "since Singapore left Malaysia to become an independent country some forty years ago, bilateral relations between the two neighbours, bound by centuries of historical economic ties, have undergone many ups and downs. The period stretching from 1997 to 2002 under the Mahathir administrations was by far the most stressful in the short history of relations between Singapore and Malaysia". Turnbull (1989, p.298) claims that more stresses occurred because Mahathir was perceived to be an aggressive leader who was always proactive and critical with regard to the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. This situation made the relationship with Singapore difficult economically, socially and politically.

However, Saw and Kesavapany (2006) claim that the economic climate for both countries improved during the tenure of Abdullah Badawi. As stated by them "the much improved atmosphere between the two neighbours arising out of the leadership change in Malaysia has resulted in a resurgence of economic activities among not only government-linked companies but also companies in the private sector" (Saw & Kesavapany 2006, p.39). It was difficult for Singapore to have business deals with Malaysia during Mahathir's government, especially when he started to introduce the Look East policy in 1981 (Milne & Mauzy 1999, p.55). The policy may have been viewed as a threat to regional relationships because Malaysia took Japan as its role model, especially in the emulation of the Japanese work ethic. This policy helped to boost drastically Malaysia's economy but at the cost of good relations with neighbouring countries, especially Singapore: "Bilateral relations and government

policies in both countries were affected by transitions of power" (Lin 2003, p.270). It is undeniable that Mahathir's aggressive character contributed to the political agitation which produced a tense relationship with Singapore compared to Abdullah's era. For example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) commented on Abdullah's mild approach to Singapore in order to improve the relationship: "Abdullah Badawi is considered less confrontational than his predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad, and there are hopes on both sides of a new approach" (BBC News 2004). Thus, how leaders are perceived seems to influence countries' relationships. For example, Chandran (2007, p.137) describes Lee Kuan Yew's perceptions of the Malaysian prime ministers between Razak[60] and Hussein:

> Lee Kuan Yew begins, typically, by describing the physical attributes of the man: he noted that "Hussein did not look the typical Malay" as he was "unusually fair for a Malay". In formal matters he was "open and direct....coming straight to the point, unlike Razak"; so he "liked him".

George (2002, p.174) claims that Singapore, under the People's Action Party (PAP), has become an enterprise nation. A common purpose is the struggle for national economic competitiveness. All institutions and policies, including the news media press laws, are judged on their contribution to the chosen national enterprise. The rule of law, of primary importance in civil association, is relegated to a supporting role in an enterprise association. And yet, despite differences in control and media ownership, similar laws and regulations have been imposed on the media in Malaysia and Singapore. Both countries have indirectly suppressed the freedom of the media through ownership controls and stringent laws and regulations including government media groups such as BERNAMA. Domination by government has limited the scope of the press to work independently. In order to boost the economy a country needs a stable political system and strong leadership. Therefore, both countries use the economy as a strong reason to implement controls despite the stability of their politics.

4.7.2 Economic Competition

Economic competition is a major issue affecting the relationship between both countries, including concerns like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), natural

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[60] Tun Razak was the second prime minister of Malaysia (1970-1976) and his successor was Tun Hussein Onn (1976-1981). Tun Razak is the father of the current prime minister, Najib Tun Razak.

assets, and operations of major ports and affiliations of health organizations. From the economic context, Singapore has an impressive economic record compared to Malaysia. The strategic location of Singapore in South East Asia has also contributed to other regional economies. However, economic differences between the countries have contributed to a potentially sour relationship. During the economic downturn in 1997, Malaysia and Singapore took different stances on the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Malaysia strongly opposed the idea of receiving IMF support, while Singapore was a stout proponent of the IMF because it wanted its assistance during the 1997 downturn. Undoubtedly, Singapore, in comparison to Malaysia, has enjoyed much more economic development and stability, and for this reason became known as the economic 'dragon' of Asia. This can be seen in the external trade between the two countries as described in the table 4.4. For example, the table shows that both countries are still largest trading partners. Despite its warming bilateral relations, trade volumes would thus likely mirror the current upward trend based on the exports and imports investments by both countries.

Malaysia, by contrast, has been lagging behind Singapore and coping with internal struggles[61]. It is one of the main producers of tin, natural rubber, palm oil and tropical lumber, and a major exporter of petroleum and spice (like peppers) (Economic Planning Unit 1996; Information Malaysia 2000 Yearbook 2000). Malaysia has no reason not to become an economically sound country. Indeed, Malaysia is richer than Singapore because Singapore has limited land and resources. However, Singapore managed to turn its limitations into opportunities when it industrialized. By the time Malaysia ventured into manufacturing of electrical goods, electronic products and textiles, Singapore was already a master in the field. Because of their strategic location in South East Asia, Malaysia and Singapore are natural docking places for shipping between East and West through the Straits of Malacca[62]. Malaysia has a few big ports, such as Port Klang in

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[61] Singapore is poised to overtake Malaysia as the third largest economy in Southeast Asia by the end of this year in a development economists and analysts say underline the need for Putrajaya to step up efforts to increase competitiveness and undertake wider reforms. According to the Bloomberg report, Singapore's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) this year is year expected hit US$210 billion on the back of a 15% annual growth, beating Malaysia's projected US$205 billion GDP (Chieh, 2010).
[62] Malacca in Malaysia was once a major port in the region in the fifteenth century, attracting traders from Java, India, and China and served as a stopping point for China-India trade during the two monsoon periods.

Selangor and Tanjung Pelepas and Pasir Gudang Port in Johor, while Singapore boasts its Jurong Port and Port of Singapore[63].

Table 4.4 External trade between Singapore and Malaysia 1990-2011 (in US million)

Year	S'pore's exports to Malaysia	S'pore's imports from Malaysia
1990	6868.0	8256.0
1991	8819.0	10062.0
1992	7935.0	10612.0
1993	10485.0	14030.0
1994	19045.0	16760.0
1995	22665.0	19250.0
1996	22512.0	27285.0
1997	21824.0	19900.0
1998	27,999.0	26,252.0
1999	32,163.7	29,283.0
2000	43189.8	39399.4
2001	37821.0	35975.0
2002	39003.0	37951.0
2003	39672.0	37528.0
2004	46073.0	42201.0
2005	50612.3	45526.6
2006	56372.1	49480.8
2007	58099.6	51808.8
2008	57638.5	53814.4
2009	44808.5	41336.3
2010	57114.2	49489.6

Source: Yearbook of statistics Singapore, various issues

This has escalated competition between the two countries, but they also need each other because they are neighbours. Singapore is dependent on Malaysia for water supply and Malaysia is reliant on Singapore for food products. Water has been a crucial resource for Singapore and has become the major factor contributing to disputes between the them (see Lin (2003, pp.260-262) on key dates for negotiations on water supply from

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[63] Lin (2003, p.266) asserts that "to increase the likelihood of success of its other port in Pasir Gudang, Malaysia was willing to renege on a prior in-principle agreement between Singapore and Malaysia to build a suspension bridge to replace the present Causeway by 2007. In another instance of not adhering to prior agreement, Dr Mahathir was reported to have said that Malaysia could go ahead and redevelop the bridge with or without Singapore's agreement, citing the reason that the cost of building the suspension bridge was too expensive".

December 1998 to December 2002). Water shortage could severely compromise Singapore's economy. Lin (2003, p.263) asserts that:

> The launch of NEWater (reclaimed water) in Singapore marked a significant step in Singapore's efforts to reduce its dependency on Malaysia for water. It was anticipated that by becoming increasingly self-sufficient, it would move the water issue from being viewed as a security problem to financial considerations.

Pressure will be less not only with reference to natural resources, but if there is continuous spending on water. Singapore's action is seen as offering a more promising future for its people. The dispute not only contributes to tensions between governments but also between the private sectors in both countries. For example, the main shareholder of Pantai Holdings Malaysia Berhad is Khazanah Nasional (the investment holding arm of the Malaysian government) and Parkway Holdings Limited of Singapore, a healthcare group listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange[64]. The privatization of this healthcare group in Malaysia has led to the significant involvement of the Singapore government and shows how both countries need to safeguard their relationship (Chee 2008, pp.2145-2156).

Summary

The findings of the content analysis demonstrate that there is an extensive range of representations through the BERNAMA online news articles on the relationship between Malaysian and Singapore. Findings and discussions from the content analysis significantly illustrate that the news trends are shaped according to leaders' influence, the issues they see as important and economic factors. Next, text analysis provides more concrete evidence by demonstrating harmonious reporting. Text analysis aims to make manifest the priorities inherent in the content which constitutes in the news headlines, first and second paragraph. It reveals how development journalism as illustrated in BERNAMA reports covers complex issues like the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. In the next chapter, I will present the approach analysis and the findings from the textual analysis. The analysis will indicate a significant relationship between news reporting, leadership styles and whether the news reporting constitutes the nature of harmonious reporting.

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[64] Pantai Holdings Berhad, available: http://www.superbrands.com/my/pdf%20files/SPB-MY_FA_PANTAI.pdf.

CHAPTER FIVE

HARMONIOUS REPORTING

> Media studies are about examining media texts. Therefore, textual analysis is often used as a research method to examine biases, dominant discourses and their framing, and representations of various groups and issues embedded in media texts (Weerakkody 2009, p.275).

This chapter discusses textual analysis method as used in this thesis. It shows how the reports construct a set of assumptions and expectations concerning Malaysia and Singapore. This chapter also presents the data analysis of BERNAMA news report on their relationship to help construct a more appropriate context for interpretation, and persuasiveness based on the headlines, and the first and the second paragraph in the story/news. Therefore, the textual analysis in this study helps to create a richer understanding of the function and value of any single text in the news. This method attempts to understand how meanings from the news move from the author/journalists to the audience and analyse how the text is related to other variables (leadership, harmonious and conciliatory elements) that precede it.

Referring to the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore, news has its own values and agendas, be it transparent or hidden. BERNAMA online is seen as a persuasive mechanism in Malaysian society. The construction of news reflects the reality of the social system and often helps the public to understand better what has been described to them. The interpretation of news in the case study of Malaysia and Singapore may conclude that development journalism is used in any kind of news as a persuasive method by the government or as a textual strategy. However the definition of news is more than just describing the reality in the social system by making them what Park (1999) described as 'comprehensible and interesting'.

In identifying the harmonious pattern of news coverage of the news in the Malaysia and Singapore relationship it is best to use the textual analysis method. The approach is to see the elements of positive and negative in the text. Therefore, analysing the most important topics highlighted by the media concerning this relationship will identify the harmonious news structure. Regional news covers all the events that occur between Malaysia and Singapore based on the Malaysian media reporting channelled through its

national news agency, BERNAMA, in which news values are divided into nine categories of importance. These will be discussed later in the chapter. The chapter includes a full account of methodology.

5.1 Why Textual Analysis?

Since text analysis is used to analyse the meaning of the text, therefore, content selections will be based on the headlines and news leading paragraphs. It is hoped that textual analysis is able to demonstrate both dimensions of cooperation and conflict between both countries through the analysis of meaning from the text. The coverage of news media is considered by many respondents in this study (see Chapter Six) as harmonious even though there are some issues highlighted by both countries, such as the highly profiled case of Pedra Branca – a disputed territory claimed by Malaysia and Singapore after the separation in 1965.

The qualitative textual analysis used in this study is based on West and Tunner (2004, p.69) requirement for "data to be interpreted through sense-making analyses" that "do not depend on statistical analysis to support an interpretation but rather require the researcher to make a rhetorical appeal or a reasoned argument for their findings". This method of textual analysis offers the advantages of a qualitative study in that the focus on the political, economic or phenomenological (predictions from the text) aspects of news generates credible data. As argued by Weerakkody (2009, p.275):

> Media studies are about examining media texts. Therefore, textual analysis is often used as a research method to examine biases, dominant discourses and their framing, and representations of various groups and issues embedded in media texts.

Textual analysis has been used to develop beyond the quantitative analysis to intrepret meanings qualitatively, taking random samples of news articles on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. Textual analysis is used to analyse latent content and "to interpret or 'read' the hidden or implied meanings of a message" (Weerakkody 2009, p.249). For this study, textual analysis is used to analyse meanings (implicit or explicit) of state ideologies, especially on the question of how Malaysia perceives its relationship with Singapore and how they handle or manage it through media reporting on the key issues outlined below. The main objectives of conducting textual analysis are:

a) to see is there harmonious reporting in the news.

b) to analyse leadership styles influence the news writing. This is an extension of findings of news trends which has been identified in content analysis in Chapter Four.

c) do the headlines, first and second paragraph constitutes any meaning of harmonious reporting.

As stated in Chapter One, a signifant objective of this study is to analyse whether BERNAMA online news reporting reflects the overall values of harmony and supportiveness in Malaysia and Singapore's relationship.

Therefore, this study takes into consideration Van Dijk (1985, p.70) ideas on topic discourse where language users "can summarize fairly complex units of information with one or a few sentences, and these sentences are assumed to express the gist, the theme, or the topic of the information". Van Dijk (1985, p.69) argues that "a complete discourse analysis can trace further structural properties of media messages that go beyond those syntactic structure of single sentences". Van Dijk (1985, pp.74-79) presents his ideas and arguments on "the themes, topics and the semantic macrostructures that used to make these notion explicit". Van Dijk (1985, pp.74-79) ideas on news study are not based on the "isolated words or sentences, but about the meaning of larger fragments of text or about whole texts". Van Dijk (1985, p.73) further argues:

> The macrostructure operates at higher level or more global levels than the micro level of words, sentences, and sentence connections. If we say that the news report is about the U.S. attack on Libya, we do not merely refer to individual sentences or a sequence of sentences but to the report as a whole.

By making assumptions that, people read in different ways, so this study analyse how do texts produce objective meanings? In other words, how do we read/analyse a text and share the same meaning? This study will focus on the thematic structures of news which signify and interpret meaning based on the issues identified Chapter Three. The analysis will also draw on the independent insights of the researcher and from the different and similar perspectives of textual interpretation.

In the study of meaning, my emphasis is on the presentation of themes which "is not only determined by thematic importance, but also by the principle of decency" (Van Dijk 1985, p.79). Decency here refers to the quality of conforming to standards of propriety and morality or the quality of being polite and respectable which will determine the harmonious reporting. Therefore, this study is not about analysing, interpreting the whole text but focus on the headlines, first and second paragraph.

5.1.1 Limitations

There are a few drawbacks of textual analysis in this research. One is that it is time consuming in applying this method (Carley 1993a). Therefore, this research could not use a big sample (19 articles - small cases) of news articles and has used the purposive sampling method which will be explained later. As argued by Carley (1993a) that somehow the process of analysis affects how texts are interpreted and the potential results. Besides that, textual analysis researchers, sometimes, tend to do level of analysis and generalization from the result derived. The approach of analysis for textual analysis in this research uses a logical concern where the use of keywords has direct connections to the issues which qualitatively reflects in the headlines, first and second paragraph. Therefore, the limits of textual analysis in this research only specify the most important information (explicit) that constitutes in the headlines, first and second paragraph. Its intention is to analyse what are perceives positively and negatively in the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. The intention is to identify the harmonious aspects in the issues highlighted in BERNAMA news articles and not to identify which issues that dominates in the headlines, first and second paragraph.

Fursich (2009, pp.238-252) suggests that "textual analysis is often chosen by cultural media scholars to overcome the common limitations of traditional quantitative content analysis such as limitation to manifest content and to quantifiable categories". Further, textual analysis brings broader perspectives and should not be neglected because it allows the researcher to discern latent meaning, but also implicit patterns, assumptions and omissions in the text. A text is understood in its broader, post-structural, sense as any cultural practice or object that can be read (Fursich 2009, p.240). Therefore, the biggest hurdle in textual analysis in this research is to make sense of the text. In this case, I was not trying to study the accuracy of the text, but to examine representations of harmonious news reporting by analysing news texts. Using the same data from the

content analysis in textual analysis, I also analyse how the leadership characteristics and styles in Malaysia and Singapore are represented. Data from the textual analysis seems to offer different perspectives from data in the previous work of quantitative content analysis. However, all data, be it from content analysis or textual analysis, is mutually supportive.

My analysis raises questions about texts in very broad contexts as evidence of how BERNAMA is mediating the relationship. By analysing texts of news headlines, and first and second paragraphs of the news articles, we may "read" indicators of how political organizations, individuals or the government in Malaysia respond to implicitly or explicitly issues or threats, in relation to Singapore. Dennis (1989, p.26) suggests that media organizations in general need to explain certain issues more fully, to give the public a better sense of why certain news decisions are made in particular ways. The results of the study, discussed below, will demonstrate several distinct features of textual meaning in selected news articles.

5.1.2 The Issues/Conflicts

The conflict between Malaysia and Singapore is more like a fight between two siblings. There is always comparing and contrasting between them because it seems important to portray the strengths of both states and what they can offer as sovereign nations at regional and international levels. Several issues between them remain unresolved, for example, the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM), railway station located in Singapore. KTM is a rail company owned by Malaysia and has been using Singapore-owned land for its operations. Both countries addressed the ownership issue of the station publicly and the conflict grew bitter, especially when the operations involve services to both populations.

If both countries have disagreements and face fiery conflicts, how can the media help to lower the heat? How does each society perceive the relationship? Is there room for the media to be a catalyst in the relationship or perhaps help to manage the relationship? How can mainstream media organisations like BERNAMA help to develop an understanding of the relationship and its future? These questions have significantly contributed to both countries' media highlighting their counterpart's mistakes.

The mainstream media in Malaysia critically focuses on a clear, issue-based reporting that can lead to a better relationship. Reporters sometimes practice transparent reporting rather than simply conform to political and state agendas[65]. This is a crucial problem as the media needs to present the accounts of journalists instead of putting states' points of view across. Malaysian perspectives are chosen to justify the agenda setting of the government and media. What has been set up by the media groups like BERNAMA is certainly described in terms of how the media took action on any issue regarding regional relationships. In this case, Malaysia's government continuously uses the media such as BERNAMA to manage its relationship with Singapore and other countries in the region. Therefore media companies are critical for certain issues when they represent the government.

Malaysia's relationship with Singapore as represented in news reports is used as a case study in order to see how BERNAMA responds to the issues and to what extent media reporting affects the regional relationship. This is done by analysing Malaysian BERNAMA online news reporting, which contributes to the harmonious reporting style in the country. The theme highlighted by BERNAMA is the overall relationship with Singapore and how both countries react to and manage conflicts.

There are two possible motives that invite the mainstream media like BERNAMA to contribute as negotiators through its coverage. First, BERNAMA is a government media agency and the government uses news reports to define the relationship between both countries. Second, the Malaysian government has voiced its concerns over Singapore's actions to increase public interest in issues of national interest which reflect the communal structure of Malaysian society. It is undeniable that other mainstream media newspapers like *Berita Harian (BH)* and the *News Straits Times (NST)* report issues on Singapore which are highly influenced by their owners. Lin (2003, p.269) asserts that "several of the newspapers are owned by political parties which wield great influence over the appointment of the senior editors".

Below are examples of how the relationships as shown[66] by BBC News actually work. A few important issues have been highlighted here such as the separation issue,

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[65] Refer to Appendix 8 for BERNAMA full news.
[66] Refer to Appendix 9 for BBC full news.

economic matters and Malaysian and Singaporean leaders' relationships. These issues have also been highlighted by BERNAMA. However, other media organisations such as the BBC also highlighted to a certain extent that they are fragile or strong as a result of the economic crisis of 1997-1998, as illustrated in the table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: BBC News

Issues	BBC News	Examples of news headlines and first lead/paragraph
History (Overall relationship)	Tuesday, 23 April, 2002	**Singapore land plan irks Malaysia** **By Mangai Balasegaram** In Kuala Lumpur Ever since Singapore broke away from Malaysia in 1965, the two nations have competed with each other in what could be seen as good, old-fashioned sibling rivalry. In recent weeks however, that relationship has become increasingly strained by a series of trade disputes. Both sides have accused each other of not playing fair and of being a bad neighbour.
Economy	Sunday, 23 November, 1997	**New tension between Malaysia and Singapore** A government minister in Singapore has urged people there not to over-react to Malaysian accusations that rumours about its economic problems are being started in Singapore.
	Thursday, 5 November, 1998	**Malaysia and Singapore agree to make up** Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, and his Singaporean counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, say they have agreed to try to settle their differences following a surprise meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Comments from BBC Asia affairs analyst BBC Asia affairs analyst Angie Knox believes the reason behind Malaysia's sudden change of heart is both economic and political. Malaysia is facing its worst-ever recession and needs Singapore's open markets to raise capital for its spending plans.
Leaders	Thursday, 9 October, 2003 (before Mahathir left the administration)	**Singapore land row rumbles on** **A long-running dispute between Malaysia and Singapore over land reclamation is to be settled by independent arbitrators, a United Nations tribunal has ruled.** But Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Singapore should not be allowed to continue the work while the arbitration process was under way. "If they continue their work, it would be too late," said Mr Mahathir. Malaysia insists that the Singaporean reclamation work in the Straits of Johor, which separates the two countries, will damage the area's marine environment. After two months of unsuccessful bilateral talks, Malaysia brought the case to the International Tribunal of the Sea, based in Germany, saying that negotiations without outside help had proved futile. Judge Dollier Nelson said the two nations should establish a group of independent experts to monitor the project.
	Monday, 12 January, 2004 (during Abdullah)	**Malaysian PM visits Singapore** Malaysia's prime minister, Abdullah Badawi, has held talks with his Singaporean counterpart in an attempt to ease long running tensions between the two South East Asian neighbours.

In 1997, after the economic downturn, Malaysia found it difficult to maintain economic stability and social cohesion. The relationship between both countries was shaky following a series of confrontational issues between Malaysia and Singapore (Saw & Kesavapany 2006). These authors suggest that a series of dramatic corporate developments between Malaysia and Singapore created tensions in attempts at strengthening their economic ties and democratic practices. The credibility of governments, political organizations and individuals was severely tested in both countries. Despite news on regional issues being monopolised by BERNAMA, the local media was given an opportunity to address its views on regional issues between both countries, such as the water shortage crisis, the bridge and the Pedra Branca[67].

5.2 The Process of Textual Analysis

As stated earlier in this chapter, textual analysis was choosen to see; 1)whether there are leadership influence constitutes in the news; 2) does the harmonious elements constitutes in the news and; 3) whether the headlines reflects the elements of expectations and consequences in harmonious reporting. The unit of analysis for this study is the 19 articles (9 years) of BERNAMA online news articles on Malaysia-Singapore relations. In this study, articles which indicate negative and positive meanings were selected for textual analysis from: 1) the news headlines; 2) the first and second paragraph of the news being reported. Any elements of the texts that represent harmonious reporting have been coded to see how the news encourages harmony. Whenever we read a text "we produce an interpretation of something's meaning […] A text is something that we can make meaning from" (McKee 2003, p.4). In this case, textual analysis is used to locate negative and positive meanings of news texts which signify attitudes of the Malaysian government on Malaysia - Singapore issues in the samples of texts chosen, it is not difficult to identify negative or positive meanings because the texts use very straight-forward or direct phrases or words. Words used about one or other country's actions or future actions and what is perceive from the relationship such as 'demand', 'argue', 'unsatisfied' and 'review relationship' usually

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[67] The Pedra Branca controversy was a territorial dispute between Singapore and Malaysia over several islets at the eastern entrance to the Singapore Strait, namely Pedra Branca (called Pulau Batu Puteh by Malaysia), South Ledge and Middle Rocks. The dispute began in 1979 and was largely resolved by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2008. It was one of two formal territorial disputes along the maritime Malaysia-Singapore Border. Available: http://www.malaysianbar.org.my.

have negative connotation while words such as 'closer', 'agreed' and 'benefit' have positive ones. Below are some examples of negative meanings and phrases[68]:

Example (1):

> *'**Malaysia has demanded that Singapore** make a public apology and **withdraw the negative statement** on the country by Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi said today' (12 March, 1997).*

Example (2):

> *'The backlash over Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement over Johor continued today with some calling **for a review of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Singapore'** (15 March, 1997).*

Example (3):

> *'Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, however, **remains unsatisfied'** (18 March, 1997).*

The positive meanings of phrases[69] can be seen from the three examples below:

Example (1):

> *'Malaysia and Singapore feel that they **must ensure closer and stronger relations in future in their common interest'** (10 April, 1997).*

Example (2):

> *'Acting Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said today **Singapore must manage its relationship with Malaysia sensitively** to avoid causing unnecessary offence, and **co-operate pragmatically for mutual benefit** wherever possible' (23 November 1997).*

Example (3):

> *'Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia and Singapore **have agreed to set aside their differences and focus on improving ties'** (5 November 1998).*

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[68] For full articles refer to Appendix 6.
[69] For full articles refer to Appendix 6.

Thus, the examples above reflects on the negative and positive meanings or informations about the issues in the headlines. However, my intention is to interpret the whole meaning of the headlines and not to weight this headlines by frequency. Those headlines will be analysed according to its meaning whether it shows the positive or negative meaning about the relationship and how attribution of responsibility (the expression of expectations and consequences) in the news articles contribute to harmonious reporting.

5.2.1 Selections of Text: Purposive Random Sampling

The sampling guidelines for this study adopt Altheide's (1996) approach in determining how 'peace' was reported in news articles in different eras by looking at each January issue in 1935, 1945, 1955, 1966, 1976 and 1985. This study uses a simple sampling method by focusing on monthly issues in BERNAMA online news and narrows it down to only four issues per year according to the importance of the themes[70].

Out of 497 news online articles collected for the content analysis. However, 19 articles were selected based on purposive random sampling from 154 articles (see Table 5.2 below) as an illustrative sample to demonstrate the outcome on harmonious reporting through the qualitative method. Two articles each year were selected from 9 important years[71]. Following Teddlie and Yu (2007, p.84) the sample size suggested is typically small (usually 30 cases or less). In purposive sampling, a sampling frame is "a resource from which you can select your smaller sample" (Mason 2002, p.140). The analysis of the text is based on elements determining whether the news articles produced by BERNAMA reflect any harmonious elements in the news.

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[70] One of the most important procedures in textual analysis is sampling technique. For this study, the sample of texts was selected from the compilation of news reporting on Malaysia-Singapore issues in the BERNAMA online news. All the sample texts were extracted from headlines and the first and second paragraphs of online news articles. The sample was also based on news used as a medium of information for society with emphasis on the positive and negative images of regional relations. Any news stories on any issues or actions taken by the Malaysian government involving Singapore found in the news headlines and the first two paragraphs of the reports were selected from December 1996 to January 2008.

[71] The study narrows down the number of news articles by focusing on the news published in 9 years - 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008 - which may be considered the most crucial years. 1997 was the year of critical global economic downturn which also affected Malaysia and Singapore. 2003 saw the transition of leadership_power in the Malaysian government when Mahathir Mohamed finally passed the baton to Abdullah Badawi after 22 years. Finally, the year 2008 was chosen because there was a political tsunami in Malaysia when, for the first time, after 50 years of independence, Barisan Nasional, the leading political party did not win the two-thirds majority in the twelfth general election; and Pakatan Rakyat, the opposition party in Malaysia, gained a stronger position with more seats in the parliament (further details in Chapter 4).

- The elements of harmonious reporting (fewer obtrusive, fewer confrontational, fewer potentially harm impact)
- The elements of conciliatory factors – protecting from impact

Table 5.2: Articles selections (19 articles)

Year/ total	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	00	99	98	97	96
154 = 19	**14**	**7**	**-**	**6**	**18**	**31**	**21**	**13**	**-**	**-**	**29**	**15**	**-**

As indicated in the content analysis of the news trend, the 13-year timeframe was chosen because so many issues and crises in Malaysia happened within that period. There were 497 news articles on Malaysia - Singapore relations published during those 10 years. For a more in-depth textual analysis, the study narrows down the number of news articles by focusing on the news published in 9 of those years – 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008, which may be considered the most crucial years[72]. For example, 1997 and 1998 were selected as critical years for Asian Financial Crisis which badly affected Malaysia and Singapore. Meanwhile, 2003 was the year when Mahathir Mohamed stood down in favour of Abdullah Badawi after 22 years. Finally, the year 2008 was chosen because there was a political tsunami in Malaysia when, for the first time, after 50 years of independence, Barisan Nasional, the leading political party did not win the two-thirds majority in the twelfth general election; and Pakatan Rakyat, the opposition party in Malaysia, gained a stronger position with more seats in the parliament.

To limit and manage the sample, this study incorporates a relevance sampling, also known as purposive sampling suggested by Krippendorff (2004). According to Krippendorff, Klaus (2004, p.119), relevance sampling "aims at selecting all textual units that contribute to answering given research questions". The sampling of media

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[72] Thus, with all the tensions and crises happening in Malaysia in those years, I randomly picked 19 of the total news reported in BERNAMA online on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship in 9 years: 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008. For textual analysis purposes, I chose a random total of 18 news articles from the selected years. BERNAMA news articles for textual analysis were selected from 497 articles selected for content analysis from 1996-2008. However, for textual analysis, the selection of articles is still drawn from the nine important years referred to above. These selected years were then divided into months with odd numbers such as November, September, July, May, March and January. From these six odd number months I identified 154 relevant articles. Next, using a random sampling technique, I chose 19 of these 154 articles, which gave a total of 19 articles for textual analysis.

content, is necessary to identify how the media report news and what may be seen as implicit and explicit.

Skolnick and McCoy (1984) state that a systematic sampling procedure on media content is necessary to identify how the media reports news. Thus, samples of this research will be extracted systematically and focus on issues between Malaysia and Singapore.

5.2.2 The Measure

In order to measure the elements of harmonious reporting in news articles, I have used the macrostructure analysis suggested by Van Dijk (1985) and combined it with part of the framing measurement as suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, p.98):

> A 20 series of questions to which the coder has to answer yes (1) or no (2). Each question was meant to measure one of five news frames: human interest, conflict, morality, attribution of responsibility and economic consequences. These were questions such as "Does the article reflect disagreement between parties/individual/groups?" (conflict). "Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?" (human interest), "Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?" (attribution of responsibility), "Does the story contain any moral message?" (morality), and "Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?"(economic).

This study adopts measures suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) but with limited usage and narrowing the attribution of responsibility by giving the coder different sets of questions on selected news. The questions emphasize the responsibility attributes suggested by the headlines, and first and second leads of the news. Moreover, the attributes are also derived by assessing the whole meaning of the news as implied in the last paragraph of the article. I focus on news frames which contribute to the "harmonious" reporting in the news agenda (major concerns). Thus news headlines below show the attributes of being accountable to readers. The word 'commitment to working' and 'don't compare' show the attributes of responsibility even though the relationship with Singapore is considered crucial but somehow the news headlines have reflected the sense of responsibility on Malaysia's side. This leads to the concept of harmonious reporting.

> *SINGAPORE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO WORKING WITH MALAYSIA, 10 March 2008, BERNAMA*

> *PAK LAH: DON'T COMPARE MALAYSIA WITH SINGAPORE, 18 February 2008, BERNAMA.*

As noted above, the organization of harmonious reporting is identified based on the blend of instruments suggested by Van Dijk (1985) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Van Dijk (1985) at the macro level describes thematic structures of news that indicate the 'whole meaning' of the news articles. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) discover different framing measures of news analysis. For this study, I only adopt the responsibility attributes which define the government actions explained in the news as the contributions to the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. This attribute of responsibility is chosen to analyse the involvement of the government and to see how news represents an attempt at preserving harmony. The involvement of government reflects their responsibility in a democratic society, for resolving problems at a regional level.

The underlying attributes of responsibility were found in the expectations elements of the textual analysis mentioned in the news articles. Despite the agenda of the news, the news was framed by demonstrating a reliable source, i.e. higher government officials. It became an influential factor that strengthened the news and does not discriminate the possible consequences if the issues were not resolved between both countries. Therefore, it is important to analyse how news encourages social harmony.

5.2.3 Representation of News

This study analyses the headlines, first paragraphs and second paragraphs of news articles. The headlines can alert a reader to what the whole text means. According to Dor (2003, p.696):

> This functional definition positions the headline in its appropriate role as a textual negotiator between the story and its readers. It explains why this construction of a successful headline requires an understanding of the readers – their state-of-knowledge, their beliefs and expectations and their cognitive styles – no less than it requires and understanding of the story.

The reader looks at a headline first and takes the cue from the headline as to how the article might be read. From this, they decide whether to continue reading the whole text or not. Normally the important information can be found in the first lead and second lead of the texts. It is important to understand the common basic principle of news writing, where every first paragraph must consist of information based on the 5Ws and 1H – What, Who, When, Where, Why and How. Some readers do not even read whole texts or continue to the end of articles because they get all the important information needed from the headlines, and first and second paragraphs. Readers usually draw their own conclusions after reading the second lead or paragraph. It is important to highlight the significance of sources in news articles. This study aims to identify the importance of leadership figures and the relevance of sources to readers[73]. Readers evaluate government source in particular ways. Headlines may be intrepreted in many ways and to give an example: according to Visser, Hsu and Kalinskaya (2003, p.2) "headlines and lead paragraphs cue readers to the main topic of news features and therefore play an important role in setting the agenda for how the public perceives a particular issue". Meanwhile, Dor (2003, p.698), describes headlines as "a fairly complex riddle, which, first, triggers frames and belief systems in the reader's mind, and, then, gets resolved in the ensuing text".

Thus, in the example from BERNAMA news headlines below, one could interpret the word 'MAY BE' in different ways, and the choice of words creates understandings that the bilateral differences could/or could not not be resolved. Therefore, it is assumed that the readers will continue reading until the first and second paragraph to answer the question.

> *LEE: BILATERAL DIFFERENCES MAY BE RESOLVED IN TWO TO THREE*
> *MONTHS, 17 August 2000, BERNAMA.*

In addition to identification of connotations, textual analysis in this study focuses on the thematics approach. Van Dijk (1985, p.86) states that "the top of the macrostructure of a news report generally tends to be expressed first; this is, first the headline (the highest macroproposition), then the Lead (the top of the macrostructure), and subsequently the

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[73] GOH MEETS DR MAHATHIR IN KUALA LUMPUR TOMORROW, BERNAMA online, 4 November 1998. Available: http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=38118&tid=54&cid=2.

lower macropropositions of the report, with details of content and the less prominent schematic categories (e.g., history or comments) towards the end". This is seen in issues such as the "bridge issue", much discussed in 2002 and 2007. Table 5.3 shows the organization of concepts for harmonious reporting for this study.

Table 5.3: The Organization of Concepts for Harmonious Reporting

Van Dijk (1985, p.86)	Gerbner (1985, p.20)	This research

Macrostructure (thematic structure of the news) consists of semantic categories:
• main episode
• reason/cause
  o conditions
    ▪ history
    ▪ previous events
  o actual situation
    ▪ events
    ▪ context
    • consequence
  o events
    ▪ action
    ▪ motivati-on /explana-tion
  o consequences
	In the news story, we need to identify the elements of:
	• existence
	• importance
	• values
	• relationship
		The analysis of the news articles are based on the concept of:
		• conditions/activity of the events,
		• the sources,
		• the statement made by the leaders,
		• the consequences,
		• the expectations / evaluations of the events

Textual analysis shows how reports in general simplify or summarize situations, and events for readers. It examines how far texts may seek to 'manage' the population's perceptions of issues. Thus "[o]ne of the characteristics of discourse analysis is that it describes text and talk in terms of theories developed for the several levels or dimensions of discourse" (Van Dijk 1991, p.110). The data describes empirically that texts have been analyzed at different levels according to the situation and according to years selected.

5.2.4 Making Sense from the Text

For McKee (2003, p.1), textual analysis is "a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology – a data – gathering process [...] we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text". Krippendorff (2004) believes that human intelligence is necessary to manage textual analysis. Texts

are seen as a context of actions, indications and representation of implementations which have been referred as 'purposes of inquiry' (Jensen 2002) or 'tools of inquiry' (Gee 2005)[74]. For this study textual analysis is used to analyse ideological aspects of a selected news channel about the Malaysia and Singapore relationship.

Analysis of the news texts will focus on form and function. In this case, form means structure and function applies to meaning. Van Dijk (1991, p.110) argues that:

> the distinction between the form (significants) and meaning (signifies) of signs....each of these levels has its characteristic, structures, which may be interpreted or function at other levels, both within and outside the traditional linguistic boundaries of the sentence, as well as in the broader context of use and communication.

Van Dijk (1991, p.113) also emphasizes that "one of the most powerful semantic notions in a critical news analysis is that of implications, much of the information of a text is not explicitly expressed but left implicit". This research analyses common keywords or phrases which indicate regional policy in a very broad context. Emphasis is given to news headlines[75] on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship as an indicator of the news content. To enhance this the search is extended from news headlines to news content using the same keywords such as 'ties', 'relations', 'agree', 'attend', 'bilateral', 'cooperate', 'commitment', 'concern', 'conflicts', 'improve', 'work', and 'visits'. In theoretical terms, such a process can be described as semantic where it conceptually summarizes the text and specifies its most important information.

Van Dijk (1991, p.114) suggests that "words, clauses, and other textual expressions may imply concepts or propositions which may be inferred on the basis of background knowledge". This feature of discourse and communication has important ideological dimensions such as how BERNAMA news influence and shape public perceptions. The analysis of the "unsaid" is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in the text. The structure of BERNAMA news headlines, news leads and highlights assumes that audiences understand the existing dispute between the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, and the former Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew.

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[74] Jensen (2002) and Gee (2005) indicate that textual analysis means the study of textual meanings and as a consequence language and communication.
[75] Refer to Appendix 6 for news headlines.

The news texts were analyzed in terms of the explicit and implicit meanings of selected words or phrases chosen from headlines, and also of words or phrases repeated or stressed in the texts. Words and phrases were chosen relating to regional policy between Malaysia and Singapore in a very broad context. Emphasis is given to news headlines and to the first three paragraphs where the 5Ws and 1H act as indicators. The indicators help in finding the implicit meaning, if any, in news texts. Fursich (2009, pp.238-252) suggests that "textual analysis involves a 'prolonged engagement', or what Hall (cited in Fursich 2009, p.240) refers as 'the long preliminary soak' where texts, using semiotic, narrative, genre or rhetorical approches, are analyzed qualitatively". This typically results in a strategic selection and presentation of analyzed text as evidence for the overall argument.

5.3 Findings and Discussions: Textual Analysis

Most of the news articles provide few details on the day-to-day issues of the relationship. The media do not highlight discrepancies on the Malaysian side. The findings show variations in the relationship with Singapore when different leaders are in power. My research has a similar view of harmony, and it is proven empirically in this study where leaders' involvement in the news has a significant contribution during conflicts and confrontations. Less harmonious reporting is described in three analyses: leadership influences, harmonious reporting and conciliatory comments in the news headlines. These three analyses suggest that the media reporting does not encourage conflicts but at certain stages generate pressures on their counterparts which are not harmonious.

5.3.1 How has News Reporting Impacted on the Malaysia-Singapore Relationship?

O'Heffernan (cited in Derek 2007, p.18) argues for the existence of a symbiotic relationship between the media and government. However, in the case of the mainstream media's role in Malaysia, this has been questioned by scholars, for example Zaharom (2002), Zaharom and Wang (2004), Mustafa Kamal (2000, 2005). They argue whether it is right for the media to be a partner to the government in delivering the information and imparting a nationalist spirit in society. O'Heffernan (cited in Derek 2007, p.18) argues:

> …that what once was a symbiotic relationship between media and government (by which he means mutually beneficial propinquity) has changed into one of interdependent mutual exploitation.

Presumably, in the case of Malaysian reporting of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore, the media has to handle different issues with different approaches. Derek (2007, p.18) concludes that in the studies by Robinson and O'Heffernan the mechanism of influence can actually be found in the 'communication itself'. This argument supports my approach to the analysis of structural properties.

The discussion on persuasive news reporting explores the dilemma of news as a powerful mechanism and significant contributor to the Malaysia Singapore relationship. The debate about the power of news has been highlighted by many scholars, for example, McNair (2006) and Park (1999). Park (1999) concludes that news "is not a story or an anecdote"[76]. It is something that has for the person who hears or reads it an interest that is pragmatic rather than appreciative. News is characteristically, if not always, limited to events that bring about sudden and decisive changes". According to Roshco (1999, p.33):

> A definition of news should be encompass both 'negative' and 'positive' news, making possible an explanation of why an armistice has as much value as a declaration of war and why a moon-landing rates as large a banner headline as the dropping of an atomic bomb. Such a definition promotes understanding of the news making process. It also provides insight into why, in daily practice, conflict and crisis are the stuff of front-page stories more often than amity and success, regardless of the social and political values of individual journalists.

5.3.2 Leadership influences

Findings from textual analysis will provide empirical evidence which develops and defines the macrostructure (the whole meaning of the text). They will also show how meaning is constructed through leadership discourse in the news constructions. The news constructions also examine the sources' roles and messages in BERNAMA news as part of techniques on how to manage the people's perceptions. This contributes to

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[76] Park (1999, pp.13-14) describes how news has been constructed as a part of 'typical reaction': The first typical reaction of an individual to the news is likely to be a desire to repeat it to someone. This makes conversation, arouses further comment, and perhaps starts a discussion. However, once discussion has begun the event under discussion soon ceases to be news, and, as interpretations of an event differ, discussions turn from the news to the issues it raises. The clash of opinions and sentiments which discussion invariably evokes usually terminates in some sort of consensus or collective opinion – what we call public opinion. It is on the interpretation of present events such as the news that public opinion rests.

the notion of Malaysian society perceptions of the relationship issues. One of the important findings from textual analysis is the influence of political leadership. 'Influence' means any feedback, comments or criticisms on the issues or events by leaders. In this study the leaders of the countries referred to are Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah Badawi for Malaysia and Goh Chok Tong for Singapore respectively, as highlighted in the selected samples of BERNAMA news articles.

The findings show that during Mahathir and Abdullah's administrations, the main sources of these 'influences' came from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and were conducted in line with the role of the minister as an ambassador or public relations official of the country. However, most of the articles during Mahathir's administration showed higher leadership influences in early paragraphs/leads of the news articles as shown in examples below. In contrast to Abdullah's administration, findings show that there is no direct influence by any leaders in both countries especially in the headlines, first and second paragraph of the news articles.

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AGREE TO IMPROVE TIES
SEPANG, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- **Malaysia and Singapore agreed to work towards improving bilateral ties and set aside whatever differences between the two neighbouring countries.**
 "We hope so, unless somebody else say something. Not me, anyway," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told a joint news conference with his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong at the Pan Pacific Hotel next to the Kuala Lumpur Internatinal Airport (KLIA) here.
 Goh arrived here today for a one-day visit. The two leaders earlier held bilateral talks at the airport's Bilik Bunga Raya, the fifth meeting between them so far this year.
 Dr Mahathir was asked if the two countries would set aside their differences and work towards improving bilateral ties.
 Goh told the news conference that differences between the two countries might arise.
 However, he said the important thing was to narrow the gap between the differences and work towards maximising the common areas.
 "And where we could agree, we will agree and where we disagree on certain things, **we agree to come back tomorrow**," he said.

The news articles do contrast with those published during Abdullah's administration, for example the comment made by Mahathir in the article above when he said, "We hope so, unless somebody else say something 'Not me anyway'" [77]. The interpretation

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[77] Articles titled 'Malaysia and Singapore agree to improve ties'. Refer to Appendix 8 for full news.

of this statement made by Mahathir shows that Malaysia is willing to improve bilateral ties, however its counterparts may not have the same aim. However, the statement made by Goh to counter the earlier statement by Mahathir shows the implicit meaning that "the differences between two countries might arise". He further elaborates that "the important thing was to narrow the gap between the differences and work towards maximising the common areas". It is implied that both countries are not comfortable with each other, but can still work together despite their differences.

Therefore, the prominent issues discussed in the news are not necessarily the most important ones such as water and bridge issues. This complements the in-depth interviews where most of the respondents are not really aware of the issues between the two countries but claim that there was a disagreement between Mahathir and his counterpart. The news article above shows the response from Goh Chok Tong, the Prime Minister of Singapore, in which he foresees the capacity to solve the problems between Malaysia and Singapore. A simple statement by any of these leaders represents the country's stance. In a way, leaders do contribute to or influence their society's perceptions of the relationship.

Most of the news articles have been written in a descriptive style and the agenda has been framed as if it is representing the public perspective. None of the samples of news reporting showed the journalists' view of the relationship or issues being reported. Instead, they described the phenomena more indirectly. The mainstream media in Malaysia seems to report and support the government policy and agenda regardless of the domestic or regional policies and issues. This is reflected when most of the statements in the selected news articles[78] were made by the higher government officials. It demonstrates a significant trend of media supporting the government policies and agenda through the mainstream media. As argued by Wang (2001, p.83) the mainstream media in Malaysia is consistent in portraying the government positively because it also happens to own most of the media   (see Khoo 2000; Mustafa Kamal 2000; Wang 2001).

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[78] Refer to Appendix 8 for BERNAMA full news.

For example, the news headlines framed an agenda which described the pressure on Singapore. However, that is not reflected in the first and second paragraphs/leads of the news articles. The repetitions in the first and second paragraphs/leads of the news show how and why Malaysia is taking actions on Singapore. These comments provide some pressure and influence from leaders like Dr Mahathir and are less harmonious in the relationship. Despite the influence, the statement made at the end of the news article 'we agree to come back tomorrow' is a good example of harmony. Although all news articles suggest pressure, as Malaysia announces its ultimatum, they still maintain the harmonious style of reporting through the news headlines by using positive words such as 'improve ties'. Another example is from the statement in the article below explaining the water issue crisis. Phrases like 'and negotiate with Singapore' show positiveness and a willingness to work towards harmony.

MALAYSIA HAS NEVER USED WATER ISSUE TO PRESSURE SINGAPORE, SAYS NAJIB MACHANG, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has never used **the water supply issue to pressure Singapore**, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak said today.
He said that actually it was Singapore which had dwelled on the issue until it was unable to separate it from other isues.
   "We do not act hastily nor are we inhuman but we want to safeguard Malaysia's interests in everything that we do **and negotiate with Singapore**," he told reporters before opening Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Temangan, near here.

Out of 19 articles, only 6 (nos. 4, 6, 8, 10, 16 and 19) indicate the leaders' influence in the news headlines and these are highlighted in bold below.

Table 5.4: News Headlines

No	Headlines
1	Outstanding Issues Won't Affect M'sia-S'pore Ties
2	Military Relations Between Malaysia And Singapore Remain Strong
3	S'pore Says Will Proceed With Idr Panel Only If M'sia Wants It
4	**S'pore Can Start A New Cooperative Relationship With M'sia – Goh**
5	Now's The Time To Resolve Issues, Says M'sian Envoy
6	**Govt Can't Abort Malaysia-Singapore Bridge Project, Says Samy Vellu**
7	Malaysia And Singapore Move Ahead With New Leadership
8	**M'sia-S'pore Ties: So Far So Good For Pak Lah**
9	Highlight Other Malaysia-Singapore Issues As Well, Call
10	**Malaysia Sees No Conflict With Singapore, Says Syed Hamid**
11	Malaysia, Singapore Meet To Resolve Outstanding Issues
12	Singapore Agrees To Accept Note On Malaysia's Concern
13	Malaysia And Singapore Agree To Resolve Outstanding Issues
14	Singapore, Malaysia Closer To Resolving Outstanding Issues
15	Singapore Wants Relations With Malaysia Back To Normal
16	**Malaysia Has Never Used Water Issue To Pressure Singapore, Says Najib**
17	Malaysia Demands An Apology From Singapore
18	Review Malaysia-Singapore Ties, Says Umno Youth
19	**Cabinet To Decide On Malaysia-Singapore Row Over Kuan Yew**

The other 13 articles only indicate the leadership influence in the later paragraph and not even in the first two leads. Only 3 articles state clearly the issues in the headlines. The first is on the Iskandar Development Region (IDR), second is on the bridge project and the last one is on the water issues (refer to the headlines number 3, 6 and 16 in Table 5.4). There were 16 articles (refer to Table 5.4) that mentioned the 'relationship and ties' issues from the bigger perspectives which deliberately downplay the main issues like 'water', 'bridge', etc.

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AGREE TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES
PUTRAJAYA, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today **agreed in principle to resolve all outstanding issues between the two countries.**

SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA CLOSER TO RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES
SINGAPORE, March 13 (Bernama) -- **Singapore and Malaysia have taken a step forward towards resolving their package of outstanding bilateral issues, Singapore Foreign Minister S.Jayakumar** told Parliament today.

However, some of the frequently mentioned issues were highlighted in the second paragraphs/leads. Some were also found towards the end of the articles which were written based on the history and comments given by other sources. For example in article 3,

MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE REMAIN STRONG
SINGAPORE, Sept 16 (Bernama) - Military cooperation between the Malaysian and Singapore armed forces remains strong despite some occasional glitches in bilateral relations between the two countries, said Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N. Parameswaran... **Kuek [Singapores Chief of Defence Forces] said the two countries had a long history which was intertwined and they were inseparable.**

The main sources are often mentioned in the first paragraph/lead, while other sources like statements made by other leaders can be found much later in the paragraph. The main sources are often mentioned in the first paragraph/lead, while other sources like statements made by other leaders can be found much later in the paragraph as shown in the news article below. Apart from that it also highlighted issues on the land reclamation ('defence, security and borders') which is the third highest news item as described in the trend analysis. For example in article 12 below,

SINGAPORE AGREES TO ACCEPT NOTE ON MALAYSIA'S CONCERN
PUTRAJAYA, March 11 (Bernama) -- **Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Singapore has agreed to accept any notes from Malaysia** regarding the latter's fears **about the possible negative impact** of **the land reclamation works** at Pulau Tekong, bordering Malaysian waters…Yesterday, **Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said that Singapore should not just brush aside fears** on the effects of the reclamation works in its waters.

Even if the main sources were stated in the last paragraph, the conclusion of the news will be deliberately framed as such to indicate to the readers that: 1) the leaders are actually involved in the decision-making; and 2) the leaders are only observing or

giving consultations or advice on the issues. The main concern of the analysis in the text highlights the condition/event/activity, the main sources, and the leadership influence/involvement through the statement/comments, the consequences and expectations. BERNAMA, as a national press agency, frequently quoted leaders' influence in their news which reflects the prominence of those leaders. Despite their role as ministers, leaders such as Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew were seen as patriots or nationalists and having strong characters that could influence the media.

It is also important to highlight the findings from this textual analysis on the significant usage of harmonious reporting embedded in the news text. Most of the news texts demonstrate significant values of striving for harmonious in the text but not in the headlines. There are some conciliatory factors and elements underlying in the text as shown in Table 5.5 and 5.6 samples of textual analysis later in this chapter. Since textual analysis is done to identify whether the news has elements of harmony in its reporting, news texts on Malaysia and Singapore relations were chosen randomly. The elements of harmonious reporting often occur in development journalism practices which lead to supportive reporting of any government issues or policies.

5.3.3 Harmonious Reporting and Conciliatory Elements

The findings demonstrate that the news articles on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship and related issues are less harmonious in their reporting. I begin with a simple textual analysis which effectively describes the evidence for this harmonious reporting.[79] The textual evaluations are based on these two primary indications below:

- Is the technique used in the news headlines, first and second paragraph reflecting harmonious reporting?
- Is there any statement in the news articles that indicates conditions, consequences and expectations which could reflect harmonious reporting?

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[79] For the purpose of understanding the concept of harmonious, this chapter starts with a discussion on what is harmonious. The first part of discussion is derived from the harmonious news reporting analysis by BERNAMA. The later discussion on harmonious underpins earlier discussion on harmonious reporting by BERNAMA.

To demonstrate the different style of news reporting, below are examples of two news articles from BERNAMA online – one was in 1998 during Mahathir's administration and the next one was in 2004 during Abdullah's administration.

KUAN YEW MANIPULATED HISTORY, SAYS SYED HAMID
KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's claim in his memoirs that Malaysia had used **"bullying and intimidation"** during the two countries' brief federation was a manipulation of history.

"All sorts of old issues were raised racial sentiments were fanned as if he was the one who determined our history. He is good at manipulating the facts to make them appear as if that was what had actually happened.

"This is manipulation of history and historical facts which I feel is not healthy for a leader who has held the highest post," he said after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between his ministry and DRB-Hicom Defence Technologies, here.

Extracts of the former Singapore prime minister's memoirs, which also claimed that Lee still believed that Malaysia could use the water issue to cow its neighbour, were published in the Singapore Sunday Times last Sunday.

Syed Hamid said that such writing would aggravate instead of ease the strain between the two countries.

The statement made by Lee Kuan Yew in the news article above reflects an abrasive character alleged by his counterparts when the phrase 'bullying and intimidation' is employed. Malaysia continues accusing Singapore and claims that the memoirs by Lee Kuan Yew were a manipulation of history. The article also reports Lee Kuan Yew's statement about how Malaysia uses the water issue 'to cow' Singapore.

M'SIA-S'PORE AGREE TO GO BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE
SINGAPORE, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today **agreed** to go back to the negotiating table **in resolving outstanding bilateral issues**.

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, announced this at a joint media conference after a four-eye meeting at the Istana here.

"We acknowledge there are several outstanding issues that need to be resolved. We have taken a positive and constructive attitude towards finding amicable solutions to resolving such issues," said Abdullah.

"I believe we can move forward in resolving these issues in the spirit of good neighbourliness," said Abdullah, who is making his first working visit as Malaysia's Prime Minister to Singapore.

Malaysia and Singapore have had a testy relationship ever since the republic left the Malaysian federation in 1965 with ties strained by a number of unresolved issues, some dating back to the British colonial period.

They are locked in a legal battle over land reclamation works being carried out by Singapore in waters bordering Malaysia and the matter is now before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Other sources of tension include the price of water Malaysia supplies to Singapore, a prospective bridge linking the countries, the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore military aircraft and ownership of Pulau Batu Puteh.

Meanwhile, the second article above, which was published during Abdullah's administration shows less pressure through the words used such as 'we acknowledge', 'I believe', 'to be resolved', 'amicable solutions'. Yet the article acknowledges that a testy relationship exists. Regardless of whether it is international or regional news, the coverage influences people on how they perceive the status of regional relationships. Consequently, in the content analysis findings, a greater percentage of news articles on relationship issues were found in 2002 and 2003, and showed a tendency to harmonious reporting, a greater percentage of such news compared to other years.

News on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship is based on the issues highlighted by the Malaysian government and space is devoted to the news on the issues or conflicts between the countries. Unlike local newspapers, the scope of reporting in BERNAMA is also varied and the news agency has to report any regional news while maintaining its role as a media agent to the government. Other local newspapers in Malaysia usually subscribe to BERNAMA news especially for regional and international reports. BERNAMA, therefore, not only plays a role as a news provider but also as a harmony media agent to the government. This suggests that the news articles, the news agency and government officials (as the sources) significantly play the same role as 'agents of harmony'.

Interpretive news analysis reveals that there is a striking 'conciliatory comments' element in each of the news stories about issues emerging from the statements made by government officials. News is used to encourage, compromise, and to protect Malaysia from any further impact or clashes with Singapore. Out of 19 news articles, only two articles (nos. 3 and 9) mentioned the concerns of Malaysians regarding Malaysia and Singapore issues; for example according to article no. 3 and highlighted in bold.

S'PORE SAYS WILL PROCEED WITH IDR PANEL ONLY IF M'SIA WANTS IT
SINGAPORE, May 22 (Bernama) -- Singapore has responded to the concerns voiced out by Malaysians over the setting up of a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), with the Foreign Ministry saying that it does not see how the establishment of the JMC is a "concession" to the republic...The committee was to explore collaborations in the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) and **ways in which Singapore could help it to succeed.**

The conciliatory element is to protect people or readers from any further prolonging of the issues. This element is embedded in the news and stresses the issues, main sources of information and leadership involvement by documenting the leaders' statements on the issues, their consequences and expectations emerging from them. The element of conciliation was very obvious during Abdullah's leadership compared to Mahathir's period in government.

The conciliatory factors or elements can be seen in the news articles below during two different administrations – Abdullah in 2003 and Mahathir in 1998. For example, the article below suggests that bilateral issues are affected by past issues and it should not jeopardize the relationship as highlighted in bold. This describes some element of conciliatory been mentioned in the articles. From the statement Goh, "future relation should not be held hostage by past issues" interprets that Singapore are willing to compromise with Malaysia. Despite one-sided feedback from Singapore, BERNAMA then highlights that Abdullah's statement "concurred on the need to move the process forward for the sake of better ties" as to portray that Malaysia is also looking for harmony.

MALAYSIA, S'PORE START AFRESH ON RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES
PUTRAJAYA, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today agreed to jumpstart talks on unresolved bilateral issues, with the republic's Senior Minister, Goh Chok Tong, stressing **that future relation should not be held hostage by past issues.**
    Both Goh and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi **concurred on the need to move the process forward for the sake of better ties** across the Causeway.
    Emerging from their meeting here, Abdullah told a joint news conference that they had tasked their respective foreign ministers and senior officials to try to thrash out the bilateral problems before he and Goh meet again within two months.

The element of conciliation is more obvious in the article below. This article suggests that talks between Mahathir and Goh could ease the testy relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. In their discussion, both leaders have indicated, despite their differences in handling bilateral issues that they mutually agreed to cooperate and work closely together. The article below interprets such a conciliatory element with the words 'moved forward' in the first paragraph which indicate an intention to work together. In the second paragraph, words such 'firm foundation' were stressed by BERNAMA to

indicate how both leaders appear to have mutual agreement on the new millennium. In fact the statement that Malaysia agrees to continue supplying water to Singapore beyond 2061 shows a desire for mutual bilateral ties.

NEW DIMENSION IN MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES
KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- **Signaling a new dimension in their sometimes prickly ties, Malaysia and Singapore moved forward on several long-standing bilateral issues following talks between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong here**.

A joint communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministry to wrap up Goh's 48-hour working visit here today said the agreements reached between the two prime ministers have laid a **"firm foundation" for both countries to cooperate closely in the new millennium.**

The two leaders also agreed that Malaysia and Singapore would intensify efforts to cooperate in banking and finance and work together with their Asean partners to restore stability to regional currencies.

Officials from both sides will study Malaysia's proposal of using regional currencies and other options to finance intra-Asean trade.

Malaysia announced that it agreed to continue supplying water to Singapore beyond 2061 upon the expiry of existing agreements signed in 1961 and 1962. This undertaking would be confirmed in an agreement in 60 days.

The styles of reporting by the media in Malaysia were found to be less obtrusive, less confrontational, less harmful and have less of an impact on the other party. More attention on harmonious reporting was given during Abdullah Badawi's leadership as more subtle, positive and encouraging words were identified in most news articles. For example words or phrases used in the headlines such as 'won't affect Malaysia Singapore ties', 'remain strong' and 'M'sia Singapore: So far so good for Pak Lah' had been used in the news articles during Abdullah's tenure. The headlines were written in order to maintain a good relationship with Singapore, and put less pressure on both countries. In contrast the pressure or heat was obvious during Mahathir's era and this can be seen in most of the news headlines such as 'Malaysia demands an apology from Singapore'. Such statements were made during Mahathir's prime ministership to indicate how his treatment towards Singapore was aggressive.

The style of news reporting during Abdullah's era was less polemical, and more of an update on the current status of an issue. In contrast, during Mahathir's leadership, there was more pressure as indicated in the news article below:

Dr Mahathir said: "What we have done is to give an undertaking that we will not cut off water supply or terminate in any way. We'll continue to supply water".

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> Asked whether the new time-frame for the supply had been set, Dr Mahathir said **the decision could not be made now as the "situation prevailing at that time is something that we do not know."**

This statement shows that Mahathir was reluctant to address the issue further and at one stage being less transparent was part of the government strategy.

For example one of the significant findings from the news articles is that harmonious remarks made by Lee Kuan Yew, the Senior Minister of Singapore, during the economic crisis in 1997 and 1998 could be seen as striving for harmony. The article below indicates the statement made by Kuan Yew on the crime rate in Johor Baru. Such statement like this had a high tendency to invite comments and criticisms from Malaysian government officials or politicians like Abdul Ghani, 'the Johor Chief Minister' and Syed Hamid, the 'Defence Minister' at that time, by questioning Singapore's sincerity in the relationship with Malaysia. Syed Hamid also comments that the media should not highlight such cases in order to maintain harmony between the countries. Consequences in doing so are that more comments arise and hence create many negative impacts on the relationship.

MALAYSIA REGRETS ARTICLE BY SINGAPORE PAPER
PETALING JAYA, April 30 1998 (Bernama) -- Malaysian leaders today blasted the Singapore Straits Times for its article to justify the republic's senior minister **Lee Kuan Yew's criticism of Johor Baru for its crime rate**.

Several ministers interviewed agreed that the report was damaging and had not helped to improve Singapore-Malaysia ties following a diplomatic tiff over Kuan Yew's remarks.

While the ministers cautioned Singapore newspapers to stop writing negative reports about Malaysia, Umno Youth called on Wisma Putra to review the diplomatic ties with the island-republic.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said the report was not a friendly way of managing the issue…

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar questioned the motive of the article as the Singapore High Court had made a decision to expunge the derogatory remarks about Johor made by Kuan Yew in an affidavit to support his defamation suit.

"I think if the intention is to behave like good neighbour, then the newspaper should accordingly in particular this case not try to highlight something as to justify," said Syed Hamid, who is from Johor.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat wondered whether Singapore was sincere in their relationship with Malaysia.

"I've been noticing that the Singapore press has been writing a lot of negative reports about Malaysia even after the issue," he said.

Mohamed, who is also from Johor, said the Straits Times article could be termed as an unfriendly act and "they still harbour bad feelings about us".

"If they are eager in establishing good relations with us, I think they should stop writing all these things ... we're not doing it, we never mention bad things about Singapore," he said.

The style of reporting shows that Malaysia has given its neighbour some respect regarding Lee Kuan Yew's remarks on the high crime rates in Johor. However, this remark has drawn some attention especially from the Malaysian cabinet members as they demand an apology from Kuan Yew or else they would proceed with a court affidavit. In this case, I found that there are some 'conciliatory' elements in the style of reporting, which means that some of the news reporting aims to 'protect from impact' by using certain words that bring about a sense of harmony as indicated in the samples below. Conciliatory elements are used to prevent serious confrontation between both countries.

Greater elements of conciliatory are also shown below during Abdullah's leadership in 2008:

OUTSTANDING ISSUES WON'T AFFECT M'SIA-S'PORE TIES
KULAIJAYA, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore will not allow outstanding issues **to hinder efforts at forging closer bilateral ties**, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today.
    He said he and his Singapore counterpart, George Yeo, **would continue** to expand the bilateral ties and find ways so that economic and diplomatic ties between the two neighbouring countries could be further strengthened.
"Both of us will not allow the outstanding issues (between Malaysia and Singapore) to become obstacles and together find ways of improving ties and comradeship," he told reporters on the last day of the 9th Annual Friendly Games between the staff of Wisma Putra and the Singapore Foreign Ministry, here.
    Rais said a positive approach was the best way in handling bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore.

In the second paragraph, the elements of conciliation seem very familiar begin from the grey shading in the news text above. The word 'would continue' strongly indicates the expansion of diplomatic ties. In 2008, Abdullah was pressured to step down. Despite the pressure he still maintained his harmonious strategy when dealing with Singapore. The statement which was made by Rais Yatim, the foreign minister at that time, actually reflected both leaders' (Abdullah and Rais) characters as calm and mild, which have contrasting approach to Mahathir and Syed Hamid (the foreign minister during Mahathir's administration). This finding also demonstrates the conciliatory aspects played by the news agency to downplay some issues with Singapore. 'Conciliatory'

means that the news published by BERNAMA somehow will also downplay the news on Singapore as highlighted in the local newspapers.

BERNAMA as the news agency has credibility as an official media organisation to report on any news brought up by other media groups. The news needs to inform the people while making them think of what lies behind the government's decisions. Furthermore these findings are consistent with the role of the news agency representing the government but at the same time also reporting the truth. These results suggest that the style of news reporting by BERNAMA is often favourable towards the government. For example, most of the BERNAMA news includes comments or statements made by the government officials. News by BERNAMA on Malaysia-Singapore relationship emphasizes the previous conflicts and political issues between both countries. In other words, the news coverage is more oriented toward the relationship and political relations.

5.3.4 The News Headlines

The findings show the news trend in content analysis (Chapter Four) that the category on 'relationship and ties' issues dominates the news headlines and news leads (first two paragraphs) from 1996 to 2008. Therefore, articles on the 'relationship' issues between Malaysia and Singapore in the news headlines is used again for textual analysis employed aggressive words such as '**MALAYSIA DEMANDS AN APOLOGY FROM SINGAPORE'** and **'REVIEW MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES, SAYS UMNO YOUTH'.**

While in the leads (first and second paragraphs), most of the words used were repetitions of the headlines such as **'demanded'**, **'a review of diplomatic ties'** etc. to emphasize the important issues to the readers. Message in the content is very clear as repetitions show how important the issue is and to what extent both countries can take the pressure by using the media as the means for discussions. Below are some examples of the headlines on water issues which affect the relationship. From the headlines, pressure is demonstrated particularly those based on issues/conflicts between Malaysia and Singapore. For example the headlines dated 13 October 2002 show that Malaysia demanded that Singapore accept Malaysia's offers on the issue.

17.11.07	MALAYSIA **TO DISCUSS** IDR WATER CLEANING PROGRAMME WITH SINGAPORE
19.11.07	SINGAPORE CLAIMS MALAYSIA'S **ALLEGATIONS WITHOUT FOUNDATION**

11.10.02	MALAYSIA **TO BACKDATE WATER DUES** FROM SINGAPORE
13.10.02	MALAYSIA GIVING SINGAPORE **LAST CHANCE** ON WATER ISSUE

Although the trend shows in content analysis that the highest percentage of news reporting on Malaysia-Singapore relations was in 2002, this is not enough to ensure that the Malaysia-Singapore relationship is well established, as there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration if it is to be a recurring news item. For example, identifying words or a phrase used such as 'need to be deepened' (12.03.02), imply that Singapore still wants to have a close relationship with Malaysia. In 2008 some headlines portray positive indications on the overall relationship.

11.03.02	SINGAPORE **AGREES TO ACCEPT** NOTE ON MALAYSIA'S CONCERN
12.03.02	MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES **NEED TO BE DEEPENED**, SAYS LEE

02.09.08	SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA **SHOULD SMOOTHEN** THEIR RELATIONS
08.11.08	OUTSTANDING ISSUES **WON'T AFFECT** M'SIA-S'PORE TIES

As analysed in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 (samples of textual analysis) the analysis is based on five aspects which give different implications on the news. Therefore, leadership's influences, expectations and consequences from the news are expected to be learned and absorbed by the readers. The news objectives here are not only focusing on the structure of the news but also focusing on the voices of the writer (journalists) despite the tensions created and the solutions to these outstanding issues.

Table 5.5 below describes the leaders influence in the headlines. Out of 19 headlines listed, six headlines mentioned the leaders name either from Singapore or Malaysia. 13 headlines have no leaders influence in it. Indications of expectations are very familiar as compared to expectations in the headlines. For example the headlines 'MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE REMAIN STRONG'

indicate the main agenda or major concerns for security of both countries. The headlines only indicate the expectation that military relations will remain strong. However, there is no indication of any consequences in the headlines if the military relationship between both countries is not strong. For further clarification five aspects are analysed in Table 5.6 below:

- News Agenda/Condition/Event/Activity
- Sources
- Expectations
- Consequences
- Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments

Table 5.5: BERNAMA News Headlines: Leadership Influence in the Headlines

No	Date/ Years	News Headlines	Headlines Issues/ News Agenda (major concerns)	Expectations	Consequences	Leadership influences/ statements/ involvements
1	08.11.08	OUTSTANDING ISSUES WON'T AFFECT M'SIA-S'PORE TIES	Outstanding issues between Malaysia and Singapore	Hope that it would not affect ties	Could affect ties	None
2	16.09.08	MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE REMAIN STRONG	Military relations	Remain strong	None	None
3	22.05.07	S'PORE SAYS WILL PROCEED WITH IDR PANEL ONLY IF M'SIA WANTS IT	Panel for Iskandar Development Region (IDR)	Hope that Malaysia wants to proceed with the IDR panel	Without IDR panels it would probably unable to raise concerns on IDR	None
4	15.03.07	S'PORE CAN START A NEW COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH M'SIA – GOH	A cooperative relationship	A new cooperative relationship	None	Singapore's Senior Minister, Goh Chok Tong
5	30.11.05	NOW'S THE TIME TO RESOLVE ISSUES, SAYS M'SIAN ENVOY	It is time to resolve issues	To solve issues now	It might get worst or might get better	Malaysian envoy (diplomats)
6	24.01.05	GOVT CAN'T ABORT MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE BRIDGE PROJECT, SAYS SAMY VELLU	Bridge project	Hope that government would not abort the bridge project	None	Malaysia's Works Minister, Samy Vellu
7	27.07.04	MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE MOVE AHEAD WITH NEW LEADERSHIP	New leadership	To move ahead with new leadership	None	None
8	27.01.04	M'SIA-S'PORE TIES: SO FAR SO GOOD FOR PAK LAH	Malaysia Singapore ties	Good under new Malaysia's PM, Abdullah Badawi	None	None
9	13.07.03	HIGHLIGHT OTHER MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE ISSUES AS WELL, CALL	Other Malaysia and Singapore issues	To highlights other issues on Malaysia Singapore	None	None
10	07.03.03	MALAYSIA SEES NO CONFLICT WITH SINGAPORE, SAYS SYED HAMID	No conflict with Singapore	Not to have any conflict with Singapore	None	None

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11	01.07.02	MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE MEET TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES	Malaysia Singapore meet	To resolve outstanding issues	None	None
12	11.03.02	SINGAPORE AGREES TO ACCEPT NOTE ON MALAYSIA'S CONCERN	Singapore agrees with Malaysia to accept notes	Singapore agrees to accept Malaysia concerns	None	None
13	04.09.01	MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AGREE TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES	Outstanding issues	Agree to resolve outstanding issues	None	None
14	13.03.01	SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA CLOSER TO RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES	Outstanding issues	Closer to resolve outstanding issues	None	None
15	01.11.98	SINGAPORE WANTS RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA BACK TO NORMAL	Relationship issues	Manage relationship back to normal	None	None
16	14.09.98	MALAYSIA HAS NEVER USED WATER ISSUE TO PRESSURE SINGAPORE, SAYS NAJIB	Water issue	Water is not used as treat on Singapore	None	Malaysia's Education Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak
17	12.03.97	MALAYSIA DEMANDS AN APOLOGY FROM SINGAPORE	Apology	That Singapore should apologize	None	None
18	15.03.97	REVIEW MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES, SAYS UMNO YOUTH	Relationship	To review relationship	None	Umno youth (political party)
19	18.03.97	CABINET TO DECIDE ON MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE ROW OVER KUAN YEW	Decision on Lee Kuan Yew	To take action on Lee Kuan Yew	None	Malaysian cabinet

Table 5.6: Samples of Textual analysis - Analysis has been highlighted in bold

Row/ Para/ Head -lines	Bernama Online News – The Structure of news consists of Headlines, Main events/activity/ Sources/Indications of leadership influence/consequences/expectations	Analysis
1	**Date: 08-11-2008** **OUTSTANDING ISSUES WON'T AFFECT M'SIA-S'PORE TIES** KULAIJAYA, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and **Singapore will not allow outstanding issues to hinder efforts at forging closer bilateral ties**, said **Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim** today. He said he and his Singapore counterpart, **George Yeo**, would **continue to expand the bilateral ties** and **find ways so that economic and diplomatic ties** between the two neighbouring countries could be further strengthened. "Both of us will not allow the outstanding issues (between Malaysia and Singapore) to become obstacles and together **find ways of improving ties and comradeship**," he told reporters on the last day of the 9th Annual Friendly Games between the staff of Wisma Putra and the Singapore Foreign Ministry, here. Rais said **a positive approach** was the best way in handling bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore. Meanwhile Yeo, who was also present during the media conference, said Singapore shared Rais's approaches of finding win-win solutions towards bilateral relation, working together and respecting each other's sensitivities. "Of course as foreign minister, **we have to defend our own national interest**, but it makes a big difference if there is trust, goodwill and mutual affection towards each other, because that enables us to find creative ways to evolve solutions which are mutually beneficial to us," he said. **Cooperation within Asean**, especially between Malaysia and Singapore, which according to him, was the single most important relationship in the regional grouping, had become more pertinent as both economies were affected by the global economic slowdown. "Where we can work together to keep each other's economy moving and thriving, we should try to do so," he said. On **Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak becoming Malaysia's next Prime Minister in March** and its impact on Kuala Lumpur's foreign policy, Yeo believed, bilateral relationship between them would remain very good and forward looking.	News Analysis: ● News Agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- Discussion on Malaysia and Singapore will not allow any outstanding issues to hinder their efforts in forging closer bilateral ties. ● Sources – Malaysia Foreign Minister, Datuk Rais Yatim ● Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs George Yeo ● Consequences– Could affect the national interest and cooperation within Asean. Could slow down the economy if not working together. ● Expectations – would continue to expand the bilateral ties. To find ways to strengthen the economic and diplomatic ties. Suggested using positive approach – win-win solutions, working together and respect each other. Datuk Seri Najib Razak will becoming Malaysia's next PM in March.
2	**Date:16-9-2008** **MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE REMAIN STRONG** SINGAPORE, Sept 16 (Bernama) - **Military cooperation** between the Malaysian and Singapore **armed forces remains strong despite some occasional glitches** in bilateral relations between the two countries, said Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N. Parameswaran. "**The relations between the two militaries are at a very comfortable level**," he said at a reception held on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Malaysian Armed Forces here tonight.	News Analysis: ● News agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- Discussion on the status of military cooperation's (security) in bilateral relations is at comfortable level ● Sources – Malaysian High Commissioner to

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	Singapore Datuk N. Parameswaran and Singapores Chief of Defence Forces Lt Gen Desmond Kuek • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – none • Consequences – none. • Expectations – To develop strong defence and further develop the relations between people to people of two countries. Reminding that both countries had a long history.	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- Discussion on the concerns which has been voiced out by Malaysian on the setting up of Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC). JMC is different from IDR • Sources – spokesman (unrevealed) • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – Both prime minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia) and Lee Hsien Loong (Singapore) • Consequences– The outstanding issues were not easy to resolve and will deal with IDR issues separately. Clearly state that IDR issues will bring more competitive pressure on Singapore. JMC will also benefits Singapore through concessions given to the republic. Once both parties had agreed to the terms and conditions, it cannot be changed
3	He said though the two neighbouring countries were seen now and then at loggerheads, the two armies were quietly conducting bilateral military exercises somewhere in Malaysia. Singapores Chief of Defence Forces Lt Gen Desmond Kuek was the guest-of-honour at the reception, which was also attended by several Singapore top military officers, foreign military attaches and advisers, and diplomats. Defence Adviser to the Malaysian High Commission Kol Abd Rahim Sainon represented the Malaysian Armed Forces. The High Commissioner said since he was posted to the city-state more than five years ago, the cooperation between the two militaries was closer as many efforts had been made by both sides to strengthen it. He said many Singapore military officers had attended training and courses in Malaysia and vice-versa, and they also interacted with Malaysian personnel in various social and sports events organised jointly by both parties. Parameswaran said apart from bilateral exercises, both militaries were also active in multi-lateral exercises such as under the Five Power Defence Agreement and in peacekeeping missions. Meanwhile, Kuek said he was delighted with the cordial relations between the two armed forces, adding that he hoped they would continue to work closely together and **develop a strong defense cooperation and friendship.** He also said they should not only "strengthen the breadth and depth of relations between the two armed forces but also **further develop the relations between people to people of the two countries".** **Kuek said the two countries had a long history which was intertwined and they were inseparable.**	**Date: 22-05-2007** **S'PORE SAYS WILL PROCEED WITH IDR PANEL ONLY IF M'SIA WANTS IT** SINGAPORE, May 22 (Bernama) -- **Singapore has responded to the concerns voiced out by Malaysians** over **the setting up of a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC),** with **the Foreign Ministry** saying that it **does not see** how the **establishment of the JMC** is a "**concession**" to the republic. "The JMC will not be involved in the running of the IDR (Iskandar Development Region)," **the spokesman** said in a statement in response to the concerns by certain quarters in Malaysia over the formation of the committee. The spokesman said that Malaysian officials themselves have made clear the role of the JMC -- that it would not be "consultative" in nature and the setting up would not in any way affect Malaysia's sovereignty. "However, to avoid any misapprehension, Singapore will let Malaysia take the lead on the JMC. **We will proceed with it only if the Malaysian and Johor authorities want us to do so,**" the spokesman said. The JMC was agreed to by the Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong at their retreat in Langkawi last week. The committee was to **explore collaborations** in the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) and ways in which Singapore **could help it to succeed.** The 2,217 sq km IDR -- about three times the size of Singapore -- is an area being earmarked for massive multi-sectoral development in south Johor, bordering the republic. The ministry also rejected suggestions in the Malaysian media that the JMC be used to discuss outstanding bilateral issues between the two neighbours. "The JMC is a forum with a specific purpose, that is, to facilitate Singapore-Malaysia cooperation in the IDR. As for the

outstanding bilateral issues, the two leaders had **agreed to deal with them later** and not let them hold back the bilateral cooperation in the IDR," it said. The spokesman said Singapore shared Abdullah's views in Langkawi when he said that "we deal with the outstanding issues later... We don't want to get blocked while trying to resolve these issues, while there are other things that we would like to do". The spokesman also reiterated Lee's statement in Langkawi that the outstanding bilateral issues **were not easy to resolve.** "It is best to deal with them separately in a way that will be completely acceptable to both sides, and at the same time not affect the overall bilateral relationship," it said. It said that Abdullah had invited Singapore to support and invest in the IDR project and Singapore studied the project papers it was given. "We decided to do so because **although the IDR will mean more competitive pressures on Singapore,** there are also complementary aspects that will benefit Singapore."This mutual benefit is the only basis for sound long-term cooperation because every project means both cooperation and competition," it said. **The statement stressed however that once an agreement was reached, both parties would have to abide by what had been agreed to.**"The terms cannot be subsequently changed for whatever reasons," it added.	for whatever reasons. • Expectations – the committee of IDR to explore collaborations and which Singapore could help it to succeed. To deal with the outstanding bilateral issues later. Singapore will proceed with JMC unless Malaysia agrees.

The tensions and pressures have been embedded in the BERNAMA news articles and might have a certain impact on readers. The repeated techniques of representation might impact on other media too, and the political relations between the two countries. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 also summarise the expectations and consequences of the news as highlighted clearly in the news headlines. Therefore, the relationship coverage shows how development journalism actually encompasses international relations.

As discussed previously, the findings also show that the influence in the news reporting could be influenced by other factors including the impact of elites or political individuals. Media organisations like BERNAMA then portray development journalism media as it is practised, which conforms to the involvement of the political elites in their news stories. As discussed by Zaharom (2002), although Malaysia appears to have adopted a 'development journalism' approach in its media practice, all media organizations there remain in the hands of corporate organizations closely linked to the government and political parties. Yet, according to Wong, KK (2004, p.30), newspapers in Malaysia operate on the basis of developmental journalism that 'the investment arms of the component NF [National Front or *Barisan National* (BN)] parties had to ensure their media companies generated profits, and because of that, editors and reporters must perform as professionals instead of propagandists for the NF'. For example, the selected words in bold in the news article below show that the media support the veracity of the statement made by the Foreign Minister. The last phrase indicates that society has its own concerns on this issue.

STATEMENT BY SINGAPORE EXCESSIVE SAYS UMNO YOUTH
KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 2002(Bernama) -- The Umno Youth movement has described the statement by Singapore MP R Ravindran on the reclamation issue published in the island republic **as excessive** and **could strain bilateral relations.**

"Ravindran can remain the 'political clown' if he chooses to, but if he wants to remain the people's representative he should learn to think about specific issues more seriously," Umno Youth head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said in a statement here today.

He said a personality like Ravindran's could not be relied upon to help resolve any problem arising from Malaysia's relationship with Singapore.

The newspaper today reported that Ravindran, in a hard-hitting speech at Singapore parliament yesterday has described Malaysia's criticism over Singapore's land reclamation works as **illogical.**

He had also suggested that Singapore could offer high ranking Malaysian leaders scholarships to study diplomacy at some renowned universities.

On the suggestion of scholarship, Hishammuddin said while Malaysian leaders had no need for such studies Ravindran himself could take up full-time **"professional clowning" studies. He said the reclamation issue had to be viewed seriously since it was a cause for concern by the people.**

The sample text above indicates a clear message as though Malaysia has given an ultimatum to Singapore on water issues. What actually leads to a harmonious reporting in the Malaysian media? Every statement made in the media adds to public debate. Malaysian media still maintain their style of reporting especially when the sources are top-ranking government individuals. All the feedback or response of the ongoing issues from these government individuals can sometimes lead to a positive or negative impact on public perceptions which the governments of both countries are managing the relationship at their best.

The article below shows some negative impact from the headlines on the relationship. The news presents longstanding arguments between both countries but still demonstrated that there are ways to manage the relationship.

MALAYSIA GIVING SINGAPORE LAST CHANCE ON WATER ISSUE
KOTA TINGGI, Johor, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is giving Singapore **one last chance to prove its willingness to find a solution** to the water pricing issue, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

"We are giving them one more chance. We want to know whether they want to resolve it or otherwise. If they do not want to resolve, we will have to adopt another approach," he told reporters here.

"If not we will be wasting our time talking without end...the crux of the matter is Singapore is not at all showing any earnestness...as though they are meeting us with a view to delaying finding a solution."

For example, the phrase – 'one last chance', in the news headline above might have made Singapore unhappy with the statement and this could lead to more negative feedback. Thus, this style of reporting, with repetitious words in the first lead, embraces both the interpretative and flag shaking styles with the phrase 'willingness to find a solution'. As we can see, the news articles written in the initial parts state clearly the conditions and the consequences of the issues if there is no other way to solve the problems (refer to Table 5.5 above). Since the news statements were made by the higher ranking government officials, I argue that the writing techniques for the regional/international are different from the writing for the domestic news. Domestic news usually highlights the importance of government actions. However, for either regional or local news, there is evidence of leadership input and contributions by different individuals from the government. Thus, evidence shows that development journalism practices are very much influenced by the leaders in order to highlight the importance of the government's views.

Looking at the concept of harmonious reporting, I have argued that this kind of reporting style associated journalistic practices are derived from the 'Asian Values' discourse. As argued in the earlier chapters, development journalism, harmonious reporting and Asian values are interrelated. However, there are some scholars who believe that this has made the whole practice of journalism in Malaysia lag behind other forms of journalism. It was argued by Zaharom (2000, p.130) that Malaysian media practice supports the ruling government:

> …there have been numerous attempts – more often than not with dubious results – among media academics and practitioners in Asia to 'redefine' media studies for the region and assert the need for 'Asian' theories of communication and media…In arguing for the need to discover 'new' theories and research strategies, often they end up helping to legitimate repressive regimes, undemocratic practices and tightly controlled media systems whose raison d'être is to uphold and help perpetuate these regimes.

The continuous changes in the media have nothing to offer except supporting the government. Unless more rooms are given by losing up the rules and regulations that bind the media and allowing more critical reporting, media in Malaysia perhaps could achieve its highest level of freedom. However, it is not easy for a country like Malaysia to do, with its multi-ethnic and multi religious society, and it may jeopardize its existing harmony.

Summary

The findings suggest that the news reporting by BERNAMA and the government officials (as the sources) significantly play the same role as 'agents of harmony' despite their statements in the news reporting. The message embedded in the news articles describes the repetition of how important the issues and conflicts are to both countries. The news articles also depict to what extent both countries can take the pressure off each other by using mainstream and authoritative news sources as the medium of discussions. BERNAMA is under an obligation to report any regional news, while maintaining its role as a media representative of the government.

Development journalism might be prominent in internal reporting but not necessarily the same practice is applied in international or regional reporting. Findings show that:

1) There are leaders influence in the news reporting

2) Less harmonious based on leadership styles. Despite Abdullah calm characters, it was found that during his administration BERNAMA was more aggressive in their writing as compared to Mahathir.

3) The attribution of responsibility (expectations and consequences) was clear and straight forward in the news headlines.

However, the findings demonstrate that the news articles by BERNAMA on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship or related issues are less harmonious in their reporting when different leaders are in power. Therefore, BERNAMA shows in their reporting as less harmonious reporting towards the country counterparts but totally supported the government actions. It also demonstrates evidence of less harmonious reporting in the news based on leaders (prime minister). Most of the news articles provide few details on real issues concerning the relationship. The media are not open especially when highlighting discrepancies on the Malaysian side.

Textual analysis significantly illuminates how the mainstream media like BERNAMA can help to develop a better understanding of the regional relationship and its future. Most of the news articles show direct involvement of higher-ranking government officers. Therefore the agenda of the news was derived from the government's perspective, not that of the public. This study concludes that the Malaysian media groups are tied to leadership styles and news reporting styles in their regional reporting.

The overall findings for content analysis show that there is element of influence by different leaders in the news and which issues is most significant in the relationship throughout 13 years. Meanwhile, textual analysis demonstrate that there are 'less harmonious' elements embedded in the news articles according to issues and based on different leadership styles. The findings have demonstrated that certain values are integrated in Asian journalism practices regardless of the issues that are raised by the media. These results also suggest that weaknesses in the news reporting especially those involving development journalism practices could be countered with a different style of news reporting and media practices so that they are in effect more accountable to the public.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY: INTERVIEW

> In-depth interviews allow a researcher to collect data from respondents when the phenomenon under study cannot be directly observed or measured. It is used to obtain respondents' opinions, feelings, values, motivations and recollections of incidents or experiences that relevant to the study (Weerakkody 2009, p.166).

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on development journalism practices through the eyes of respondents who are journalists or deal directly with journalism in Malaysia. The chapter highlights not only the strengths and limitations of development journalism through their eyes, but also analyses respondents' variety of opinions about relevant issues on press freedom, the media in Malaysia, the influence of international media relationship and media democracy.

Interview data collected includes feedback from different types of social actors: media practitioners, academics and policy makers. Their reflections on journalism demonstrate a sensitivity to many topics in journalism practice, international reporting and the question of press freedom in Malaysia. The respondents were generous with their thoughts and beliefs even though they were holding back at times, and were quite reserved in giving their feedback at first. However, their views emerged as the interviews went on, and the data proved rich. The respondents practice differently from each other as media professionals, and they are also citizens, despite their profiles as media educators, practitioners and policy makers. The complexities of these respondents background were seen as major contributions as their different kind opinions and answers help to construct a better understanding of journalism practices in Malaysia and the regional relationship issues with Singapore. Therefore, identification of different respondent's feedback enabling the research to identify qualitatively how development journalism is regarded by those most closely involved, and how they understand the ways these influences the regional relationship between Malaysia and Singapore.

In addition, the respondent's different background illustrates how latent analysis can provide insights and depths about a phenomenon of journalism practices in Malaysia through their personals and professional life.

Therefore, their opinions and answers, both positive and negative is hope to help eliminate possible confusion especially in describing the journalism practices in Malaysia and to support the findings in the textual analysis in Chapter 5. In relation to textual analysis, the interpretative meaning of news online by BERNAMA found the reasons of why the news is reported in such ways. Textual analysis is conducted qualitatively to see the phenomenon meaning of news online and the influential factors on the regional news. In addition, textual analysis is flags of intent that noted in the news by the journalist with regards to their interviews with the sources. The goal of conducting textual analysis in BERNAMA news online earlier was to raise the level of public awareness concerning the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore through the news. As to confirm the findings in the textual analysis, qualitative interview is conducted to gain insight and hidden reasons of journalism practices from those who studied, practice and understand the concept of journalism field.

I chose to interview the first group – of media practitioners – because they are the newsmakers working at media organizations in Malaysia and experiencing day-to-day media practice.

It is also significant to include the second group, academics, in this study because they are the educators who disseminate the knowledge and skills to journalism students who will be the future media practitioners.

The third group is made up of the policy makers who set the guidelines on how media should be practised in Malaysia. (Details of all respondents will be provided later in this chapter).

They made certain claims and revealed details of journalism practices which at first were difficult to analyse. However, I took this difficulty as an opportunity to reflect upon the journalism practices I had shared at one time. Thus, this chapter identifies how development journalism is regarded by those most closely involved, and how they understand the ways this influences the regional relationship between Malaysia and Singapore.

The data suggests three important findings concerning (1) a measure of confusion about terms to apply to shared practices, (2) the potential impact of their international news training on their ideas about press freedom, and lastly, (3) the desire for moderation by an understanding of constraints. The chapter includes a full account of methodology of interview.

6.1 Political elites as social actors

Continuing the argument about political leaders and their influence established in Chapter 3, this chapter presents evidence of a consensus among the three groups of respondents on several issues. Most of the agreement is focussed on the definition of development journalism and responsible journalism. Therefore, their feedback is hoped to identify the context, causes and consequences of practicing development journalism in Malaysia which are all important consideration in understanding the complexities in relation to regional relations. However, there are a few different issues where these three groups do not share the same opinions, for example, on the rise of the new media in the country.

A shared understanding became evident among these three groups regarding the excessive involvement of social actors such as political individuals in the decision-making in international reporting issues. This conforms to Van Dijk (1995, p.12) who believes that social actors may vary in controlling the news according to the 'discourse genres' and 'discourse properties' of their control:

> More powerful social actors may control discourse by setting or selecting time and place, participants, audiences, possible speech acts (such as commands or requests), agendas, topics, choice of language, style, strategies of politeness or deference, and many other properties of text and talk. They thus may essentially determine who may say (or write) what, to whom, about whom, in which way and in what circumstances. It is hereby assumed that social power of a group or institution (and their members) is proportional to the amount of discourse genres and discourse properties they control.

Agenda-setting in the Malaysian media works the same way under the influence of elite individuals. Political elites are part of control mechanisms playing a significant role as social actors, as has already been discussed in Chapter Five, in the analysis of leaders and influence.

6.2 Methodology: Why In-depth Interviews?

The importance of using in-depth interview in this research is to see and transform the answers given by the respondents in accordance with recognized or accepted standards or principles of news reporting in journalism practices. In-depth interviews with selected groups of respondents were carried out to examine relationships between government, media and society as seen by the respondents.

The benefits of conducting in-depth interviews include the most direct, research-focussed interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Kazmer & Xie 2008, p.273). Although I already knew and had established a rapport with some of the respondents, it was not easy to interpret their insights: I used follow-up questions, and probed to construct as completely as possible the respondents' experiences. This can only be accomplished when the qualitative interview is open-ended enough for participants to provide deep knowledge on the research topic[80]. The intent is to discover a person's view of an experience or phenomenon (DeMarrais 2004, p.52). Respondents personal and professional views has been taken into accounts which are significant to decribe and explain the complexities of journalism practices in Malaysia. Based on their experiences, this research has describe an important role of social actors which contribute to the growing of journalism field.

I use the qualitative in-depth interview, which is more flexible and quite unstructured in the sense that questions are generated in the process of the interview itself. An interview guide serves as the basis for the conversation. It is just a guide. In the interviews I conducted, respondents talked about a range of issues that posed new questions for further discussion. DeMarrais (2004, p.52) describes qualitative interviews as follows:

> Using interview questions and follow-up questions, or probes, based on what the participant has already described, the goal is to construct as complete a picture as possible from the words and experiences of the participant. This can only be accomplished when the qualitative interview is open ended enough for participants to provide a depth of knowledge on the research topic. The intent is to discover that person's view of an experience or phenomenon of study.

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[80] According to DeMarrais (2004, p.52), qualitative interview is used when a researcher wants to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences. According to Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003, p.140), "interviewing is by far the most popular research method employed in the social sciences, yet this is not to under estimate the importance of simply talking to people and placing their personal accounts at the centre of the research".

For this study the interviews were designed as semi-structured and a topic guide was used to ensure comparability across the cases. An effort was made to be as 'authentic' as possible in the interviews (proceeding as in a normal conversation) in order to put the respondents or interviewees at ease. As Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003, p.141) emphasise, the success of interviewing as a research method hinges greatly on the personal and professional capabilities of the researcher; a skill that only comes through practice and experience. For this study I used my experience and skill as a former journalist and my knowledge as an academic and researcher in conducting the in-depth interviews.

6.2.1 Semi-Structured Questionnaires

The key issues were development journalism practices, and the limitations and strengths of media practices and factors that shape news reporting in Malaysia, specifically stories concerning Malaysia-Singapore relation. The respondents were interviewed in an audio-taped interview, with questions exploring themes relating to: (i) development journalism practices in Malaysia; (ii) the participant's background, experience and views on news reporting and media practices in Malaysia; (iii) views on the style of reporting of regional issues with Singapore on longstanding disputes/political conflicts, for example, issues on water deliveries to Singapore, Pedra Branca, sands, the scenic bridge, relocation of Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM), mutual maritime boundaries, and the overall relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. I thus adopted a semi-structured questionnaire technique, instead of guided or structured questions guide, so that the respondents were given more room for discussion. The interview schedule is in the appendices[81]. Twenty-four questions were listed, but some impromptu questions were asked as follow-ups or for further clarification from the respondents[82].

The interview questions were divided into six discussion topics:

1. Respondent's background, education, and working experience.
2. General understanding of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia.
3. Perceptions of 'influential factors on media and news reporting' internally.

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[81] Refer to Appendix 1

[82] As suggested by Denscombe (1998, p.133), although the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered, it really helps the interviewer to conduct the semi-structured interview. This prepares the interviewer to be flexible in considering the order of the topics. Perhaps more significantly it is important to let the respondents or the interviewees develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest.

4. Perceptions of 'the potential and strengths of development journalism, development communication and free press practices in Malaysia'.

5. Perceptions of 'media reporting on the Malaysia and Singapore relationship'.

6. Perceptions of 'potential and future of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia and the current state of the media'.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and intepreted based on the six major themes above. These interviews are significant as they reveal respondents' knowledge, background, experience and insights into Malaysian news reporting and media practices and other possible forces that might shape their news reporting and media practices. In-depth interviews were conducted to increase the understanding of the issues discussed and to provide empirical data[83]. This method contributed to the understanding of how journalists understand the managing of the regional relationship through the media.

6.2.2 Respondent Selections

The respondent's selections were done based on their direct involvement in the media industry which involved directly in the media industry. The respondents were chosen based on their homogeneity which share similar characteristics: occupation and education background. Therefore, three categories or types of respondents – academics, practitioners and policy makers – were chosen based on their relevant media background. These three categories have a good knowledge of and experience in media and communication. These are vital because their opinions will provide evidence not only about how the Malaysian media works but about journalism as a whole. The respondents were chosen based on their familiarity with the journalism issues. Furthermore, their perspectives will support the findings for the content and textual analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

In the academic category, respondents were selected from those with higher academic positions such as Professors and Associate Professors in Media and Communications. They had to have taught Mass Communications, Communications Studies, or other communications-related subjects. In the media practitioners and industry category, respondents were selected from top managerial positions, editors and journalists from media organizations. The policy makers were selected based on their roles in several

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[83] Jensen (2002, p.207) asserts that this qualitative interview technique involves a "systematic of interviewing, observation, and textual research, including issues of data collection and data analysis".

relevant government ministries, media practices and regional relationships, for example, the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's office. Both media practitioners and policy makers had to be experts in development communications or development journalism subjects, involved directly or indirectly in the subjects, or at least have some knowledge about these subject matters.

Below is the number of selected respondents for this study based on their current post/profile:

- Malaysian Media/Communications Academics   : 11
- Media Practitioners/Industry   : 11
- Media Related Policy-Makers   : 3
- Total of respondents interviewed   : 25

All respondents' comments are reported anonymously. Confidentiality enables respondents to speak more openly and freely. Otherwise, the respondents may have been reluctant to be honest and forthright about controversial issues such as press freedom and the government policies of regional relationship. However, since the number of media and communication practitioners and academics in Malaysia are relatively small compared to other countries such as the United States (US), there are some possibilities that readers may identify them.

In order to understand the context of their feedback, it is important to look at factors such as their background such as their educational background and working experience. Based on the respondents' profiles, almost 80% of them were US graduates with different professions in the media. Some of the respondents hold higher positions in the media industry or government and were trained as journalists before becoming editors. Therefore, this could indicate the same or different pattern of shared values and understanding of development journalism and press freedom in Malaysia. Their differences due to cultural experiences from the US and different training in writing practices, craft and rhetoric of journalism might influence the response which emerges later in the analysis. Below is the table of respondents' profile.

Table 6.1 Interview index of 25 respondents' profile

Respondents Profile

R1 – academic, policy maker, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 7 years experience as a journalist. Lecturing media and journalism for more than 25 years. Currently a Professor at the Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) and a Fellow Professor at Perdana Leadership Foundation, Putrajaya.

R2 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in International Relations. 5 years experience as a journalist in The New Straits Times Press. Lecturing International Affairs for more than 15 years. Currently, a AP at Department of International Affairs, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)

R3 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 5 years working experience in the industry. Lecturing media and communication for more than 15 years. Currently, an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)

R4 – practitioner

A graduate from local university, major in journalism. 30 years experience as a journalist. Was trained under development journalism in 1975. Currently a Chief Editor Berita Harian, group of The New Straits Times Press.

R5 – academic

A graduate from US, major in development communication. Lecturing media and communication for 30 years. Currently a Professor at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

R6 – academic

A graduate from US, major in journalism. Lecturing media and communication for 25 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)

R7 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 7 years working experience as a journalist at Utusan Malaysia, Lecturing media and communication for more than 25 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

R8 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 7 years working experience as a journalist. Lecturing media and communication for more than 20 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and also still involved as a columnist in the alternative media.

R9 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 3 years working experience as a journalist. Lecturing media and communication for more than 10 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

R10 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 5 years working experience as a journalist at The New

Straits Times Press. Lecturing media and communication for more than 25 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) University Technology Mara (UiTM)

R11 – academic, policy maker, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in journalism. 7 years of working experience as a journalist at BERNAMA. Under the development journalism training in 1974. Lecturing media and communication for more than 30 years. Currently a Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and an advisor to the ministry on media policy.

R12 – policy maker, former practitioner

A graduate from US, major in linguistics. A former News Executive Chief Editor at Sistem Televisyen Malaysia (TV3), currently a special assistant to Minister of Wilayah State. A policy maker/advisor in the state on media policy.

R13 – policy maker, former practitioner

A graduate from a local university and US, major in journalism. Working experience in the media industry for the past 30 years. Currently a Director and Consultant and Media Advisor, to Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM)

R14 – Editor

A graduate from a local university, major in journalism. Working experience in the media industry for the past 20 years. Deputy Editor-in-Chief Foreign/International Service, BERNAMA

R15 – former media advisor to the PM, former practitioner (journalist and Editor)

A graduate from US. A journalist for more than 30 years at BERNAMA and The New Straits Times Press. A prominent media advisor to Mahathir Mohamed and Anwar Ibrahim. Was trained under the development journalism of 1972. A former Editor-in-Chief to The New Straits Times Press. Currently an advisor to NAZA (automobile chain) and a columnist in the English newspaper in Malaysia.

R16 – practitioner, former academic

A graduate from US, major in Economic. A journalist/News readers/anchor for more than 20 years. Currently an Executive Producer, ASTRO AWANI a private television channel

R17 – editorial/media advisor, former practitioner

A graduate from US. A journalist for more than 30 years at BERNAMA. A prominent media advisor to Mahathir Mohamed and Anwar Ibrahim. Was trained under development journalism in 1972. Currently, an Editorial Advisor at BERNAMA

R18 – blogger and practitioner

A graduate from local university and US. A journalist for more than 25 years. Currently President of National Press Club and a columnist in mainstream newspaper and alternative media. An active blogger since 2005.

R19 – editor, former media advisor,

A graduate from US. A journalist for more than 30 years at BERNAMA and The New Straits Times Press. A prominent media advisor to Mahathir Mohamed and Anwar Ibrahim. Was trained under development journalism in 1972. Currently a columnist in the English newspaper in Malaysia. Owned a publication company and Editor-in-Chief Berita Publishing. An active blogger since 2005.

R20 – editor

A graduate from local university, major in journalism. A journalist for more than 25 years. Currently a Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Editorial Dept. BERNAMA

R21 – media advisor, former journalist

A graduate from US. A journalist for more than 10 years. An advisor to Malaysian Insider CEO, an internet online news web.

R22 – media executive director, former media advisor to the PM, former practitioner

A graduate from local university and US. A journalist for more than 30 years at The New Straits Time Press. A prominent media advisor to Anwar Ibrahim and Najib Razak. Was trained under development journalism in 1976. Currently a columnist in the English newspaper in Malaysia. An active blogger since 2005. A Former Editor-in-Chief at NST. During the interview, he was a Board Member, Yayasan Salam Malaysia. Currently is Media Prima, NSTP Executive Director.

R23 – academic, former practitioner

A graduate from local university, major in journalism. A journalist for more than 5 years. Lecturing media and communication for more than 20 years. Currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

R24 – policy maker

A graduate from US, major Law. A former secretary to Malaysian Embassy in Singapore for 3 years (2002-2005) during Syed Hamid Albar, the Foreign Minister. Currently attached as the secretary to the Foreign Ministry, Malaysia

R25 – media executive chairman, former media advisor to the PM, former practitioner

A graduate from local university and US. A journalist/columnist for more than 30 years at The New Straits Times Press. A prominent media advisor to Mahathir Mohamed, Anwar Ibrahim and Najib Razak. Was trained under development journalism in 1976. Currently a columnist in the English newspaper in Malaysia. An active blogger since 2005. A Former Editor-in-Chief at Utusan Malaysia. During the interview, he was an Executive Chairman Media Prima Berhad, a private media organization (TV3).

In the beginning I identified a list of 30 potential respondents for this study and several steps were taken during the selection of respondents (see Appendix 2). However, only 25 respondents, who seemed relevant to this research, were selected, and the other five respondents were selected as a back-up[84].

After the interviews were completed at locations and times chosen by respondents, it was found that these respondents had overlapping profiles. For example, out of eleven academics interviewed, seven are former practitioners/journalists/editors; two of them

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[84]Prior to interviewing, I contacted all potential interviewees via telephone and email, asking them to participate in the study. Once they agreed, I sent them: (1) a participant information sheet on background of my study and, (2) a consent form. I then arranged an appointment for an interview at a place and time convenient to the respondents. The completed consent forms and approval letters were collected before the interviews began. These interviews were carried out face-to-face and were audio-taped for transcribing later.

have extra profiles as policy makers, and they have been invited regularly to give advice or feedback on the media laws, policies and regulations in Malaysia. Out of eleven practitioners interviewed, nine are media and journalism graduates. One was an economics graduate.

As for the policy makers, they are linguistics, media and law graduates, and two had previously held higher positions in media organisations. All the respondents had profiles making them eligible to be interviewed since they have a vast experience and knowledge in media and communication.

Despite overlapping profiles, the respondents' answers were still analysed according to their current background and past experiences. For easy referencing and identification, each respondent has been assigned a numeric number and this number has been placed at the end of their selected quotation. There is some indication on their overlapping profiles (if any) at the end of the quotes.

The in-depth interviews were carried out face-to-face in Malaysia, followed by e-mails and/or Internet communications for further clarification. The interview was set for 45-60 minutes. However, some respondents were interviewed for more than 2 hours. This resulted in a large amount of data for analysis.

6.2.3 Thematic Analysis and Coding Process

I had interviewed people according to a systematic research method to ensure that lack of bias in the data. A thematic analysis was then used to find similarities among respondents' thematic statements. The thematic analysis derived from questions based on the main objectives of this research, the conceptual framework and the literature review. The coding process started once I had completely summarized the transcribed data from the interviews. I identified the coding from the first and second summary of transcribed data and later retracted the coding manually from the summary. The coding process was similar to the one described by Saldana (2009, p.13) and was done manually from the summary. As argued by Saldana (2009, p.13), coding is different from the themes because "a theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" thus there is no such thing as 'theme coding'. Therefore, thematic analysis is used in this research to analyze and illustrate respondent's

thoughts, interactions or individual experiences and collective feedback and answers toward this research inquiry.

This research approach includes identifying the themes from the questions designed, as Kvale (1996, p.88) argues, theme analysis describes "the concept of the topic under investigation before interviews begin." Kvale (1996, p.226) further explains that "the interviewer does not uncover some pre-existing meanings, but supports the interviewees in developing their meanings throughout the course of the interview". For example, in this research the main investigation is about the potential and limitations of development journalism. Respondents were asked about development communication and given an opportunity to enlarge upon their answers, leading to a greater understanding of development journalism within the broader context of communication research.

The major themes used were:

1. Defining development journalism
   a. Critiques of Development Journalism: A responsible practice?
2. Defining freedom of press with responsibility
   a. Limitation of freedom
   b. Freedom with responsibility
3. Shaping harmonious journalism
   a. The importance of laws and regulations in shaping harmony
   b. Leaders and the state
   c. Ownership
   d. The journalistic obstacles and dilemmas
4. Malaysia and Singapore: how do media influence the relationship
   a. People's perception
   b. Media reporting on Singapore
   c. The relationship and leaders
5. Media freedom and democracy in Malaysia
   a. Media Freedom
   b. Governing an educated society
   c. The new media

Some themes necessarily overlapped, but overall they provided a useful overview and interpretation of expert perceptions of development journalism, media practices and the regional news reporting.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described why and how interviews were conducted amongst different types of social actors: media practitioners, academics and policy makers. Using semi-structured questionnaire technique, I interviewed total of 25 persons from different backgrounds. Six key discussion topics were used such as respondent's background, respondent's understanding of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia, and various perceptions of influential factors, development journalism, media reporting on Malaysia-Singapore relationship and future of media reporting in Malaysia. In the next chapter, I will discuss in details on the findings of the interviews.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: INTERVIEW

This chapter describes the analysis of the interview with academics, media practitioners and policy makers. The data demonstrates: various understandings of development journalism and a free press; understandings of current news reporting (internal and external) and media practices; identification of factors that slow the development of media freedom; indications of what could contribute to better media democratization in Malaysia; perceptions of how the media and leaders influence regional stability through news reporting; and reflections on how issues regarding the Malaysia and Singapore relationship are portrayed through the news reporting.

Before more detailed reporting on the findings is given, I note that respondents gave their perspectives on the overall news reporting and media practices in Malaysia and how this practice influences the rationale of development journalism. On Malaysia and Singapore's relationship issues, most of the respondents noted that the relationship was much influenced by the leaders of both countries, especially Malaysia's, which will be explained later in this chapter. Respondents also claimed that the media help to shape perceptions on this regional relationship. However, they also detect a lack of transparency in reporting the issues. The overall claims by respondents about the current state of media practice suggest that the media in Malaysia are moving slowly towards harmonious reporting in regional reporting similar to that of domestic reporting. Despite feedback and comments from the respondents on development journalism, harmonious reporting and the authorities' control of the media content, the argument that development journalism is suited to 'Asian Values' is still a convincing one for respondents.

7.1 Respondents' Perspectives on Defining Development Journalism

Although development journalism is defined as a media practice that regards the media as a partner to the government in propagating nation building, as contended by Mustafa Kamal (2000, 2005), Abdul Razak (2000), Nasution (1996) and Bayuni (1996), analysis of the respondent's comments suggests an array of understandings of the nature of development journalism.

Some of the practitioners claim that development journalism is an old paradigm and irrelevant to the media in Malaysia today. One frequent usage is exemplified in the phrase "tapered off" used by the respondents. When asked about their understanding of development journalism, they understood the concept well but did not give exact definitions.

The majority of respondents claim that Malaysia still prioritizes development journalism as its media practice, one that has both strengths and weaknesses. This accompanies the judgement made by most of academics that development journalism is an 'old paradigm' or 'third kind of phrase'. Yet, they also agree that it is well-grounded, appropriate and fitting for the current Malaysian context.

The majority of respondents (academics, practitioners and policy makers) thoroughly understand development journalism in Malaysia as having originated from the need to develop nation building and maintain cultural unity among the ethnic groups. The understanding of the ongoing process of the struggles of the nation's development can be seen from the responses by the academics, policy makers and practitioners below:

> Development journalism operates under a numbers of objectives or factors: 1) national integration, 2) cultural unity, 3) single language and 4) nation building…in fact, development journalism operates within these four particular contexts…to achieve these objectives; media have to work hand in hand with the government (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

> Development journalism means that you are supposed to put up news that can develop the nation… news that educates the public (R7-academic and former practitioner).

> The media and the authorities are going hand in hand in tandem towards national aspirations and national developments (R10-academic and former practitioner).

> A partner in disseminating government policies, government programs, what other program that is carried out by the government for the benefits of the people (R15-practitioner).

> They (the media) being partners in building a nation (R16-practitioner).

Most of the academics agree that development journalism is commonly understood to support nation building aspirations as they are also former practitioners who underwent a period of journalism training and their visions of nation building are a shared vision as academics. I will return to this point later under the Journalistic Obstacles and Dilemmas.

However, current practitioners have also recognised that one of the major influences for nation building is the media.

Government influence is considered to be extremely significant in development journalism practices. Many respondents agree that the biggest challenge for development journalism today and in the near future is that the media need to be transparent, open about many things (culture, social issues, politics and economics), and should be free from government control.

> A free press in the sense that press has the capacity to report things that are considers important, socially significant to the general public. Free enough to be critical of not just the government but also the business sectors and also other stakeholders in the society…it has to be free as well as responsible (R8-academic and practitioner).

> Of course Malaysian media environment looks like very controlled…there is lack freedom but the perceive lack of freedom is sometimes a choice as much as it is legislated. Malaysian media and media practitioners are not willing to risk riot, to risk racial, to risk religious, conflicts for the sake of press freedom (R19-practitioner and media owner).

Therefore, the implementation of development journalism in Malaysia indicates by the respondents as positive and negative to the nation building and national unity. For example, Respondent 18, an advocate of the left wing press, is critical of many government decisions and policies. He claims that:

> We can grow development journalism in a positive way not the way the government of the day thinks development journalism should be...if we were to liberalize the media and allow editors, professional journalists to run the newspapers... and the TV program and all that, I am sure journalists themselves can create a definition of development journalism for Malaysia…it should be an agenda that is set by the journalists upon communicating with the people...not set by the politicians (R18-practitioner).

He thinks that despite its relevance to nation building, development journalism cannot be isolated from journalism about other kinds of needs. Therefore, even after decades, the idea of using journalism to develop a nation or country is still relevant in the Malaysian context. What may differ is the nature of implementation and what should be covered in the name of development, be it positive or negative, as suggested in the same respondent's comment:

This discipline emphasis on the positive value of things, for example how multi-racial community can be developed instead of going into find faults and to try blame one race against the other in terms of economic opportunity...we have solved the problem of racial tension…that would contribute a lot to the development of the nation...that's how I see developmental journalism...positive still reporting the truth but the slant, the spin is towards the positive and constructive (R18-practitioner).

Respondent 1 claims that the idea of development journalism may also be considered in relation to the continuation of colonial practices through news reporting and media practices. Development journalism is thus considered to be a Western concept, which involves media groups working towards educating the nation. Essentially, it is a production and reinforcement of neo-colonialism:

Development journalism related to colonialism and intellectual imperialism and is an output to colonial knowledge…The function of development journalism is to ensure that there is an economic growth in the nation…is to protect against any form economic sabotage or economic disorder (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

As a policy maker, he found that economic growth contributed to the needs of development journalism practice.

Respondent 4 (a practitioner) claims, in contrast, that Malaysia has changed since independence, which involved a process of getting the population to conform to certain ideas of nationhood. Those perspectives have changed with the growth of the country:

We have our own values and cultures, we don't exactly follow them (colonial), but we still hold to development journalism, we still practice development journalism until today (R4-practitioner).

There is a sense of nationalist sentiment in the responses given by the academics and practitioners above. They also hold the same perspectives that development journalism is an idea from colonial experience. The understanding of development journalism has been claimed as a Western tradition inherited from the colonial power; respondents still conceive of development journalism having an important role in boosting social, economic and political development.

It is important to note that Respondent 4 above was trained as a development journalist in 1975, and he is still captivated by the original idea of development journalism:

> Development journalism has more responsibility here…it provides us with the need to be aware of what is happening. The changes that are required for different levels of society and certainty for the government because it is through this form of journalism that the government can develop their own or formulate their own policies and implement whatever projects they have (R2-academic and former practitioner).

Respondent 3 agrees that development journalism is regarded as having potential and that Malaysia has not utilized it to its maximum capacity in building a democratic society.

However, some academics and practitioners also agree that development journalism is helping Malaysia to become a successful nation:

> I don't think so we really utilized development journalism and development communication…development journalism has a very big potential here in Malaysia (R3-academic).

> Development journalism has helped Malaysia become a successful nation…at the same time, if a reporter only reports 'glowing' stories and ignoring the need to criticise for the betterment of a nation, development journalism will do a disservice to a country (R16-practitioner).

However, there is an expressed hope for development journalism practices to change. Respondent 16 considers the opportunity for journalists to be critical, not focusing solely on the government's agenda and progress in developing the country. Three respondents agreed that development journalism suits a developing country such as Malaysia but present the idea that it functions to disseminate information about development:

> Development journalism should involve the people in the development projects in participatory approach so that people can get involved in development of the country (R5-academic).

> Today…development journalism, you got to redefine. What development you're talking about? Intellectual development? Infrastructural development? Inter country relationship development? So you can no longer use development journalism as it was made to understand in 1970's to today…development journalism as it is now I think should be looking from another perspectives (R21-practitioner).

Comments by Respondent 5 and Respondent 21 above give some insights into how development journalism in Malaysia could operate. It is noted that Respondent 5 is a well-renowned development journalism expert in Malaysia and has been involved with many government projects, and government research.

> As long as this state intervention in the running of the media, they would not encourage critical analysis or assessment of government projects, policies by the media (R8-academic and practitioner).

In contrast, some of the academics and practitioners disagree that development journalism works in a positive way, as development journalism is seen as 'propaganda tool' because it is assumed that the media are 'forced' to say or write good things about the government's efforts:

> The people are fed up with the media propaganda which serving the government (R17-practitioner).

> I would say that the development journalism is the subconscious strategy in nation building, one and two in at parroting the elites in power (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

Both respondents above (who were also trained journalists) agree that the old concept of development journalism may be expanded to involve participation in the sense that people need to organise themselves and then the government will help them to identify problems and issues. The key focus here is no longer the government but the people. Society's views, thoughts and responses are important for inclusion, so that social and economic status can be improved together with government.

Most of the respondents claim that development journalism and communication had decades ago been limited to rural and agricultural issues. However, current news reporting and media practices have widened the process to apply to any news.

Academics acknowledge that the limitation of development journalism is in promoting good news only, rather than negative reporting. Journalists were expected to promote only the positive development activities of the government without being critical. This view is illustrated by R8:

> This kind of journalism is meant to stay away from this negative reporting about society, development…there's a need to provide space for news about successful government projects in terms of development…but over time, this concept of development journalism into 'yes journalism'…you don't criticise. Journalist are expected to just promote what the government has done in terms of development projects without being critical about it…is the government say so journalism which to me is quite disturbing (R8-academic and practitioner).

7.2 Critiques of Development Journalism: A Responsible Practice?

The Malaysian media is a product of specific development policies embraced by the government from before independence in 1957. Since the government made development

its objective, support for development by the media is seen as supporting the government. Generally, there are two categories of views on development journalism in Malaysia: first, the positive or proposition views, and second, the negative or opposition. Most of the respondents (academics and practitioners) describe development journalism as a positive, responsible practice in Malaysia internally and externally. Representative comments include:

> The media place greater emphasis on issues which are constructive in nature…contribute towards development of the nation in terms of the development of thought and is not only in a physical sense but development in maturity of that nation...of that people (R18-practitioner).

> Development journalism…uses media to develop society but be critical with the goal of development, we should support and participate in development and be responsible (R5-academic).

A few respondents claim that development journalism is constructive and responsible, in terms of supporting government policies, especially in the Malaysia and Singapore relationship, in making sure that regional development is consistent with national growth:

> We are to practice what we pledge under the ASEAN leadership or even under ASEAN corporations then we have to ensure that we start good relationship with our neighbours (R2-academic and former practitioner).

Practitioners saw that the challenge for development journalism is to allow open discussion and both positive and negative dialogue:

> Development journalism, being constructive in terms of supporting whatever policies that the government have...it will consistence with the growth of the country...everything from creating media unity, promoting economic zone that under developed...we also need to look at development journalism whether it allow full information to be out there...but the question is are we mature enough? The assumption being industrialized means you progressed… what is the approach you should take in general to contribute towards that? what you need to do is to let the good things surface...the bad things...why they are bad?...allow open dialogue...what can we do to improve the situation…but if we report on all the good and bad, I think then that really contribute to development (R21-practitioner).

Thus there is agreement that development journalism not only needs elements of a free press but also needs to be responsible.

However, the idea of freedom in development journalism is vague and often challenged by the partnership with the government and the issue of media ownership:

You can have a free press in developmental journalism but it is not easy to develop a nation…development journalism means media should be responsible (R20-practitioner).

Regarding the harmony issue in Malaysia, academics and policymakers shared the same views and perceived that development journalism must be more balanced in reporting negative and positive developments, yet at the same time aligned the needs of maintaining harmony in Malaysia's multi-cultural society:

To certain extent we still need some form of development journalism…is in itself is a challenge, there is a limitation on the Malaysian media…it is difficult in given the Malaysian racial and religious mosaic (R10-academic and former practitioner).

Increasing number of issues which are racial and religious related have warranted Government's interference…the Government is trying very hard to keep media freedom and racial/religious harmony in balance (R24-policy maker).

However, this ideal is being compromised by the pressures of new media. Many of the respondents found that the need for harmony in the country is a significant reason for having a controlled media:

The new media help to create another alternative medium or channel of practising development journalism in the country...and since Malaysia is a multi-racial society, it is important for the government to make sure all these races are integrated and live in harmony before they can prosper (R13-policy maker).

If you go on that basis, the controls is for many reasons, one of them is because of the social harmony, social order (R10-academic and former practitioner).

Despite its relevance to nation building and multi-ethnic issues, can development journalism retain its relevance in the near future? Many of the respondents, especially the practitioners' group, believe that Malaysia has gone beyond the period of using development journalism for national development. They suggest that journalism should be seen in a broader sense and provide balanced information. An interesting point raised by practitioners is the fact that media should not be separated from government because the media works for both government and society:

Development journalism …can go hand in hand with whatever other aspects of journalism…it won't go out of fashion because we also need to help contribute towards the nation building (R17-practitioner).

Development journalism also contributes to commercial growth. Current journalistic practice has a concept of development journalism that is more engaged with commercial life:

> The traditional developmental journalism, as we understand it 20, 30, 40 years ago has in fact tapered off. Today development has been reported as part and parcel of the overall reporting…not anymore specific…in fact developmental journalism to my mind has already ended 10-15 years ago…today the reporting of the developmental journalism is very commercial oriented (R19-practitioner and media owner).

Since Malaysia is still a developing country, all media are expected to work with the government. Development journalism, from this perspective, occurs when media and journalists are expected to be responsible. There is a possibility of having free press practices in development journalism where media are critical of the government and responsible in reporting all the news without fear or favour. This was highlighted by Respondent 25 who is a prominent media practitioner in Malaysia and headed several media organisation under different ministers such as Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and currently Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak. He contends that:

> I find it perplexing…as a journalist, practitioners, we don't label journalism within that bracket developmental or non-developmental…our role is actually to report and to report without fear and favour, without bias…that is considered ideally (R25-practitioner).

Based on that understanding, practitioners being expressive over their views of development journalism depend on journalists who have the ability to write and communicate well and have a sense of responsibility and intelligence.

Overall, the majority of respondents demonstrate a view of that suggests that the ideal role of media practitioners is to report without fear, favour or preference. In relation to development journalism, the media have to play a role in building the nation but also balance that with a need to write responsibly. The media are not seen necessarily the mouthpiece of the ruling elite. Media can change positively by becoming the eyes and ears of the people.

As claimed by Respondent 25, media practitioners, specifically journalists, are not in a position to make, or to question, policies but have the opportunity to question the implementation of policies. Paraphrasing Respondent 25 (practitioner), justifications are

made by media experts that the media do not represent the people, as people are really represented by their members of parliament. According to him, the media do not have the capacity to create policies but they (the media) respect and comply with the policies implemented by the government. However, they have been constructively critical on their part in the implementations of these policies. Therefore, the media has been seen as an institution which should be given leeway to be critical of government policies. Development journalism can be regarded as a tool in nation building but it is not supposed to encourage the elite's hold on power. This is a significant differentiation for those espousing earlier forms of development journalism. It indicates that aspirations for changes to old models exist.

The interviews above have shown different understandings of development journalism and how complex it is. The next set of findings present the reasons that restrain the Malaysian media from achieving western-style 'freedom of the press' practices.

7.3 Defining Freedom of Press with Responsibility

Freedom of the press has always been a contentious issue. It overlaps with other issues such as colonial influence, obstacles to practice, media ownership and the state, and media credibility. This part of the findings and analysis will explore further what levels of media freedom are seen by respondents to be appropriate in Malaysia. What are the biggest impediments to achieving a free press? Based on respondents' arguments they share with the Malaysian people a desire not to jeopardise national unity, and religious and regional stability, for the sake of press freedom. Most of the respondents shared the same perspectives on the appropriate levels of media freedom are as follows:

- There is limited freedom in the Malaysia media.
- Total press freedom cannot be implemented in Malaysia based on issues of national unity and harmony.
- Thus, press freedoms come with responsibilities.

I will now discuss their views in more detail.

7.3.1 Limited Freedom in the Malaysia media

Many of the respondents (academics, practitioners and policy makers) shared the same claim that Malaysian media outlets should be given more freedom in news reporting. There is broad agreement that they are not free, and are controlled by the laws,

regulations, ownership, leaders, authorities and social issues. Some practitioners define press freedom in terms of the ability to express views and ideas, regardless of who owns the media or whatever restrictions have been imposed on it:

> Media in Malaysia is partly free, partly controlled (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).
>
> We are very much guarded by the authorities (R10-academic and former practitioner).
>
> Freedom means you are free to write…you can do your own newspaper, no permit needed, but now you need to have permitted, so you are not free because you are obliged to the rules and permit (R4-practitioner).
>
> In Malaysia, we have laws that actually curb media freedom, not to protect media freedom (R8-academic and practitioner).

Most of the respondents (academics, practitioners, and former practitioners) agree that total press freedom is not completely acceptable as total freedom or too much freedom for the press will not help achieve social harmony or media democratisation. Freedom must come with responsibility:

> What we have is actually a limited form of press freedom…there's a danger if we have a total press freedom, especially if people don't understand the constitution of Malaysia…we need to have a degree of control over this issues (race and religion) (R2-academic and former practitioner).
>
> There is no absolute press freedom…shouldn't be absolute freedom because freedom comes with responsibility (R5-academic).
>
> We don't ask 100% freedom…but freedom with responsibility (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).
>
> I dare not say that I want a total freedom…I want a freedom that respects people's right and have some ethical values in practices that the media pay close attention…to me freedom does not mean absolute freedom to do as you pleased, to write as you pleased. It must also be tempered with some measure of responsibility (R10-academic and former practitioner).

7.3.2 Freedom with 'Responsibility'

Many of the respondents agree that the ideal of a free press is of one having freedom with responsibility. To them, this understanding of responsible media is itself what media freedom means. It has been fully understood by everyone that every right come with responsibilities. A study by Fauziah Ahmad et al. (2012, p.135) on social citizenship shows that in order to contribute to building a better society, Malaysians, must understand that 'with rights come responsibilities, and that they must act respectfully to others in

order to get respect in return'. Despite different respondent's conditions and experiences, they have given the same insights on freedom with responsibility. Most of them frequently use the word 'responsible' and below, I have highlighted some arguments by respondents who believe that development journalism means freedom with responsibility:

> Freedom and responsibility is now side by side...there is no total freedom...**responsibility** means you have to be more control in reporting...you don't write anything that will hurt people (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

> I would say there's a lot of freedom in media industry…meaning you can write and say whatever you want as long as you know, as long as you're **responsible** to what you write (R13-policy maker and former practitioner).

> In Malaysian environment press freedom must be addendum to responsibility…they cannot be press freedom without responsibility. Assuming that we do away with all the laws that we have mentioned earlier, or assuming that we have amend all of them to become a lot less restrictive…but still freedom in the Malaysian environment will not be absolute. It will be objective and with it has to come **responsibility**…there are press freedom and **responsibility** (R19-practitioner and media owner).

Most of the respondents contend that the word 'responsibility' is a major issue. It is argued that in order to gain press freedom in Malaysia, the media must report on issues with responsibility. In other words, any news written by the journalists must be truthful, fair and aware of the consequences of the writings.

However, practitioners are fearful about whether the Malaysian public is mature enough to respond constructively to greater press freedom. One respondent believes that the Malaysian polity is now mature enough to accept criticisms and make them as well. A free press therefore, depends on the maturity of the country's democracy. It will not survive if people are not ready for such a situation. Even with a responsible media, respondents had doubts about the readiness of Malaysian society to handle a more open media practice. Practitioners also claim that Malaysians are seen as not ready for a free press that deals with truths and paradoxes:

> If the people are not ready for an open free press…then a free press can never survive depending on the maturity of the country...the nation...the people (R18-practitioner).

> We (the media) believe that Malaysians have come to a certain level of maturity where they can receive...they can critic it...so that's why we allow comments against any articles...our big challenge today is actually to get the Malaysians public to be more matured in a way they respond to...or towards bias that are not in the alignment with their own – R21

If respondents define press freedom as the ability to write anything, it does not mean that people can write anything without facts as substantiation. Many of the respondents (practitioners) believe that freedom to write is freedom to be supportive or critical of the government but with supporting facts or evidence for the criticisms:

> Press freedoms mean the ability to write anything…but it doesn't mean that you have given the freedom to write anything without any facts (R20-practitioner).

> A press freedom for me would be an ability to report and ability to share information without fear that sharing the information can lend me a trouble… the press freedom as a burden and as a responsibility…a lot of people talk about the press freedom they can tarnish a person's image and they may find that very satisfying not knowing that it will have far reaching consequences including their own…or you're restricted, you're limited,…some of the restrictions, probably stands in a person ability to understand the issues. Not because of the law. I mean the law is there (R22-practitioner).

Therefore, the meaning of freedom with responsibility is related to the maturity of the polity. The majority of the respondents (academics, practitioners, and media owner) describe the challenges of obtaining press freedom as depending on the roles of journalists. These are defined by respondents as being different from reporting in Western countries like Australia. Race, religion, culture and language are perennial and sensitive issues to Malaysian journalists:

> The Malaysian press, the journalist is very responsible…when I said responsible, I'm referring to the key issues, race, religion, culture, and language…in other areas, we are free as anybody else (R19-practitioner and media owner).

> We cannot have the same level of freedom for every country...because of a various stages of development, various peculiarities and sensitivities and of the racial, religious and other wise. But it is to be emphasized that the press has to be free to report what it feels the correct things (R17-practitioner).

> There are two categories of freedom…either political or non political…non political is a total freedom…sometimes religion is political too, there's some restriction to some political relate…I rate 80% freedom but with some blockades (R4-practitioner).

> A free press means journalists can do whatever they want while adhering to true journalist ethics (R16-practitioner).

> Free press is a system that allows certain kind of autonomy to the journalists. Media are owned by certain group of people but they (they media practitioners) are free to practice their media believe. Meaning to say the owners help in funding the press in providing the capital for the cost of production that kind of thing but in terms of expressing the media they're free in terms of expressing their ideas, expressing their views, ideals journalism. Regardless of who owned the media? (R23-academic, and former practitioner).

> To increase space for criticism, increase space for comments…it is about quality…our journalist only think that there's only one form of press freedom, but they don't know that there are many forms of press freedom…every journalist must be a thinker (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

Respondent 6 raises a crucial point about whether national unity is already disaggregating. Striving for unity is not a stable power sharing, as every ethnic have different objectives. Therefore, the important of power sharing among ethnic may be realized through the new media by the journalist.

> The media in Malaysia, they have their own way of presenting ethnicity, racial or religion. So I cannot say that we are free, or so called 'freedom'. It seems that different ethnicity or groups have different objectives (R6-academic).

However, there are balanced views by most of the respondents (the academics and practitioners) who agree that the understanding that the media should work responsibly comes with the awareness that media freedoms are bound by laws and regulations, ownership, leaders and government. Despite the respondents' differences in their journalism training, they still perceive journalism as a noble and responsible profession. However, they also contended that media in Malaysia are still restrained by perennial complexities that have always restrained media development: laws and regulations; the colonial legacy; ownership; journalistic dilemma; political influence; and ethnic problems. These are the major factors that have driven and shaped current news reporting and media practices in Malaysia.

7.3.3 Shaping Harmonious Journalism

In internal or domestic reporting the media play a significant role in development journalism, where they offer room for criticism in harmonious reporting. However, for reporting, on international matters, development journalism practices provide for more harmonious reporting in order to maintain regional relationships. This can be seen in the Malaysia-Singapore news reporting as demonstrated in the textual analysis of this study. Nevertheless, there are some challenges that need to be considered: the pressure to move towards a 'responsible press'; and the need for a politically mature population which understand the constitution, government and media as the basis of a democratic society and accept the ideas of freedom and responsibility.

Only a few discussions (Chapter Five) have emerged about how news reporting can contribute to a bigger picture of the regional relationship. My case analysis contributes to this corpus of knowledge. Analysis of how news objectivity can be identified, of news values and news structures, added to the data collected from media experts about their perceptions and opinions, helps describe how media reporting in Malaysia is evolving towards harmonious reporting on regional issues. Entman (2010, p.112) states that:

> The traditional journalistic practice of 'objectivity' bears a complicated relationship to news slant. Slanted news can sometimes perform the functions that professional creed often assigns to objectivity. That is, objectivity practices largely entail removing personal political preferences from news coverage and attempting to give contending sides' equivalent treatment. The intended function is allowing audiences to assess political events, issues, and officials as autonomously as possible....

Media experts (practitioners) who were interviewed acknowledge that their contribution to regional stability is about managing perceptions required by the government. However, the most important items highlighted by the media may not be perceived as important to grassroots society. Therefore, Malaysian media practitioners see it as important to orchestrate perceptions.

Respondents have also identified that media freedoms were controlled by laws and regulations to achieve unification and stability objectives. Interviewees have argued that these forces are necessary to a multi-ethnic society. They also concluded that media freedom in Malaysia is guaranteed by the constitution, and that laws and regulations are implemented to ensure racial harmony. Many of the respondents (policy makers, academics, former practitioners and practitioners) agreed that laws do help in maintaining harmony:

> I think in a multi-racial country… the ISA and OSA are used to maintain the harmony of the society, ISA and OSA should be maintained (R3-academic).

> The society composition, Chinese, Malays, Indians have different world view…these differences contribute to some of the laws being used in Malaysia...clearly the laws are been used to manage the harmonious relationship in the country…we are able to live in harmony, maybe as a result of these laws (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

> In the name of peace and harmony, I think we should retain ISA but you have to exercise judiciously (R25-practitioner).

However, Respondent 24 observes that there is a growing disagreement on media freedom in Malaysia as media are subjected to various political motivated laws which are applied in the name of security and multi-ethnic harmony.

> Malaysian constitution guarantees media freedom. However, a growing number of people in Malaysia perceive that the media freedom is severely limited. Journalists are subjected to various laws which many people see as politically motivated. The Government has always argued that all the laws applied are meant to protect the security and maintain the harmony of Malaysian multi-ethnic people (R24-policy maker).

Therefore, based on harmony issues, media practitioners practice self-censorship on issues deemed sensitive to Malaysians, especially those of ethnicity and religion:

> At ASTRO AWANI we have been doing a 360 degree approach in dissecting news items in a responsible manner. We are pushing the limits. The regulations and Acts have to a certain extent made reporters practice self-censorship. But today, due to the 'pressure' from our viewers, journalists are breaking away from excessive self-censorship (R16-practitioner).

However, practitioners think they must use a technique or approach in news reporting that is non-controversial to avoid racial issues. That is one reason which prevents practitioners from writing freely and the reason why Malaysia still applies a number of these laws, rules and systems. For example, one rule under the Printing Presses and Publication Acts (PPPA)[85] and the Sedition Acts is that all publishers of newspapers, magazines, etc. must have a license before they can be distributed to the public, so that nobody will use any of these media to destabilize the country.

The government has to be attentive to various sensitive issues, especially in a multi-ethnic society. These laws and regulations are perceived as a useful tool for the ruling powers to continue managing problems of press freedom. However, increasing numbers of issues[86] which are racial and religious in character have warranted government influence. The implementation of laws and regulations may help in maintaining racial harmony but tend to stimulate criticism that the media are too much guided by restrictive laws and regulations. Most of the academics perceived that laws and regulations introduced by the

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[85] At the time this chapter is written, PPPA is still in practice. However, it was announced in 2012 that the Act has been revised and the license has been made obsolete.

[86] Street demonstrations and rallies, for example: 'REFORMASI', 'BERSIH' and 'HINDRAF', took place in the last three years. These street demonstrations occurred during the rule of Mahathir Mohamed and Abdullah Badawi, as well as the current Prime Minister, Najib Razak. Most of the demonstrations and protests focussing on human rights issues have disturbed the country's social harmony. Research by academics shows that Malaysians are against these demonstrations (The Star 2008).

British during the colonial period have implications for news reporting and media practices today. Academics claim that these laws and regulations compromise human rights:

> Our Printing Presses and Publication Act which is actually the colonial legacy, we also have OSA which have an impact upon journalistic practices, ….to put in a nut shell yea I think it has some impact upon the media of today (R8-academic and practitioner).

> We are very much influenced by the British…the repressive laws (R9-academic and former practitioner).

In contrast the practitioners believe that laws and regulations introduced by the British have helped the media in Malaysia to develop:

> The laws that we practice also based on the British laws…but many things we have adapted to our surrounding (R20-practitioner).

> The British left behind a very workable legal system in the country…these rules and regulations were either copied from the British statute books or were modified to suit the Malayan environment (R19-practitioner and media owner).

Some of respondents disagree and believe that laws and regulations introduced by their former colonial masters should be revised and applied to today's society:

> We should revise the acts, the laws that we have now so that it more reflects the society (R5-academic).

> We have been independent for the past 53 years. We are mature enough and we are intelligent enough as to change the laws but we are not doing anything about it (R10-academic and former practitioner).

However, other respondents agree that laws and regulations are important, to limit, if not control, the freedom of the Malaysian media, but when the media are bound by laws and regulations, the road to free expression seems to be very far away:

> The Acts has been excellent in protecting the society…but in the perspectives of press freedom, it doesn't help at all (R10-academic and former practitioner).

> There's a lot of government officers who always hide behind OSA…we cannot get the document because it's consider secret document...it's a government document...so it comes under OSA. In that sense, it has curtailed the investigative journalism and the sensitive issues...you (journalist) are not supposed to question Royalty, religions, citizenship, language, races (R15-practitioner).

Basically, the academics and practitioners suggested that media in Malaysia are regulated and guided. Malaysia inherited journalism practices and adopted colonial laws and regulations in its news reporting and media practices. Media practitioners have been controlled by these laws[87]. However, practitioners suggested the practice of self-censorship to avoid problems caused by suppressive laws:

> The regulations and Acts have to a certain extent made reporters practice self-censorship. But today, due to the 'pressure' from our viewers, journalists are breaking away from excessive self-censorship (R16-practitioner).

Most of the policy makers claimed that the laws and regulations have had positive effects and contributed to social cohesion. This is due to their investment in the policy background, which shapes perceptions that regulation maintains harmony:

> Journalists have a choice to write or to report in their news based on racial perspective: *Four Chinese men killed a Malay man* or based on occupation or *four loan sharks killed a businessman*. Such headlines used to avoid creating a racial sentiment in the society (R13-policy maker and former practitioner).

However, only a few practitioners perceived that these laws and regulations ensure that the country is stable and secure. Because of the delicate social fabric of Malaysian society, the media, as argued by Respondent 25, need to be controlled. His experience as a senior media advisor has given a balanced insight to the significance of the laws and regulations implementation in the country:

> We have to address this issues…the constitution, the laws pertaining to the governing to law and order in the country, if those are adequate, so we have to relook at the ISA but if those laws, regulations are inadequate and we need something like this in the name of the country, the future of this country, and in the name of peace and harmony…we should retain ISA but you have to exercise judiciously (R25-practitioner).

> If the purpose is to safeguard this country from going to anarchy just because there are some bad apples amongst us, there are elements that are all out to destroy us…it is proper to use judiciously the ISA…it should not be an excuse to put anyone under ISA just for political reasons or otherwise that should not be the case…creating unnecessary problems among the people and dividing the people becomes very

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[87] This control factor not only includes laws and regulations but also the degree of press freedom, dubious practices and journalist routines (see Hansen, Neuzil and Ward 1998. Hanson 2005 describes laws and regulations such as the concept of the embedded journalist which implies a sensitivity to race, religion and culture, and the country's political masters. For example, the Internal Security Act (ISA) allows detention without trial and has sent many people to jail. The early ISA, designed during British rule, was designed to curb the Communist threat. However, some practitioners discovered that after independence in 1957, the law was abused and used to detain critical journalists for 24 to 48 hours detention.

divisive…on that score I support ISA but it has to be used judiciously (R25-practitioner).

A contrasting view is held by less experienced practitioners who believe these rules and regulations are sometimes burdensome, infringing on media activities, and that media practitioners need to fully understand them to get around them. They need to know how to exploit the situation; both practitioners below are more open as they are actively involved in the new media and citizen journalism:

I don't think ISA has any effects on how media practise...not at all...the ISA only comes to play for anybody that's not operating as a media owner (R21-practitioner).

These regulations do not affect responsible journalism…by applying good lateral thinking approaches; journalists in Malaysia are still able to tell their stories given the limitations as their priority is nation building (R16-practitioner).

Malaysia inherited many laws and practices from its colonial rulers. The country's leaders and their governments have also influenced the media, especially the mainstream media, which are owned by a political party or the government, or by elites with links to them.

7.3.4 Leaders and the State

Most of the respondents (academics and practitioners) argued about what levels of government freedom are appropriate. According to them, the media have been controlled by federal politicians, business elites or other political interests, and by different leaders:

Media freedom is more affected by the 'instructions' from Putrajaya (federal state)…which is normally done in a subtle but effective way (R16-practitioner).

The newspapers are owned by parties or people aligned to the parties in power...UMNO, MCA, and MIC...for instance (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

During the general election the mainstream media was too pro Barisan Nasional (BN) or too pro on the government of the day (R17-practitioner).

They also indicate that all laws and acts relating to the media are based on state controls and influenced by different political ideologies. Since most, if not all, of the mainstream media are owned by the government or elites with political links, most of the academics doubt the credibility of Malaysian media when it comes to political news. According to them, people who support the opposition's ideologies will tend to turn to alternative

media, such as *Malaysiakini*, which present news favouring non-government ideologies. Therefore, most news media in Malaysia reflect their owners' political ideologies[88]:

> The laws are still there, to circumscribe the powers of the press. And will I see a day with total freedom?...I won't see no changes so much because there will be the power from the state to control the news reporting and media practices…All this are the repressive state apparatus, and this repressive state apparatus is also being supported by the ideological state of apparatus…whatever you see in Malaysia now days, the laws that we have, the legislative that we have, the family system that we have, the economic system, the social system, the government system, is all capitalism, beneath it is capitalism. It has not changed (R7-academic and former practitioner).

> As long as this state intervention in the running of the media…they would not encourage critical analysis or assessment of government projects, policies by the media (R8-academic and former practitioner).

> Media in Malaysia is underdeveloped because they have an imbalance existence of newspapers where most of the mainstream newspapers have existed along the line of the partisan or political ideology. These newspapers conform to their political parties. And these papers have been existed along the line of the partisan or political ideology. What we have are papers that conform to political parties. There is no newspaper that cut across the political parties (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

Most of the respondents agreed that how the media work in Malaysia is a result of particular political leadership traits and affiliation with political parties. However, some of the practitioners expressed different ideas about these leadership characteristics and political ideology. It has been identified that other limitations of Malaysian journalism come from political factors. Leadership factors influence the media landscape in that different leaders have different styles of authority and levels of tolerance of the media[89]. This indicates respondents believe that media control depends on the leader in power:

> The limitation right now depending on who's in power? The licensing itself...if the government feels your way is ok, and then the licensing doesn't become a hindrance…but when they feel that you are not doing it the way they think you ought too, then they can use the licensing to stop you from doing that...they can threaten suspend you (R21-practitioner).

> Utusan strike...that was the start of political party UMNO try to gain control of a newspaper company, Utusan and they succeeded in doing that. Ever since that the media and the government have had a very close relationship (R18-practitioner).

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[88] For example: *Harakah* is the voice of Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS); *Utusan* for UMNO, *The Star* for MCA, (see for example Jeniri 2005). Thus individuals with preferences for certain political parties will tend to align themselves to specific newspapers

[89] For example, Abdullah Badawi's administration was more transparent and flexible in its relationship to the media.

However, both academics and practitioners claimed that the mainstream media practice has gone from good to bad (or likewise) under different leaders. This depends on the personality or principles of the leader at that time. Measured against the universal values of press freedom and media freedom these have declined, especially during Mahathir's administration. For example, Malaysia was seen as practising freer news reporting and media practices under Abdullah's administration than under Mahathir's[90]:

> In 1997, Mahathir added 3 things in the printing presses and publications, number one, section 8A. Section 8A is with regards to false report...you cannot write false report or false news report. It can be taken to court. Two, no representation can be given...under section 13A, you cannot bring anything to any court if the government takes any actions against your newspaper...like suspend your newspaper, reject the renewal or something like that... You cannot bring to court. So we ask for that to be repealed (R11-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

> Measured against universal values or press freedom…I would describe it as getting from something gradually worse through time and during Mahathir's 22 years, we got the media that very uncomfortable relationship with a very strong headed leader…we got the Operasi Lalang which involved journalist, we got the introduction of OSA which targeted journalist (R18-practitioner).

> Media is more open now as compared to the last 5-10 years ago when Mahathir was in power (R4-practitioner).

Therefore, most of the respondents (academics, practitioners) agreed that freedom of the press varied under each leader. Abdullah was seen as a more open leader compared with Mahathir, and one who tried to promote transparency in government and allow freer reporting in the media. This supports the textual analysis findings declaring the excessive involvement of leaders in the media decision-making. Most practitioners and academics interviewed agreed with this contention.

However, leadership differences may also be seen in the way that these leaders dealt with Singapore-related issues. Leadership influence and state control of the media led to non-controversial reporting on domestic and regional issues. This will be explained later in this chapter:

> Malaysian media ... very mild, they are not really controversial, in fact they will try to avoid controversial issues. It make sense because of some of these newspapers are affiliated with political parties and government bodies,…somehow, they try to avoid

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[90] According to Freedom House 2010, Freedom of the press 2010, the media in Malaysia were freer during Abdullah's time compared to Mahathir's. The media are still controlled but the freedom score has improved from the scale of 5 to 4 during Abdullah's administration. Refer to the tables and charts published by the Freedom House Organization. Available at: www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15.

controversial issues…if you compared during Mahathir and Abdullah's time not much has been written on corruptions in government and what not. But under Abdullah, it was more open; he tried to promote transparency in the government. So we see this sort of endorsement by the prime minister, the newspapers began to be more open report, more on this issues of corruptions, of money politics in Malaysia (R2-academic and former practitioner).

Despite these differences, some respondents claim that the most significant development in Malaysian news reporting and media practices was during Mahathir's administration. Mahathir built Malaysia as a nation and also influenced local journalism in terms of the way news was reported. He also became the major influence on the hegemony and new opposition of the country. Some respondents expressed the opinion that the media were more or less 'dictated to' during Mahathir's administration. Media-savvy himself, he knew how the media worked and what it wanted. Media control was very tight under Mahathir but this abated under the next Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Thus, leadership factors have significantly determined the media climate in Malaysia.

7.3.5 Ownership

Another factor shaping media in Malaysia is economic in character, specifically the influence of ownership. In response to this issue, most of the academics suggested that media practitioners and decision-makers should only be involved in media business and not in other types because it might lead to conflicts of interest. They claimed that the ruling elites have contributed to the control of the media in Malaysia through ownership affiliation.

It may be impossible for the media to be totally free from ownership influence. The media are not 'free' because most of the media agenda will have to go through some kind of 'internal' censorship by the owners and/or stakeholders. My analysis suggests that the level of 'closeness' in terms of ownership and the power relationship between media outlets and the government has shaped the local style of news reporting in Malaysia:

> Printed media, I don't think is really free in terms of reporting…because of the owner and the stakeholders of the media…I think more positive news rather than negative news that is free in Malaysia (R3-academic).

> if you give them (the media) freedom, they will not be able to use up the freedom because there always be the owners who want to take care of their interest…it's all about money (R9-academic and former practitioner).

The media in Malaysia are mostly owned by political parties as a medium or channel to transmit political ideology to society. Mainstream media in Malaysia are also clearly seen by practitioners as linked to the government:

> It is very obvious…that many major newspapers are owned by political parties...for example, Media Prima, which owns four television stations, and some major newspapers like *The New Straits Times* and *Berita Harian*…is owned by UMNO…that's why the Western label them as a pro government because its control by parties which running the government (R17-practitioner).

> The government also co-opted through the share ownership the newspapers into what we can roughly call the government media ownership or the government media control example *Utusan* in 1961 (R19-practitioner and media owner).

This ownership issue was seen by both academics and practitioner as a common problem for every journalist worldwide. In the context of Malaysia's media, it has been alleged by the respondents that journalists serve their owners' personal interest, that of making profits, but do not emphasize the importance of news. For example there are events where journalists, and the media in general, only report the good things about the government and ignore any criticisms from the opposition[91].

According to the majority of the practitioners, this control suggests that the news will reflect owners' opinions. However, both groups – the academic and practitioners – agreed that controls derive not only come from the direct owners, but also from ethnic groups and political parties:

> Media in Malaysia conform to its owner where the owner is political related, be it political parties or political interest…first is the political issue and second is the sensitive issue. Usually any news that touches on these 2 issues will be scanned by the editors before it can be released on media (R4-practitioner).

> Mainstream media is owned by parties linked to the government or controlled by the government…include *New Straits Times*, *The Star*, BERNAMA, Radio Televisyen Malaysia and TV3…we have the alternative media which I would categorize *Harakah, Roket* and other publications, which party organs, limited circulation as alternative media (R18-practitioner).

> We have so many newspaper, broadcast media in different languages to cater to different group of people...different ethnic group. With that also comes sensitivity. For example, the Malay newspaper will champion the Malay cause...the Chinese will tend to champion the Chinese cause...and so is the Indian...with that also comes control...for example the Malay political party will control the Malay newspapers...the Chinese political party will try to have control the certain side

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[91] In 2009 Perak (one of the Malaysian states) experienced a Constitutional Crisis when the opposition called for fresh elections because Nizar (Perak's Chief Minister) refused to resign and they asked the Sultan to reconsider and dissolve the assembly (Dewan Undangan Negeri) in the name of democracy (Loh and Siew 2009).

influental newspapers in Chinese...so is MIC. They try to control certain media. So that be durable to promote their ideas, ideologies...they already become what I say as a 'propaganda' tool or 'influential' tool...of certain group in power (R5-academic).

Some academics and practitioners claimed that, besides ownership influence, other factors shaping media and news reporting are the connections with news sources and feedback from readers who are Internet-savvy. One company can own many television stations and newspapers provided that it allows its journalists to be true to their craft[92]:

Like if the owner may have the bias, so he may implicitly impose advice on his journalists...so if the bias between the owner and the journalist are not alike, the journalists have two options. They can conform to the bias of the owner, or they can choose to leave…if for them earning a career in journalism is important, they will realigned their writing style so that it will conform to the bias of the owners (R21-practitioner).

Freedom sometimes will depends on the owners....I don't deny the fact in Malaysia…the freedom is also determine by the owner (R14-practitioner).

Free enough to be critical of not just the government but also the business sectors and also other stakeholders in the society (R8-academic and practitioner).

Some of the respondents, especially former and current practitioners, argue that media ownership in Malaysia does not promote a healthy environment because it is controlled by a group of people who have political links and motives. The media should be more independent, or at least editorially independent. The ownership issue is considered to be a disturbing one because of media concentration. Control is in the hands of shareholders and political interests. This also means that there is only one voice and the audience receives the same content from different channels:

In the case of Media Prima, they control the entire private TV station…it means you don't get the diversity you would like to have…the media prima would be influence by the ideological bench of the owners themselves…views that are not in line with the philosophy of the owners may not have a place in this private station…I don't see something healthy (R8-academic and practitioner).

Who is behind Media Prima? Again it goes back to the political masters…to me is a very disturbing trend in Malaysia, you'll not get the dissenting voices, you'll hear only one voice wish just not good at all (R10-academic and former practitioner).

However, Respondent 12 felt that there are positive and negative implications in the monopoly of media organisations in Malaysia. On the one hand the media conglomerate

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[92] This means that journalists must be allowed to have freedom of expression within the limitations of responsibility; see Gade 2004 and Gade and Perry 2003

can share resources with other media under its umbrella. They may follow the same philosophy and policies, while in an economic sense they benefit by belonging to a big company. On the other hand, there is central control and audiences get the same, biased and one-sided perspective, especially in the news. The main concern of media owners is how to attain good ratings and circulation figures:

> Owning a media station is very expensive...there are good things and bad things about Media Prima owning all 4 TV stations and 3 radio stations...in the sense Media Prima being a conglomerate has got all the resources and they can cross share platform, share manpower, share products, studios and resources...that's the good part on the economic sense to have one big ownership…but on the freedom, on the liberty, and to report, to have your own point of views to somewhat curtail (R12-policy maker and former practitioner).

Many of the respondents claim that media ownership in Malaysia is nothing new compared with other media in the world. The Malaysian media are owned by ruling and business elites, like other giant media companies such as Fox Network[93] and News Corporation[94], which are amongst the most popular media in the world and also owned by powerful people. All media owners wield influence on the media outlets they own. Most of the respondents prefer a diverse ownership regime where audiences would have access to differing ideas and opinions.

7.3.6 The Journalistic Obstacles and Dilemmas

Most interviewees claim that mainstream media seem to be less viable compared to the independent media. The majority of the practitioners and academics concur that there are several obstacles and dilemmas faced by media practitioners. Academics, practitioners, and policy makers claim that the media practitioners, especially journalists, tend to be idealistic when they are students studying media and journalism, but when they work with media in the real world they have to conform to their media owners' ideologies. Most of the respondents urge media practitioners and journalists to look at things from many perspectives and be more responsible.

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[93] Ownership of Fox Network has been challenged by NBC, reported in the New York Times News Service. Available: http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1994-11-30/news/1994334027_1_foreign-ownership-fox-television-network-broadcast.
[94] "The Murdoch Interests will directly own shares in News Corporation, rather than indirectly owning shares in News Corporation through various entities. Like all other shareholders, the Murdoch Interests will receive identical voting and non-voting shares in News Corporation in exchange for the shares in News Corporation that they own directly". Available: http://www.newscorp.com/investor/index.html.

The practitioners and academics have different understandings of the concept of development journalism, based on their opportunities and limitations of its practice. This is due to the fact that most of the respondents have different journalism training backgrounds (local and abroad), for example, R1, R6, R7 and R9 had graduated from Western universities and have been teaching in journalism for more than 10 years. Prior to teaching, they were former journalists. Meanwhile, R11, R15, R17 and R19 were amongst the pioneer journalists in Malaysia (since the 1960s/1970s), who were trained in development journalism in the Philippines. Despite their differences in training background, the majority of respondents still describe the main role of the media as disseminating development news to society as part of the nation building process and qualify that perspective by acknowledging limitations of development journalism in its employment as a government apparatus. Respondent 12 claims that:

> I have been cautioned many times when we write that kind of story (criticise government), like we are not supporting the interested parties...the state government, the local government, or the federal government....as Malaysia progresses, towards developed status...so development journalism changes in this format (supporting government) (R12-policy maker and former practitioner).

Another issue raised by the respondents is that Malaysia lacks specialist journalist periodicals and websites on journalism. Academics and practitioners claim that journalists in Malaysia do not know enough about their profession, and do not have information to comment on or criticise their practices. Journalism as a practice needs ethics and knowledge of techniques. Some of the respondents, especially practitioners, claimed that journalism is not only about techniques, but includes intellectual and spiritual activities. Journalists need a 'soul' and every journalist must be a thinker:

> Journalist just learnt mostly about reporting, writing...but what is the concept of journalism? History? Philosophy of journalism? What kind of intellectual production? What kind of social verification? This is the sad thing of journalism in Malaysia (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

> Individual journalists who are not properly trained who look at journalism purely as a job and as a vacation and not as a passion... they can be influenced into writing less objectively then they should (R22-practitioner).

> All journalists must put only their best efforts forward. Times have changed and the world has changed and people are getting smarter so it is not a place where you feel that just for money. The quality of journalism must improve and not go backwards (R17-practitioner).

> When I talk about journalism practices, I'm not talking about something comes out from the text book but coming out from the experience that I face as a journalist in real life in real beauty in the line of fire so to see and sometimes is combative in nature but sometime you're restricted in the things that you can do and you cannot do (R7-academic and former practitioner).

In spite of all criticisms of Malaysian journalists, the practitioners are quite optimistic about their profession. They argue that Malaysia has many good and talented journalists. However, they have not been fully utilised, especially by the mainstream media because they are consistently guarded in what they say or write:

> Other influences would be individual journalists who are not properly train, who look at journalism purely as a job and not as a passion…they can be influenced into writing less objectively then they should. And the other reasons that cannot be discounted is the fact that there are some journalist are lazy and refused to go to extra mile to verify stories quotations and in the last five six years a new trend that came was the effort to discourage journalist from asking the serious and tough questions to politicians (R22-practitioner).

Since leaders play an important role in influencing news reporting and media practices, journalists too feel these influences. This has been confirmed by most practitioners, who claim that leaders have influenced journalists in many ways:

> The prime minister of Malaysia also loom large in the life of journalist because of the facts he's the most powerful man in the country and whatever he said, influence a lot of things the way the country has been driven or the way the country being governed or run (R17-practitioner).

However, some of the respondents argue that laws and regulations that bind journalists do not actually restrict press freedom. It is not written in the law that journalists are restricted in questioning particular politicians. Even so, some of the practitioners feel that journalists should go back to the basic role of a journalist:

> Journalists do not understand the rules and regulations; this is the floor of journalism training, the floor of the common journalism training as well as the floor on the job training of a journalist (R19-practitioner and media owner).

> Journalists should be reminded on their basic duties are, to report, to entertain, to inform and to disseminate information. That you're the custodian of the conscious of society…your role is to be more knowledgeable than others so that you can impart that kind of knowledge, that you must be skilful that you must acquire the language skill. You must not be taken in by promises of wealth, position and all that. And you must remember that your first duty is to your profession (R22-practitioner).

Therefore, media practitioners have to identify paths of development and move out of the colonial shadows by strengthening news reporting and media practices in a proper context. They need to decide on the type of media freedom they want to practice:

> Journalists have to play a role in nation building yes and but we cannot be the mouthpiece of the ruling elite…we understand the role that journalists have to play in nation building…in the position to make policies…we are not in the position to questions policies, but we are here to question the implementation of those policies…we cannot say we represent the people, the people are being represented by the parliamentarian and also by the ADUN (Member of Parliament)… at the same time you must give us the leeway to be critical of that policies (R25-practitioner).

In general, all respondents understand the positive values of journalism. It is suggested by respondents (academics and practitioners) that journalists need to be aware of the sensitive issues in Malaysia when they write the news. They need to write responsibly and credibly. Mainstream media need to maintain credibility and, according to some respondents, the most important thing to be considered by journalists is to write responsibly.

7.4 Malaysia and Singapore: How Does the Media Influence the Relationship?

Criticisms of the government have also been evident throughout the crisis between Malaysia and Singapore, even to the level of discussions of responsibility for water management. In the case of Malaysia, the issue on Pulau Batu Putih between Malaysia and Singapore has focused attention on the responsibilities of both countries[95].

However, in some cases, based on the interviews with respondents, the journalists do not have the opportunity to discuss openly their point of view, especially regarding political news. There is some truth that development journalism has helped Malaysian society to grow, but not in the political sense. The nature of the freedom that exists in development journalism refers to the amount of press freedom that is less than expected by the practitioners.

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[95] In accordance with that statement, the practice of Asian 'harmony' and the desire not to offend limits what may be said (Natarajan, K & Xiaoming, H 2003). For example the Malaysian media try to be as polite as possible so as not to hurt their neighbour, in this context - Singapore, especially in economic matters and tourism and this is reflected in their mainstream newspapers, such as *Utusan, Berita Harian (BH), The Star* and *The New Straits Times (NST)*. Refer to Appendix 6 for the news about Pulau Batu Putih.

This theme overlaps with that of leaders' influence and most respondents agree that both media and the countries' leaders contribute to the success of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. News reporting has been seen as a 'leading' factor in maintaining the relationship. This supports the findings in the textual analysis of news agendas which people perceive as important. Some of the respondents also comment that they did not really study the issues and conflicts in depth, but they know about them. However, the majority of the respondents strongly believe that the media in Malaysia have their own agenda and frame the news according to the following:

- The majority of the respondents saw that most of the agendas and news framed by the media focus on public policy and not people's needs. They felt that the media should expose and report real issues to the public.
- All the identified issues were significantly important but what concerned them more, for some of the respondents, were relationship issues.
- Many of the respondents identified the current state of the relationship as a love-hate or symbiotic one.
- Due to this symbiotic relationship, many of the respondents saw journalists caught between what should and should not be reported
- The majority of the respondents believed that media could help in this relationship despite one-sided reporting. The style of reporting should be based on what has been taught culturally: i.e.; 'harmonious' reporting.
- Some of the respondents commented that the media should not sensationalise issues between the governments as this would cause serious problems in the long run.
- Some of the respondents claimed that the media did not make any effort to develop the people's understanding of the issues.
- The majority of the respondents believed that leaders play an important role in this relationship.

Many of the respondents found that long-standing issues between both countries, such as the water issue, bridge, and island dispute (Pulau Batu Putih), were relatively important to them, compared with 'relationship' issues. Based on these issues, respondents depicted the Malaysia-Singapore relationship as:

They are friends and yet they are enemies (R3-academic).

It always had been uneasy relationship…partly is because of the historical (R25-practitioner).

> I think we play a lot of hide and seek…we know that we hate each other like hell, but at the same time we have to be cordial, smile at each other and try to be very civil…but in the end we get to resolve because we like to think that international relations is very important…to be civilised is very important (R9-academic and former practitioner).

The respondents thought that not only the relationship issue should be highlighted, but the media should report all news and let the readers decide and weigh up which news is important to them. All categories of respondents (academics, practitioners, former practitioners) claim that a harmonious and stable relationship is based on the types of issues arising.

7.4.1 People's Perceptions

Despite agreements and differences, Malaysia faces challenges in compromising on issues with Singapore. Some of the respondents in this project claim that the people of both countries have failed to realise that outstanding issues could be worse, and could be unmanageable unless highlighted by the media. People do not usually know what is going on around them until it has been reported in the media. This is where governments use the media to gain support from their people in resolving issues between the two countries.

It might be assumed that people-to-people relationships do not affect the regional relationships between countries, but advances in technology and education have begun to change this view. People start comparing and learning from different reports from the alternative media, especially the Internet, regarding important national issues. However, this medium has had to endure many challenges. Balraj (2008, p.300) asserts that:

> While there has been deregulation and a wider range of issues discussed on the Internet, the powerful grip of the government is always present in the form of licensing and imposition of other laws that obstruct the creation of participatory empowering discourses aimed at society. This further hinders the formation of an active, discriminating public, linked to a citizen's movement for democratic media reform. Under such circumstances, news views and entertainment programmes that deemed safe and uncontroversial gain the bulk of media and public space.

Social culture is important in that it contributes to a non-confrontational environment where people usually try to maintain good relationships. Kaur (2002, p.51) states that "the people use a non-confrontational manner to preserve harmony and maintain relationships".

Some bilateral issues that have impacted on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship are not immediately apparent. For example the water issue has obviously affected both governments and contributed to the sour relationship because Singapore relies on Malaysia to supply raw water. Unfortunately, this much discussed issue in the media has not been of much interest because people perceive it as less important and a matter that could be easily resolved by both governments. However, it has been discussed publicly and involved clashes over government principle. According to Ganesan (1998, p.22):

> Turbulent relations with Malaysia added to Singapore's sense of vulnerability, which went beyond its diminutive size vis-a-vis Malaysia. Historically, Singapore has relied almost exclusively on the Malaysian southern state of Johor for potable water. The original agreement for Malaysia to supply water to Singapore, which was due to expire in 2011, was supplemented by a second agreement, which expires only in 2061.

Mahathir Mohamed's administration tried to solve several outstanding issues such as water, gas, ferry services and bridges in one package, in a memorandum of understanding with Singapore on 28 June 1988 (Cheong & Ismail Kassim cited in Saw & Kesavapany 2006, p.11). However, not many Malaysian people really know of the crisis that led to the signing of the memorandum. It seems that most of the time Malaysians acknowledge conflicts with Singapore through their media. During Mahathir's prime ministership, issues like water shortage became obvious as the media reported how Singapore desperately needed water. Chapter Five discusses how this issue was significantly repeated in news reporting and highlighted the renewal of the contract to the year 2061.

7.4.2 Media reporting on Singapore

Malaysian media play an important role and are seen as a positive force in this relationship. Most of the academics found that the media present a good picture of this relationship most of the time.

> I don't think we have come across news that is very provocative towards the Malaysia and Singapore relationship (R2-academic and former practitioner).

> Malaysian newspapers, we are soft…we write good news about Singapore. Singapore's media…if they write about Malaysia…they are quite harsh…their media try to cover up and bury the historical aspect that at one time Singapore is part of Malaysia (R6-academic).

Most of the academics also found that Malaysian media are more tentative about the relationship and took their cue from the government, especially in regional relations. This

is due to the previous understanding that when it relates to international reporting, the media take direction from ministers.

> Most likely the mainstream media would play safe in the sense that it will follow the Malaysian government stand…the media would expect to be patriotic…the mainstream media are not expected to be critical of the whole issue…it may have to get into a position where it should have been critical towards the Malaysian government as well (R8-academic and practitioner).

However, the policy makers have contradicting views on the role of media in this relationship.

> The Malaysian media very supportive on government policies…especially in improving the relationship with the neighbours…I don't see there are a lot of bad write up about the neighbours…unless it being used to explain the situations....to explain to Malaysians on any accusations by our neighbours (R13-policy maker).

Policy makers also found that sometimes the Malaysian media are seen as playing an important role in inflaming the situation. The contra of perspectives between policy makers is due to the position they hold in the government. For example, Respondent 13 holds a higher position in the government, where Respondent 24 holds a lower position in government and has less experience as government servant.

> Media reporting tends to sensationalise issues and henceforth influences the mind of the people. The people would form a set of voices to put pressure on the Government to make certain decisions which could be positive/negative to the relations (R24-policy maker).

Meanwhile, most of the practitioners and academics who are also a former practitioners agree that journalists may be caught between what should be reported and what should not. How much should journalists reveal of issues to the public? How much should they report to the public, especially about the nature of both governments? It is not easy to get information from government officials, which causes a dilemma for journalists. Both practitioners and academics share the same views that everything is represented positively when it comes to personal relationships between Malaysians and Singaporeans because most of them are relatives and friends. However, there are difficulties in the government to government relationship. This is why both governments use the media to gain support for their actions. In this case, development journalism practices seem vital and applicable in the context of regional relations.

The Malaysian media it seems to be an extension to the Malaysia government, the Singapore media it seems to be an extension to the Singapore government (R22-practitioner).

Critical analysis of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore is today largely in the domain of the press…meaning that the press has become main actor for that relationship because the media keep reminding the people. And in fact, the posturing within two countries is very much reflected in the media, in fact the media in two countries take side, each supporting their government, or each supporting their country (R19-practitioner and media owner).

Media represent the views of not just the government but the people; the government represents the views of the government…so the people-to-people relationship has to be nurtured...I don't think it can be done naturally by government, I think it should be tackled by our media (R18-practitioner).

Need to ensure there is some peaceful relations…address a problem between Malaysia and Singapore in a cordial manner. The government will use the Malaysian media to get the Malaysian support for their actions, any policies against or relations to Singapore (R2-academic and former practitioner).

I think what are our press is doing is just to follow closely with what the government's way of treating their neighbour…to what the government strategic plans…our press are like that especially to sensitive issues. They take the queues from the government (R23-academic and former practitioner).

Some of the respondents (policy makers) claimed that most commentaries in the Singaporean media are biased, provocative and critical, and could influence the public as a whole. These negative comments shape and influence Singaporeans' views of Malaysia.

When I was in Singapore, I personally felt that news on Malaysia were shaped so as to influence the people that the Malaysian Government was a bully, that Malaysian people hate the Singaporeans, that Malaysia is an unorganised country and with weak governance (R24-policy maker).

The majority of the practitioners agree that the media should play a role in improving the relationship. These respondents believe that media should be a positive force and a facilitator between the two governments and two peoples. They should not take sides when issues arise.

The mass media role in Malaysia and Singapore is huge in maintaining the clashes, rivalry between Malaysia and Singapore (R19-practitioner and media owner).

For example, the Malaysian media reported only on Malaysian efforts to win Pulau Batu Putih from Singapore. They revealed the justifications given to International Court of Justice (ICJ) by Malaysia but did not release the justification that Singapore gave that led

to them winning the claim. The Malaysia media represented only their government's views and not all sides of the issue.

According to academics and former practitioners, the Malaysian media practise this harmonious reporting about issues between Malaysia and Singapore.

> You know what Asian media has been doing all this while…they downplay any issues that deal with Singapore (R23-academic and former practitioner).

Despite contrasting views on how the media should report the relationship between policy makers, academics and practitioners demonstrate a different pattern of how issues with Singapore should be dealt with in the media.

7.4.3 The Relationship and Leaders

There is a significant link between leaders of countries and handling of regional relationships through media in the textual analysis. In this matter a majority of respondents (practitioners, academics and policy makers) agree that the state of Malaysia-Singapore affairs depends on who the prime minister is and consequently the representational practices alter. Different prime ministers or leaders practise different approaches to the media. The media may influence the regional relationship further in the way they represent issues between the two countries. For example, during Mahathir's administration there was much suspicion and mistrust between the countries.

> If you look at government to government is not the best of relationship…it also involves personalities. Who's the PM that side, who's the PM this side? We're link historically, economically, and socially, we can't be divorced (R22-practitioner).
> If Mahathir made strong criticisms of Singapore and we (the media) have to report that means negative not good for relations and we have to report it. But on the other hand we have to give our readers the other side of the story (R17-practitioner).
>
> The problem with Singapore is that they look at everything under the agreement...they don't look at the spirit of the agreement but they look at what is written (R15-practitioner).

Policies of leaders often seem to reflect their personalities. Abdullah Badawi, for example, is often seen as more diplomatic, but Mahathir is seen as having a very forceful personality. The two made contrasting decisions and thus generated a lot of criticism. This shows that leaders' personalities play an important role in determining the climate of the relationship. Many of the respondents saw that the media in Malaysia started to

'favour' Singapore when Abdullah Badawi took over the administration. Many criticised this favouritism, including Mahathir Mohamed. Media were involved in this situation as they are the tools to the leaders in power and they conform to that role.

Below are some comments from the respondents on this issue:

> The last five years when the Prime Minister (Abdullah) told us the media not to report anything negative about Singapore...but during Mahathir's time, there was always a healthy, lively reporting...against one another…there were some statements from Singapore saying that Pak Lah is more calm than Mahathir…Mahathir is more firm. Mahathir decides what is good for this nation...Pak Lah, some people said that he's clam...but he is also can be consider indecisive...he would say yes now and no later. In the relationship with Singapore he gives precedents to what Singapore wants rather than what is good for Malaysia (R18-practitioner).

> Dr Mahathir for whatever he claims himself to be is less tolerant to media being critical about him or about what he did. But Abdullah Badawi his tolerance is quite high. So, he likes to open space for the media to express themselves (R17-practitioner).
> Mahathir, I think he has a very charismatic, forceful personality and this reflected in his policy… Abdullah, he is more diplomatic, quite…likes to sit and discuss first (R2-academic and former practitioner).

The opinions of leaders generate the state influences on the media. This situation creates an imbalance in media development, not only in domestic, but also in regional issues. It is perceived that state control has led Malaysia to a guided democracy.

> In the eyes of the west, it appears that our media is controlled…we can't report everything and we are subject to a lot of laws, printing presses act for the press… otherwise, we can go beyond that…a lot of things we cannot write openly and criticize the government. There are pros and cons to that because we don't want to be like other countries where they (society) voted for the government but they also brought the downfall of the same government…for Malaysia I think there's a guided democracy (R20-practitioner).

However, a majority of the respondents (practitioners, academics and policy makers) suggested that in terms of the media Malaysia is freer than Singapore. They also claim that media in Singapore are more controlled by their government and owned by one giant company, the Singapore Publishing House (SPH), (see for example, Rodan (1998)).

> Malaysia is much freer than Singapore in terms of media…I have not seen any criticism of Lee Kuan Yew and the family in Singapore, although not all things are positive in Singapore. Singapore has a very stiff media practice and low press freedom (R17-practitioner).

The policy makers suggested that unlike Singapore, the media in Malaysia allow some news of the Opposition and some criticism of the government. This shows that the

political practice in a country parallel news reporting and media practices. In addition, respondent 24 argues that the Malaysia-Singapore relationship was not very good until Mahathir stepped down as the Prime Minister. He also argues that Malaysian newspapers do not give as much attention to Singapore as Singaporean newspapers do to Malaysia.

> Relationship between Malaysia and Singapore has been increasingly warm since after Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed retired from the Government in 2003. Government to Government relation has been very good with close cooperative relations in many areas of work. All the outstanding disputes are political in nature and many politicians would love to talk about the issues to the media in order for them to gain more political mileage. As long as media in Malaysia continues to approach politicians for their views without taking into account whether they (the politicians) are privy to the issues, the issues would continue to be blown up out of proportion. In reporting on these sensitive bilateral issues, the media should only talk to the Ministers/government officials' concerned (R24-policy maker).

Both countries are looking for a win-win relationship, in which they depend on each other for economic survival. However, some issues strain the relationship, especially concerning state sovereignty.

Most respondents also agreed that Malaysia and Singapore are good neighbours and that this relationship can be seen in various ways such as government-to-government and people-to-people. The media in general do not have much influence on this relationship although most of the time the Singaporean media pick up negative stories about Malaysia. They saw that if both countries need to play a positive role in order to maintain the relationship, then their media should play a vital role in supporting the direction or tone set by government. They should not sensationalise critical issues that could create tensions. Policies of both governments potentially affect each other and respondents see that geographical proximity and a close relationship may be mutually advantageous. In order to maintain harmony in both countries, the media may need to avoid reporting negative news and stop pointing fingers at each other.

7.5 Media Freedom and Democracy in Malaysia

If respondents are correct, this research demonstrates the limitations and opportunities for the media in Malaysia in progressing towards greater freedom in development journalism practices for external issues. However, democratisation of news reporting internally and externally are still shadowed by the owners and government.

Based on the respondents' points in this chapter and from the literature, the media are still temperate in their responses to criticism, in particular on domestic issues. However, for regional issues the media use a different approach as discussed in the textual analysis in Chapter Five. The account of media freedom given by the respondents signals that the media in Malaysia are still far from being free in development journalism practices in domestic issues. Regardless of domestic or regional issues, media freedom in Malaysia is an ongoing critical issue. Although there were many attempts by media practitioners and academics to upgrade news reporting and media practices by having a media council, this attempt proved inconclusive, (see for example, Mohd Safar and Ahmad Murad (2002)). They argued that the practitioners were against the media council, as it would mean more regulations despite those existing. Similarly, the suggestion to repeal the yearly media permit has attracted massive negative discussion among media practitioners, academics and policy makers, yet problems persist. As discussed by the respondents, the permit has curbed them from operating under normal conditions.

Respondents also claim that the mainstream media in Malaysia needs reform and that actions taken towards media development (such as media variety) are not sufficient[96]. Respondents suggest that the Malaysian media has been very slow in achieving press freedom due to the existence of federal power. The implementation of laws and regulations by the government has determined the degree of press freedom.

Various elements of media freedom on domestic issues are discussed by respondents. These include a discussion of media credibility, given government and ownership control in development journalism. To some extent, the 'closeness' of mainstream media to the government challenges the role of mainstream media. Therefore, the role of mainstream media such as BERNAMA as the agent to encourage a harmonious society completely contrasts with the notion of a free press. Harmonious reporting is reflected through the news reporting of the Malaysia-Singapore relationship. Most respondents claim that the role of the media is to deliver facts and information freely but at the same time they should be responsible in their practices.

Respondents' concerns about current news reporting and media practices appear to focus on a growing issue that needs attention, and involves civil society. Media freedom issues

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[96] Banerjee (2008) from his speech: titled 'Trends and Future of the Malaysian Mass Media'. Available:http://www.ssig.gov.my/ssig/kcent/hits.php?id=17136.

and limited access to freedom of information may create fears in the society. Current news reporting and media practices and the demand for more freedoms may prevent the harmony of Malaysia's multi-ethnic landscape. The Malaysian media mediate between society and government and in representing a range of opinions it may contribute to better news reporting and media practices. However, free press practices are restricted by the government regarding issues classified as 'sensitive' such as the citizenship of non-Malays and the special position of Malays in society. In this respect, the media practise non-critical reporting of government activities especially relating to regional reporting.

Respondents indicated the same concerns in the context of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship. The media show limited transparency and work for harmony in reporting issues, which has been discussed in Chapter Five. Economic factors are the main constraints to the relationship as Malaysia needs to work closely with Singapore in order to boost its economy. Security measures taken by Malaysia are significant in the relationship. The Malaysian media have become a forum for discussion but sometimes it leaves issues to the political pundits. Malaysia needs to co-exist with neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia such as Singapore, Thailand, Burma and Indonesia. This need also affects press freedom and democracy issues. In this analysis issues of press freedom are seen to be deeply affected by the pressure to maintain harmony among ethnic groups within the region.

7.5.1 Media Freedom

Most of the respondents agree that the media could be a positive force for democracy and the country. Although Malaysia claims to be a democratic country, it has imposed stern laws in the name of national security. Is media democracy possible in Malaysia? Some respondents suggest increasing the pressure on the government, especially in terms of checks and balances. However, the question is whether there is a better model to implement in order to achieve media freedom? Respondents argue that party politics and a lack of openness are problems.

> Democracy is not a word that can resolve everything. There are multiple democracies. So practise it…We have to be rational...what's happening now is putting party interest above everything else, above the truth. What we need is that we have to put above the party interest (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

However, most of the respondents (practitioners and policy makers) argue that the Malaysian media are unable to break through the elites and state control. They do suggest that media democracy in Malaysia could be improved by encouraging the main forces – government and society – to work together[97]. Respondents found that Malaysian news reporting and media practices need constant change.

> At the moment with the competition from the new media, the mainstream media must change…but many are slow in changing (R16-practitioner).
>
> Whether alternative media or mainstream media, they all have their own role to play towards making Malaysia more mature and progressive. May be one day Malaysia will also be more open than what it is today. But in a way the media cannot move towards that without the government (R20-practitioner).
>
> The fourth estate has a very crucial role to play...you like it or not...there's no two ways about it in Malaysia…they have to act correspondently with the changes in culture, in society...in the whole scenario...they have to adapt...that's not business as usual...you cannot do that...when you said 'business as usual' – I'll do the same formula, I'll adopt the same practice, the same formula as 30-40 years ago…you are gone (R12-policy maker and former practitioner).

It was suggested by many of the respondents that one part of change may involve redrafting the laws and regulations. They also suggested that Malaysians should not depend too much on inherited laws because they hold different values from Westerners[98]. As mentioned by Respondent 2, it is important to have a mature and open society where people are more receptive and unemotional in receiving news and information from the media, especially in relation to sensitive issues. This is to avoid any manipulation by the media or the media owner, which is often the government. Otherwise, society can never be ready for free press practice. Thus, social attitudes contribute in important ways to media democratisation.

Media democracy in Malaysia also requires media practitioners to be free but responsible. Media at the moment are not encouraged to present critical analysis or assessment of government projects or policies. However, from the journalists' point of view,

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[97] According to Sunanda (1998, p.25) the most serious challenge that press freedom faces in parts of Asia today is not from any of the traditional threats but from the quest for a better life….In certain situations, liberty of the press can turn into license, too, but, on the whole, the greater danger arises from the fashionable casuistry that all human attributes and activities must be subordinated to the profit motive, which will, in turn, solve all social and political problems. Therefore, the media has the power to shape people's mind. The media are seen as one of the pillars necessary for democracy. Perhaps what needs to be done is to liberalise the media and give certain latitude of media freedom but with responsibility.

[98] Saravanamuttu (2007, p.8) in the Ishak Shari Memorial Lecture book, claims that, "many Asian politics, especially in the Southeast Asia region, have remained starkly authoritarian or simply undemocratic even as modernisation has advanced rapidly". He also states that "the less mature democracies of Southeast Asia along with the established authoritarian structures have produced citizens less critical of established political institutions".

responsibility lies more with the editorial board because editors have to ensure that there is non-critical reporting of sensitive issues such as ethnicity, religion and politics. All these depend on the current leader who may become a constraint on publishing.

> As long as they are (the media) link to the power that be, I don't see anything that's going to change in the future (R7-academic and former practitioner).

Most of the respondents emphasize that understanding the journalist's roles and journalistic professionalism are important for media democracy. The biggest challenge in media practice now is whether mainstream media can provide a platform for investigative reporting. The power of journalists is increasing with the growth of the Internet. However, journalists should understand how to utilize this new media responsibly. Thus, both mainstream and new media today are positive forces in developing the country and building the nation by providing information to society.

> What is lacking in our mainstream media is investigative journalism (R10-academic and former practitioner).
>
> I wish we can have journalist who are more charismatic in their reporting…of course you (journalist) have to work within constraint…but at least vocal or brave enough to go for true investigative reporting (R2-academic and former practitioner).
>
> The new media has forced us to be a lot more critical of our reporting. The new media will one day make the existing mainstream media obsolete… In the future, Malaysians will demand the media fraternity to be more critical and use 360 approaches in news reporting. Online news will one day replace both terrestrial and print media (R16-practitioner).

In contrast, it is also suggested that the role of media is to write responsibly, to inform, and thus benefit the people. This allows society to make decisions about how to live. According to respondents, the media should be as accurate as possible to avoid discord in the general population. For this, the type of news published should be more neutral.

> As a journalist we are very much part of the society…we put ourselves in that position to ask what is wrong with the tax payers money, what is wrong with the businesses, to look at is a particular company taking us for our right? Are we taking the inferior products, are we getting unhealthy products, and inferior services. Are our roads safe? Those are the things as a newspaper person as journalists we have to make sure that those things are safeguarded (R22-practitioner).

Another challenge that needs attention is the partnership issues involved in media ownership in Malaysia. This challenge contributes to an unhealthy environment. There

needs to be a more balanced composition of media, with some media owned by the opposition. The government could be encouraged to provide a fair platform for opposition news. The respondent added that it is unwise for the government to ban certain opposition newspapers. Respondents urge the Malaysian government to revise the policy on ownership where most media are owned by political parties, and therefore are controlled by ruling elites. People believe that media opinions derive from owners of media organizations. The media, suggest respondents, should have checks and balances and operate independently, without influence from owners or government.

> Yes...people believe what the media says, everything. That's why who owns the paper is very important. What gets into the paper is very important. How you sensationalise an issue and how you prioritize an issue is important, how you angle a story is very important, how you worded a story is very important. That's why journalists must be very crafty and arty to whoever's advantage (R9-academic and practitioner).

On the one hand, some respondents did not agree that "the society is not ready for press freedom" because no society can ever be ready. On the other, some of them contemplated giving society absolute press freedom, taking into consideration all the sensitivities of Malaysian society, which is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious. Therefore, it may be best for the country and people that Malaysia still practises development journalism with some influence from government.

> We (the media) must nurture this creative, open, civil atmosphere for the country to move forward…we must uphold the integrity of the press, we must make sure that we are professional first and last and we must play a very important role as eyes and the ears of the people and of course we will convey the unhappiness, the uneasiness on the part of the people so, the political masters will understand. So that bridge is very critical…we have to play a more credible role…to make this country a better place (R25-practitioner).

Yet, people's power should not be underestimated or taken lightly. As argued by some of the respondents, the new media have been used to channel protest against the government; and when situations deteriorate or get out of control, the government sometimes has no choice but to conform to the demands of the people.

7.5.2 Governing Educated Society

Some of the respondents argue that it is not the function of media to govern society. As a democracy Malaysia runs general elections every five years, which provides a platform

for Malaysians to choose their government. Respondents (practitioners and academics) strongly believe that Malaysia can no longer use the media or any other propaganda tool to disseminate information or educate its society because people are more educated now. According to them, civil society in Malaysia is more mature now as audiences analyse what they read and watch.

> The quality of journalism must improve and not go backwards…people have been exposing to international standards. The media should also as far as possible, come close to international standard. We shouldn't waste time on petty things….let's do things that we can really bring this country forward. Let's concentrate on major things which can make Malaysia looks good which can push Malaysia status standing in the world (R17-practitioner).

However, the practitioners still believe that in order to achieve better media freedom, society has to be well disciplined, because there are dangers in giving total freedom to society.

> If the society is quite undisciplined unless it's a developed country, then we still have a long way to go (R17-practitioner).

In dealing with civil society practitioners and academics share the same view and suggest that Malaysia should encourage citizens to look for information by expanding their horizons to new media, to gain as much knowledge as possible to prepare them to meet challenges in the future. People are encouraged to share their thoughts and knowledge on the Internet but at the same time negative attitudes and distortions should be avoided. Some respondents highlight the need for more people to articulate themselves effectively. In this way serious debates may be discussed openly and publicly. As proposed by respondents, it is important that people start to think like sensible citizens and avoid negative discourses to prevent unnecessary abuse of the Internet.

> The media play a very critical role and in civil society. We have to have a free press; we have to have a nation of people who articulate the opposition freely and without fear but of course within the bounds and boundaries with laws and order. I encourage debate, because I believe the discourse is very critical to this country. What is lacking in our society now? Is the ability to articulate, especially when you talk about the Malays for instance, we are not able to articulate the position (R25-practitioner).

> Ideally, the media champion the aspirations, needs of the society, interest of the society…and we can see that both media alternative and mainstream media do cover the societal interests...but it is difficult for the media to satisfy everybody (R23-academic and former practitioner).

7.5.3 The New Media

Many respondents question whether the new media really brings more press freedom into the media landscape of Malaysia. This issue was raised by both the practitioners and the academics when discussing how the challenge of the Internet may suggest that changes in media trends will take place in the future. Understanding this possibility early, Mahathir formulated the Multimedia and Communication Acts 1998[99] which state that there would be no censorship of the new media (Internet). Following this there has been a rise in online media, with more alternatives to the mainstream media such as *Malaysiakini*, *Malaysia Today* and *Malaysian Insider*. In fact every mainstream media now has its own online version to keep up with this trend.

The rise of the Internet shows some openness to changes in technology but also to changes in society. People are more educated now and want wider perspectives. However, freedom given to the new media, the practitioners and academics argue, should come with responsibility. They claim that people can write and say whatever they want to as long as they are responsible, because their writing could, at the worst, create chaos or anarchy. Most respondents, despite their divisions on this issue, advocate a free press. They also agree that too much freedom in the new media can do more harm than good. Too much freedom comes with consequences.

> The government is really open…they allow the public and non-mainstreams media to express themselves, however, the comments from the public in the new media can also be damaging…some maybe true some may not be true (R20-practitioner).

> Are we prepared for the consequences if the media is to be free as free as they want to be? To report on whatever they want to report? (R10-academic, and former practitioner).

However, many of the practitioner respondents suggest that the new media should not be suppressed with regulations like the mainstream media.

> The less regulation the better, but we still seeing this regulations and rules…very much the same in terms of numbers…let the industry regulate itself. So, in that sense, Malaysia is still not moving ahead…the thinking about controlling is so out-dated and the Internet media hard to be controlled…the society have greater freedom to write things which the mainstream media do not dare to write (R17-practitioner).

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[99] Available: www.agc.gov.my/Akta/Vol.%2012/**Act**%20589.pdf

Practitioners and policy makers also suggest that the Internet is the model platform they want to have which supports media freedom. The new media has provided alternative channels for the development journalism, which is supposed to be offered by mainstream media. For instance, the new media can provide a space for the general public to write and question relationships or partnerships between the state and traditional media. The new media offered a platform to the people and the people do aspire to have a free press. It also provides spaces for people to express their opinions, and feelings, including giving feedback to government.

> But with regards to the new media, I think we stayed above eight (media freedom index from one to ten) all the time...since we started...despite the arrest of some bloggers...we still around eight because of the freedom that the government has promised on Internet (R18-practitioner).

> The new media has forced us to be a lot more critical of our reporting. The new media will one day make the existing mainstream media obsolete… In the future, Malaysians will demand the media fraternity to be more critical and use 360 (reports all aspects of the issue) approaches in news reporting. Online news will one day replace both terrestrial and print media (R16-practitioner).

> The mainstream media was too pro on the government…the people relied on Internet for information and this show that the mainstream media may lose its status one day (R17-practitioner).

> The advent of Internet has made information flow more freely and widely in Malaysia. Malaysians could get information which would otherwise not available or reported in the mainstream media. The result of the Malaysian general election in 2008 was seen as a manifest of Internet-driven information flow in Malaysia (R24-policy maker).

The interesting challenge for mainstream media, as suggested by some of the respondents, is how to maintain or increase its circulation with the rise of the Internet. People are now more comfortable reading online version of newspapers and can be more selective and read only what they want to. They have the choice not to buy the entire newspaper as hard copy. Thus many newspapers now have their own online version such as *Berita Harian, Utusan, New Straits Times* and *The Star*. Other, alternative newspapers only have online versions, such as *Malaysiakini, MalaysiaInsider* and others.

There is no doubt that the traditional media need to expand and explore new frontiers to engage with this new media. The policy makers, despite their conditions in the government, still feel positive about the rise of new media, as people have more choices. One respondent says that it does not matter who owns the media as people now can

choose between mainstream and alternative media. Therefore, the media as a creative and positive force have to change old practices if they want to maintain their business.

> With the advent of Internet, media in Malaysia could be expected to be freer and more competitive. People have access to information not offered by the mainstream media and would be able to judge the quality of information from the choices they have. Media would thus be forced to offer independent, accurate and in-depth information in order for them to stay competitive (R24-policy maker).

Before the rise of the Internet, newspapers were monopolized by big media companies such as the *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia*, which where they were basically the 'thought masters' and determined what people should read and think. However, with the new media in place, people have more choices of views and opinions.

> What we have to allocate is the third space...where likeminded, intelligent people, across party line, non-parochial, neutral people, come together and publish...and generate a journalistic system...newspaper especially (R1-academic, policy maker and former practitioner).

The new media could provide a critical platform. However, there are drawbacks with blogs which may be more biased than the mainstream media. Respondent 21 (practitioner) claims that the government has continually called editors from media organizations in Malaysia for regular meetings. They usually meet on a regular basis to discuss new issues, or to decide what needs to be reported, or not reported, and how to do it. However, this only applies to mainstream media because the new media is not covered by any form of legislation, requirement or licence. New media have more freedom of expression.

> But in our case (online newspaper) we don't get invited to high level editorials meeting because we don't come under any form of legislation or requirement that we comply to something…but the only thing that we need to concern with is the sedition acts and other usual or common laws... defamatory statement... otherwise there's really nothing to oblige to keep our alignment with anybody (R21-practitioner).

Summary

This chapter explains findings on the opinions of media practitioners, academics and policy makers, suggesting that the Malaysian media is still immersed in development journalism practices. Development journalism as a concept has been appropriated as a positive value to the country, the people and among the practitioners. However, development journalism concepts may not be understood similarly by the media

practitioners, academics and policy makers. Therefore, Malaysia practices 'development journalism' with a limited collective understanding that the practice is changing and transforming through the process of decolonisation by which these three groups of respondents hope to attain harmonious journalism.

Opinions by the academics, practitioners and policy makers seem to have similarities on the press freedom. It may be significant that 80% were US graduates. They perceived that press freedom in Malaysia should have a fundamental change, but at the same time their expressions of that freedom should be responsible where 'harmony' is concerned. Besides that, practitioners' opinions on development journalism were seen as different and sometimes expressive of the hope that practices would change. Despite the ongoing process of struggles with colonialism, leaders' influence and restrictions of laws and regulations are still perennial. However, there is a possibility of practising development journalism in regional reporting, and this differs from the impact of reporting domestic issues.

Chapter Four (content analysis) and Chapter Five (textual analysis) present findings on how journalists report using development journalism practices. The boundaries of where they need to be critically independent and not biased, but where, at the same time, they need to conform to the government's rules and requirements are noted. The various constraints which were described earlier in Chapters Two and Three indicate that development journalism practices began with the implementation of stringent laws and regulations governing the media in order to tackle domestic issues such as to maintain harmony in its multi-ethnic society. The same is true for the reporting of regional issues.

The questions I put to the three groups of respondents were designed to identify how and why these journalism practices have been shaped and practised in a developing country such as Malaysia. This chapter will provide a summary of the answers to this and other questions pertaining to the implementation of development journalism in the country. In the in-depth interviews, respondents identified major influences that shaped the Malaysian media in its current form, such as media-related laws and regulations, impact of colonial rule, journalistic obstacles, and ownership issues, the links between media and society, and relationships with leaders and government. Therefore, it is important for this research to take into account media credibility for balanced and accurate reporting and

whether harmonious reporting is being promoted in development journalism. All these contribute to the limitations on the media internally and externally.

Evidently, every country practises different kinds of press freedom because each country is unique and at a different stage of development, with different peculiarities and different sensitivities about race, culture and religion. The values of societies differ, as do tensions and the balances of ideas and opinions. Some of the respondents argue the media should not be controlled over multi-ethnic issues by the government or ruling elites. The media need reform and greater freedom yet this must come with responsibility, so argued the majority of respondents. They argue that the media need to report truthfully, as people have the right to know. Many of the respondents suggest that a free press should provide fairness and balance in reporting, and that a free vibrant press should be responsible. Journalists need to know how to articulate problems and issues; therefore, it is important to have a free press where people in civil society can articulate opinion freely but within the bounds of laws and regulations.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM IN MALAYSIA

Overall, this thesis has argued that development journalism in Malaysia has followed an individual pathway. Despite the different formulation of development journalism in Malaysia compared to other states such as Singapore, where both have been formed from independence onwards, the practitioners I interviewed express disappointment in it. At the same time, some of them see themselves as pursuing practices thought radical in Malaysia. Using Malaysia-Singapore as a case study, this thesis outlines the harmonizing approach in Malaysia regional news reporting, while taking into account other forces such as leadership impact and media ownership. The news report data from Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate a possible disconnect between intention to achieve harmony, and the evidence of tension.

In Chapter One, I discussed different notions of development journalism and how this concept has been formed and worked in Malaysia. Different interpretations, notions and terms by scholars have drawn attention to the multiple facets of development journalism. In Malaysia, the development journalism concept has been based on the idea that media groups are associates of the government. This model has been challenged by those who propose Western-style models. The divergence of views has put Malaysian media in a difficult position concerning whether development journalism in the Malaysian context offers opportunities or too many limitations. I, therefore, canvass the strengths and limitations of development journalism, identifying where there is a potential for a freer press in Malaysia, as it exists within shared understandings of Asian journalism practices. I discuss journalism practices in Malaysia as echoing Asian journalism practices. In Malaysian culture, there exists a context of desire for 'fewer confrontations', and for different ways of achieving a more harmonious society. This is supported by the interviewees in Chapter Seven. The concept of harmony is relevant to the prevalence of Asian values in the writing and reporting style in many forms of development journalism.

In Chapter Two, continuing my argument that the media have been associated with the government, and that they work within specified limitations, I identify how media in Malaysia work, and explain the forces that prevent it – for the moment – from adopting a

freer press model. How these forces have shaped current news reporting and media practices in other ways are identified. This chapter discusses these points in relation to the process of nation building and national unity, and the influence of leaders and government on media.

I argue that several relationships exist which are significant to media practices in Malaysia. These are: media and nation building; media and the state; media roles in democratic practices and other challenges; media politics, commercialization, laws and regulations; journalist's roles; and, media ownership. My analysis also suggests that the level of 'closeness' in terms of ownership and power relationship between the media and government has contributed to these forces. As I noted in Chapter Two on the loyalty of media practitioners to society, the question is - how objective and autonomous can the media practitioner be within these complexities? Malaysian journalists have been trained in, and practise, development journalism models for all of their professional lives, even though many are graduates from international university programs. This challenge has to be negotiated by journalists. They report that they sometimes struggle to understand the meaning of what is journalism for, and what is the ultimate commitment of a journalist, as outlined in the later chapters.

Having described how development journalism has emerged as the dominant media practice, Chapter Three discusses the impact of news reporting by BERNAMA on the Malaysia - Singapore relationship. As a national gatekeeper of the regional and international news, BERNAMA has had a critical role in defining and shaping national perceptions of Malaysian foreign affairs and international relationships. The chapter also discusses development journalism in relation to the colonial past, the relations between the two countries, some of the historical challenges journalism faces in Malaysia and how the history of separation between Malaysia and Singapore has subsequently helped develop different political ideologies in each country, and thus has become one of the forces that shape and influence their relationship. Subsequently, this separation divided political and social power between two races differently in both countries: the Malays and the Chinese. Political ideology differences however do not contribute to different styles of authoritarian government, or in media control in both countries, In fact, the leadership approach remains similar when it comes to strengthening government power and controlling the media. This is also reflected in practices of Malaysian news reporting, as I argue in later chapters.

In Chapter Four, and in the introductory parts of Chapters Five and Six, I discuss the multiple methods engaged in this study's empirical approach: content analysis, textual analysis, and the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with media practitioners and academics. All these methods use non-numerical examination and interpretation of news articles to suggest meanings in the news reporting, and patterns of relationships through trend analysis and textual analysis. In these chapters, I present the ways in which development journalism is used to maintain the regional relationship from the Malaysian perspectives. Findings and analysis presented in Chapter Four, Five, Six and Seven have provided significant empirical evidence leading to a conclusion that Malaysia is slowly absorbing freer press concepts in media practice. In this chapter I develop understandings from the case study of the Malaysia and Singapore relationship, as shaped by Malaysian news reportage from BERNAMA. Findings in Chapter Four demonstrate the great influence of leaders in the news reporting of Malaysia and Singapore where the findings of the content analysis demonstrate that there is an extensive range of representations through the BERNAMA online news article of the relationship between Malaysian and Singapore. It also illustrates that news trends are shaped according to the influence of each country's leaders.

In Chapter Five, the textual analysis method is used to provide additional information from the news by BERNAMA, as the provision of a set of assumptions about key points for continued discussion in the relationship. This helps construct a more appropriate context for interpretation, and thus it includes contextual effects based on the headlines, and first and second paragraph in the story/news. The findings of the textual analysis chapter demonstrate that there are 'harmonious' elements embedded in the news articles. It demonstrates that there are such integrated values of Asian journalism practices in the style of news reporting regardless of the issues been raised by the media. These results also suggest that the limitations in the news reporting involving development journalism practices could be countered with a different style of news reporting and media practices, so as to be more open. I will return to this point later in this chapter in the points I propose in concluding the thesis.

In Chapter Six and Seven, the analysis from in-depth interviews is used to identify – from the perspectives of key informants – whether elements that dominate and influence the idea of a free press which are developing in Malaysia can contribute to an understanding

of development journalism alternatives. Currently, it is unlikely that Malaysia, inheriting traditional classic news reporting and media practices that conform to the owners' views, can do much more to move more quickly towards a freer press. Owners are often also the government or politicians in power. Balancing the nation-building role of government with a desire for freer press practices is not an easy task, for journalists or for politicians, nor can any major change to media be expected to be smooth in a transitional period.

Overall, although there is a strong level of consensus between media practitioners and academics that indicate that Malaysia requires more room for press freedom, Malaysia also needs to accommodate press freedom within various limitations which has been discussed in - Chapters One, Two and Three.

An important question in the thesis has been: What does development journalism offer to the handling of regional relationships? My study concludes that Malaysia has adopted a development journalism approach in which it is still largely enmeshed through the provision of 'direction' from BERNAMA about the Malaysia - Singapore relationship. Development journalism aims to maintain the nation's regional, political stability, and multi-ethnic harmony, and thus development journalism, as a kind of news practice which does not include criticism of current government, seems better matched to this stage of Malaysia's development. BERNAMA appears to strive for, and it supplies, harmonious reporting. This has been illustrated by the empirical data presented in the case study.

This chapter, as well as presenting an overview of the thesis argument, reflects briefly on the ways in which Malaysian news reporting and media practices might move more swiftly to a freer model of development journalism.

It is undeniable that media have played a vital role in society although there continue to be issues and problems in achieving media freedoms, and evidence of unbalanced reporting. However, the groups interviewed differed in some way as they saw that the role of civil society has grown inevitably as people's diverse views become one of the challenges to the state, political parties and the media.

8.1 Rethinking Development Journalism Model for Malaysia

The future challenge is to act on an understanding of the changes to journalism in Malaysia. Government still considers development journalism an effective way to communicate to the public. The origin of development journalism practices is still perceived as 'accountable' or 'suitable' in the modern society of Malaysia, not just by government but also by the respondents. Development journalism can still be the kind of journalism, which conceptually includes media's role as the fourth estate. Development journalism could incorporate a free press model but would need to adhere to certain journalistic values and new regulations to allow a freer press to operate. Journalists still may have to conform to a media owner's political ideology and interests, as they do in the free press countries. They also have to consider other factors such as pressure groups, social demographics, and the economy. All these aspects restrict the potential for more freedom in the Malaysian press. It was argued earlier by Zaharom and Mustafa Kamal (2000, p.171) that the main forms of control over the media in Malaysia – legal, political and economic – have certainly been tightened. The case does not appear to have altered much.

I have argued that development journalism can be seen as negative impact on journalism practices; however, the practice is deeply embedded in a new society and seen as necessary in establishing 'one nation' in a multiethnic population. Merrill (2000, p.33), for example, is an early commentator who has foreseen that a new journalism paradigm is emerging and maturing: one "that stresses order and social harmony". He further argues that "Western media dominance is still a fact of life as the 21st century dawns. But the social form, pulling even more complex populations toward order, cooperation, and a need for authority, is thrusting media systems into a new and more harmonious communitarianism". This coincides with my own view. Suggestions made by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007, p.5) on the elements of journalism and the purpose of journalism, indicate that this model also provides people with the information that they need to be free and self-governing.

In order to understand the difficulties of changing current journalism practice in Malaysia, it is worth repeating the long tradition of development journalism in the country. A serious study on development journalism practice was first done in 1979 when the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) was established in Malaysia.

AIBD has listed the significance of development journalism practice in the country. It gave a very clear and justified reason about how and why the media should operate under the development journalism label. In the context of development journalism practices, the journalist's role is to serve the nation and contribute to regional development. This agrees especially to what has been stated on development journalism by Keith and Brickenden (1979). The compilation below from the work of Keith and Brickenden (1979, p.4) outlines important points on development journalism strengths at that time:

    i. Obligations and responsibilities
    ii. Restraints on the media
    iii. Presentation techniques and styles
    iv. Research and training and
    v. Regional co-operation

Given this history of commentary, it is timely now to reconsider the possibilities.

8.1.1 Harmonious Journalism

The thesis argument about the importance of harmonious reporting in Asian journalism began in Chapter One. A significant consideration is how journalists used development journalism to construct a distinctive Malaysian variation, after experiencing colonization. In redefining the development journalism practices in Malaysia, this thesis claims that Malaysian development journalism practice is very dynamic. It can be reconceptualised, based on the conclusive findings of the understanding of development journalism terms and practices of the respondents.

There are important criteria to be discussed in assessing the obligations and responsibilities which describe the substance of development journalism: journalism standards; regional co-operation; partners to government; and public participations. All these will reflect the new journalism standards in Malaysia which I refer to as 'harmonious journalism'. As defined earlier in this thesis, 'harmonious', describes news values which work to achieve public agreement or public consensus through routine news reporting. In other words, 'harmonious' is marked by a striving for public agreement in feelings, attitudes, or actions. This has concluded that the setting up 'harmonious' as more culturally appropriate for Malaysia, even though journalists and other public figures want more freedom to express discord.

The study has previously concluded that continuing government controls may weaken media's watchdog role and journalistic autonomy. However, the harmonious element of journalism is seen as a peaceful strategy for the government to resolve many domestic and international issues. Therefore, it seems possible that the practice of harmonious journalism could be a self-defeating strategy on government's part. In fact, this study has identified that government pressure and leaders' influence have become detrimental to the practices of a more inclusive development journalism. Thus journalists must constantly seek to expand their autonomy, and fully exercise their right to criticise, as described in Chapter Two. Working more independently, journalists could demonstrate the professional clarity and conviction to express themselves freely. It is vital for media practitioners to distinguish between the principles, ethics and journalistic values and their obligations and responsibility towards the wider society.

Harmonious journalism practices have a great influence on the maintenance of regional co-operation. In fact, among the problems that have been raised about development journalism in regional co-operation were the disputes between some countries in the region. This has become an important point on the question of media credibility, especially the national news agency roles and specifically whether it is really self-sufficient. Therefore, development journalism has imparted the necessary practices for Malaysia to practice harmony not only internally but also externally.

In an early consideration of development journalism, Keith and Brickenden (1979) assert that the media are not the propaganda tool for the government. They argue that media have to be respected as partners and are free to criticize the government. They also stress that beyond this partner relationship, "development journalism is EQUALLY an INDEPENDENT investigator of what type of development is taking place; and that it is an honest free CRITIC in pointing out what may be going wrong and what dangers may be building up as a result" (Keith & Brickenden 1979, p.12)[100]. Therefore, there is no exception for development journalism to perform as it is sharing the same understanding of what journalism is for. However, that was an ideal perspective on development journalism. Keith and Brickenden (1979, p.12) say that it is important for the journalist to take part in the nation building:

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[100] Keith and Brickenden (1979) gives strong emphasise to development journalism values.

> The role of the mass media should not only to help in the fulfilment of (the national) vision but also to help in deciding what the vision should be. The mass media should help in the attainment of national objectives by spreading awareness of the objectives among the people and by evoking their participation in national tasks. But the mass media should also take part in identifying true national interests and aspirations; otherwise temporary expediency may be mistaken for national interest. They should also scrutinise and monitor the implementation of national policies so that public authorities may be alerted whenever policies go wrong or threaten to produce unforseen and undesirable consequences.

Their points are that: the ideal role of the media is to help the government to build the nation with constructive criticism. Under a freer model, the process of checks and balances should not be neglected by the media. The media have an important role in the nation building process but its success in enforcing its roles has always been challenged to serve by what multi-ethnic society demands. Yet Keith and Brickenden (1979) believed that the value of media freedom in Malaysia as a form of public participation is vital in order to uphold the principle of media freedom.

In reality, they acknowledge that it is difficult for society and for government officials to understand a journalist's broader social and moral obligation. Therefore, the success of development journalism is also influenced by society's awareness. Keith and Brickenden (1979, p.13) further argue that:

> How freely the practice of frank and honest development journalism was allowed in any country depended upon the state of public awareness of the value of the freedom of the media, because journalists alone cannot practise it in isolation. But there cannot be much public awareness of the value of the freedom of the media if journalists do not exercise, with responsibility as well as courage, such freedom as they may have in any given situation. Freedom lapses by the lack of exercise of it.

Another important point of valuing development journalism practices is to conceptualize development as part of the media assessment and measurement in ensuring that the nation is being developed by the government. Keith and Brickenden (1979, p.13) perceive development in the following way: "[it] catalyses fundamental, social and economic changes. It brings large majorities of people into the full stream of social and political processes, from which they have been excluded by history in many developing countries". Another challenge for development journalism is to function as a catalyst for development to unite the country because Malaysia is still a developing country with a multi-cultural society.

Issues of significance to development journalism practices and press freedom in Malaysian media have been discussed and debated for over thirty years on the acceptability across the nations and its implementations. Furthermore, it has been continually discussed among scholars and practitioners until today with the same evidence (media as nation builders) and what has been discussed earlier in Chapter Two. Thus, what is required are continuing efforts by everyone to stipulate working requirements for, and expectations about, media freedom issues.

Theoretically, development journalism seems ideal as a practice promoting the purpose of democratic government, journalistic autonomy and the public life. I have argued from the evidence supplied in my analysis in Chapters Five, Six and Seven that the exercise of development journalism has not rejected the ideological domination by the government nor resists the authoritarian structures and the elite's power. However, that idea of rejections still does not distance the media from focusing on nation building especially for developing countries. In fact, development journalism offers an important philosophy which combines freedom, responsibility and a sense of public service. This can be seen as part of harmonious journalism practices in Malaysia.

In relation to the harmonious journalism, there are factors that contribute challenges to media democratization in development journalism which impacted by how the media democratizations operates in the vacuum of development journalism.

8.2 Malaysia's Media and Democracy

It has been suggested that the independence of media organizations in development journalism could create a democratic mechanism without control. This study has proven that development journalism alters in accordance with the desire for harmony and media democratization in Malaysia. However, this form of democracy may not survive due to pressure from different political ideologies, types of cultures, religions and government controls. The influence of development journalism practice in Malaysia is based on the importance of news and information where public opinion matters. In order to reform the democratization of news reporting and media practices, public opinion is as an important step to reform the states, the media and the wider society.

The journalists and media practitioners need reassurance and to have their practices protected, especially when they criticise the government. Their role as a watchdog in monitoring government power and media democracy will continue to provide a challenging role for decades to come, especially where new social media is available. It is quite difficult for journalists to receive protection from the media councils especially when they are writing online. For example, journalists use social media such as blogs and Twitter where they write about any issues they use self-censorship on their own stands. Therefore, to achieve a better form of media freedom and democracy, according to Green (2008, p.21), the state needs to create educated and active citizens:

> Effective, accountable states are essential for development. States ensure health, education, water, and sanitation for all; they guarantee security, the rule of law, and social and economic stability; and they regulate, develop, and upgrade the economy. There are no short cuts, either through the private sector or social movement, although these too play a crucial role.

In addition, Green (2008, p.21) states that:

> A central challenge for development is thus how to build states that are both effective and accountable, able to tackle poverty and inequality in all their forms (not just income), and ensure the respect for rights that allows active citizenship to flourish. Effective states are critical in reducing vulnerability to shock and enabling poor people and communities to benefit from the market, as will be discussed elsewhere.

An active citizen can takes a more active role in the community and make a constant effort to understand what is happening in public life. An active citizen is also known as an informed citizen. He/she is someone who searches for information, digests it, and actively participates on society putting his knowledge to a good collective use.

A major transformation of news reporting and media practices begins with these active citizens as the new monitoring mechanism which challenges traditional media's role as a watchdog. According to Keane (2009, p.140) representative democracy has changed into a more mature democracy status - monitory democracy. He argues that commercialization has contributed to the changes in the essence of journalism. However, the basic understanding is that journalism cannot be guided only by development (economic forces) or media freedom (special interest) or democracy. The existence of journalism is based on the provision of information to society and needs to be free from any forms of government control outside of legislation on defamation and so on.

Judging from the information from the respondents in Chapter Six, it has been identified that press freedom and democratization have become the major issues for them. Therefore, to widen the philosophy of multi-culturalism and pluralism in Malaysia, a different concept of media democratization is needed so that it is consistent with development journalism practices.

Media practitioners cannot assume that the growth of press freedom has developed in line with the development of democratic government. A time of transition can lead to a privileged role for the public service in the country, and could contribute to undemocratic practices. Indeed, Raslan (2011), a journalist, has commented on the demand for democracy in Malaysia:

> When the society start to invoke democracy, they mean freedom, prosperity, good governance, social justice and peace – in fact they're calling for the ends for which democracy has evolved and developed: societal goods that everyone can enjoy because democracy in itself serves no purpose if it doesn't enhance and strengthen these aspects of public life.

Based on his point, there is a predicament in achieving a comprehensive media democracy in Malaysia. The government, media and society could realign their objectives and work together towards that aim. The objectives, concerns, needs and constraints cannot be taken for granted by anyone. Solutions to any of these problems must be presented to all so that everyone will understand the process. However, it is difficult for Malaysia, as with any country, to apply an 'ideal democracy' practices in meeting the challenges of managing a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religion society.

Development journalism appears to work internally, however, the practices also being used to strengthen the regional relations. Apart from that, the advancement in media technology also enables people to contribute their thoughts and perspectives more openly. The world without borders is continually challenging the mass media in Malaysia. In fact, the media is in a dilemma as it becomes more responsible to the public by encouraging public participation. Merrill, Gade and Blevens (2001, p.128) argue that there is a "serious need of the fundamental change in the triad relationship of press, politics and public which has become obvious and everybody is a journalist". They further state that the "media no longer serves the public based on the money-oriented enterprise but has emerged to a people-oriented enterprise" (Merrill, Gade & Blevens 2001, p.126). Malaysia is no exception to this growth in new media because people have been

socializing through such networks as Twitter, blogs and Facebook. Therefore, with the existence of the Internet, development journalism practices have been challenged; whether it will survive in maintaining or handling issues such as regional relationship in the future. Perhaps, Internet could offer better solutions for journalist to work in development journalism practices, or it would be harder for them to work within the expectations of a globalised media.

Greater media democratization in development journalism could be achieved by increasing societal participation in the process of democracy. Social participation has increased due to the existence of the Internet. Issues that did not emerge directly have been reported in the Internet news. In fact, this thesis has provided balanced evidence about the potential for achieving more media freedom in Malaysia. Internally, there is a need for a freer press but for the external reporting, the stakes are different. For example, it is claimed by many respondents that the Internet news is more convincing and provides more balanced news.

Despite the challenges posed by the Internet, the traditional media operation has also been impacted on by federal influences. An example of strong state and federal influence can be seen when media organizations require annual permits to operate. This issue has been identified by the respondents as a failure of media democracy practices.

Malaysian media practitioners find the full range of Western journalism practices are difficult to abide by. Democratic practices should be perceived as an important element that contributes to the freedom of press practices through the freedom of expression in society. If the media cannot obtain this freedom, how then can society? The mass media and media industry in Malaysia are still developing and they have the potential to address issues concerning a freer press.

8.3 Reflecting on the Future of Journalism in Malaysia

Development journalism practice in Malaysia has reflected various perspectives of the primary purpose of journalism to the society internally and externally. Chapters One and Two provide literature on different terms of development journalism and how it works in the Malaysian setting. Chapter Seven provides findings that demonstrate the different understanding of development journalism among academics, practitioners and policy makers.

However, these reflections of development journalism practices are being altered by an emerging journalism paradigm, the practice of 'harmonious journalism', which in future continue to be nuanced in the following ways:

1) The role of citizens in monitory democracy[101] will loosen authoritarian power on the media through citizen participation.

2) The role of balanced news in a democratic society will improve understandings of how the media works and how news-reporting affects people through news framing and certain agenda issues.

3) The negative impact of continuing racial and political issues may lead, with increased diversity to power sharing[102].

There is a key role to be played by political leaders in recognising change and in introducing the media policies, journalism training, and ownership regulation appropriate to the complexities of Malaysia's democracy. Keane (2009, p.740) elaborates on the substance of monitory democracy by the citizens that:

> The divide between media-rich and media-poor citizens blights all monitory democracies; it contradicts their basic principle that all citizens are equally entitled to communicate their opinions, and periodically to give elected and unelected representatives a rough ride…Every nook and cranny of power becomes the potential target of 'publicity' and 'public exposure'; monitory democracy threatens to expose the quiet discriminations and injustices that happen behind closed doors and in the world of everyday life…In the era of communicative abundance, no hidden topic is protected unconditionally from media coverage, and from possible politicisation; the more 'private' it is, the more 'publicity' it seems to get.

One of these changes as it has been alluded to previously, is the Internet. Malaysian public life is still in the process of adapting to the new media, and how it operates. The

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[101] Keane, J 2009, The life and death of democracyp.740 elaborates on the substance of monitory democracy by the citizens that "the divide between media-rich and media-poor citizens blights all monitory democracies; it contradicts their basic principle that all citizens are equally entitled to communicate their opinions, and periodically to give elected and unelected representatives a rough ride…Every nook and cranny of power becomes the potential target of 'publicity' and 'public exposure'; monitory democracy threatens to expose the quiet discriminations and injustices that happen behind closed doors and in the world of everyday life…In the era of communicative abundance, no hidden topic is protected unconditionally from media coverage, and from possible politicisation; the more 'private' it is, the more 'publicity' it seems to get".

[102] Racial power sharing was designed during the British era and resulted in a different understanding/interpretation that the power should be monopolized by the Malays, as suggested by Jomo 1986, A question of class: capital, the state and uneven development in Malaysi, Jomo, KS 2007, The new economic policy and interethnic relations in Malaysia, Firdaus 2007, Mansor 2005, Unity the Malaysian way: some empirical evidence, ibid., Maznah 2005, Ethnicity and inequality in Malaysia: a retrospect and a rethinking, Rahim, MS 2005, Approaches to community development in a multicultural setting and Shamsul 2005, Making sense of national unity in Malaysia: 'break-down' versus 'break-out' perspectives. However, based on Article 153 of the Malaysian constitution, the Malays hold a certain quota of civil service jobs and other privileges based on the Bumiputra title. Article 153 has generated some controversial issues resulting from Bumiputra privileges and how these can be negotiated.

existence and importance of the print media is being debated continuously by scholars especially in the context of who owns it. How important is this when everybody has their own form of media? The world is becoming borderless and information is accessed freely. In the end no one could identify what is right and false information.

Regardless of all the debates on print and new media, these forms of media should actually be more accountable and responsible in addressing the truth. If self-censorship was practised fully, can it ensure accuracy facts being reported? This sounds sceptical but certain materials on the Internet should be censored as they could cause more harm than good. However, in terms of social freedom, how can we be assured that the freedom given to the people will not be violated? The thesis respondents suggested that the Internet censorship board should devise more liberal classification codes like those applied to television. This should be done to protect Internet access by children and restrictions should be exercised to a certain extent. Through this classification, the Internet providers need to go back to the materials produced and advocate tactical issues on how to deal with it. Merrill, Gade and Blevens (2001, p.180) claim that:

> The Press must take the Internet seriously and try to adapt its institutional practices to the great competition presented by cyberspace. The institutionalized press is quite likely to be split asunder by the Internet, its traditional power diverted into millions of communications outlets operating in the hands of the people. As governments (or people) see the danger generated by this mega pluralism or cacophony of uncontrolled voices, laws will emerge to control them. In the process, such legal restraints will leap over onto the traditional and institutional media such as newspapers and magazines. What this means is that traditional media autonomy that the American press has enjoyed will come to an end? The rationale: the need for order, responsibility, and social harmony.

Media organizations need to take the advantage of the new media. The new media is a dynamic social force and created a technological media revolution. Traditional journalism models are becoming weaker and are shifting their operations to the Internet. Internet operations have impacted on journalism practices, where development journalism has a global or international role to play beyond local or national functions.

8.4 Conclusion

Development journalism has been recognized as motivating society and functioning in a spirit of independence since 1957. However, development journalism in Malaysia is confronted by the concept of unity, nation building, commercialization, and certain laws

and regulations that control journalism practices to maintain regional relationships. Thus, after fifty five years of independence, the media's position in Malaysia is inevitably and continuously constrained in what it can and cannot do. Development journalism practices in Malaysia have been shown to be more complex than has been suggested by those supporting a Western 'free press' model. Thus when Internet becomes more established in Malaysia, and in information dissemination globally, development journalism practices have transformed, and continue growing under the new imperative of harmonious journalism.

The ideal situation for the media is to perform better or lose society's trust. In Malaysia, in future, it is very likely that people will be given an opportunity to experience open campaigns between the government and the opposition during elections. There should be an open debate on any public policy that the public has the right to discuss. Many ideas have been suggested regarding how the media should function better. It is understandable that the media should allow Malaysian people to express their aspirations. However, the people also need to understand government policies and why they have been implemented. In doing so, the media needs to maintain a more neutral role.

It is clear that in implementing development journalism practices, the mass media plays an important role in maintaining peace and harmony in Malaysia. This role should be in accordance with the needs of the community as a nation. The rules and regulations of a ruling government cannot simply be abandoned, and detailed commentary on these issues is beyond the scope of the thesis. Development journalists could propagate ideas that motivate the society and the government. Development journalism can operate as a partner to the government and at the same time allow free criticism and maintain the harmonious issues in the country. We understand that the media is at a crucial stage where social and economic forces emanate from the government and certain sections of the wider society. Development journalism can be quite problematic in its implementation as shown in other countries. For example a study on development journalism in Ethiopia by Skjerdal (2011, p.10) appears to repeat some of the troubles in development journalism:

> The concerns are mainly of three types. First, the ambiguity of development journalism is a persisting problem. In principle, the framework encourages both promotional and investigative stories. In effect, however, journalists perceive sympathetic reporting to be the only style accepted by the owner. Secondly, the

policy becomes politicized on its way to the newsroom. As far as the journalists are concerned, there are only certain issues that are allowed to be reported on; only a certain form of language that is accepted; and only certain sources that should be consulted – and they are all pro-government. Thirdly, and ironically, implementation of development journalism turns out to be marked by top-down directives rather than participation from below.

This has put new pressures on the implementation of development journalism itself and the rise of harmonious journalism promotes an understanding that the press is working towards social stability and responsibility for the people and the country.

This study offers insights into development journalism where ideology has become part of the structure of journalism. Hanitzsch (2007, p.372) states that "this dimension reflects the extent to which journalist pursue a particular mission and promote certain values referred as interventionism dimension". Normative concepts can be found in development journalism. However, the extended primary position of journalism is not the only media form that supports those in power. As claimed by Kovach and Rosentstiel (cited in Hanitzsch 2007, p.374), it is assumed that the primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. This research has discussed Malaysia's regional relationship with Singapore and the cultural and historical values which are partly constructed through normative journalism ideology.

This study has thus opened up a number of pathways. Future research could deal with larger samples from several countries to compare and contrast how news is constructed and regulated. Although this study explores a relatively large number of news articles from one news agency, it is considered limited because it is only one-sided reporting. It is obvious that additional research is needed, but that research should be directly compared to international news coverage in Singapore as well.

Future research studies could also establish how widely these findings on Malaysian news reporting could help other South East Asian countries to maintain their harmony and political stability. A study that compares the harmonious styles of reporting beween news agencies in South East Asia could be carried out. This will enlighten all involved on the advantages and disadvantages of regional news reporting in maintaining regional relationships. In addition, research on the media's influence on how news is constructed is important because it will help identify what kind of news represents the national agenda

in various South East Asian countries. Such research should incorporate in-depth interviews with editorial staff to identify what constitutes news and the role of the editorial team.

Therefore, future comparative studies in development journalism would offer further insights into more sustainable journalism models, and a more socially useful way to inform and communicate about our world. Harmonious journalism at its best will continue to inform and inspire public debate and participation. However, this will not happen automatically and needs investment and strategic thinking, primarily by the journalism industry itself, but also by government and civil society.

APPENDICES

Appendix One (1): Interview Guide

Background Study

This study will identify how media works in Malaysia and the focus is on the Malaysia/Singapore's regional relationship. It will examine the forces which can be potentially detrimental to the accuracy and diversity of news reporting in Malaysia. This thesis will examine the influence of media development on contemporary news reporting and media practices in Malaysia, especially during the transition phases from colonial rule to current news reporting and media practices. Particular attention will be paid to media's relationship with the government and the society, the current situation of media reporting on Malaysia's relation with Singapore, as well as the journalistic practices, and the potential future of free press in Malaysia. Then, the study will compare 'free journalism' and alternative media with the concept of 'development journalism' approach in Malaysia.

The Interview

Each interview will take about 45-60 minutes. It covers six themes:

Part 1 – Participant's career background

- ☐ Tell me about your job?
- ☐ How long have you been in this job?
- ☐ Can you explain about your role now in the organization?
- ☐ Could you tell me about your past working experience prior to this job?

Part 2 - General understanding of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia

- ☐ How would you describe Malaysia news reporting and media practices in general? How do you describe your involvement in this matter? (Optional question).
- ☐ What do you think about the media changes in Malaysia? (i.e. key events, developments).
- ☐ How do media reporting generally reflect Malaysia? It is accurate? Example of issues/events/ situations on Malaysia Singapore relationship where reporting and reality didn't match – such as Pedra Branca & Water issues.
- ☐ How do you usually get Malaysian news? From which medium?
- ☐ What is your most trusted news source? How is this trust reflected in the news source contra another possible source?

Part 3 – Influential factors on media/news reporting

- ☐ Malaysia had been under British colonization for years before independence in 1957. Do you think the colonial rules or laws and regulations during this colonization have influenced news reporting and media practices in Malaysia? In what ways? Can you identify other complexities or factors that may influence media in Malaysia?
- ☐ The Malaysian government has introduced numbers of regulations and Acts that relate to media such as the Printing Presses and Publication Act 1972, the Official Secret Act (OSA) & the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Sedition Act (1984), the Malaysian Communications & the Multimedia Commissions Act 1998 and many other regulations. How have these regulations and Acts influenced media in the past, and what is their current influence?
- ☐ Do you think these regulations and Acts have achieved their objectives?
- ☐ Has your reporting/professional writing ever come under their formal remit? I.e. ISA, OSA?
- ☐ How do you rate media in Malaysia in terms of its freedom? Do you think the regulations and Acts have moulded media, particularly news reporting?
- ☐ Are there any other factors that you think have historically helped shape the media and news reporting in Malaysia and what are the factors currently shaping them? Political? Social? Cultural?

- How do you see media ownership in Malaysia (since most media in Malaysia are under one roof i.e. Media Prima Corporation). Is this good for media in Malaysia? Why?
- Are you alert to other news reporting under alternatives media like news blogs? Can you recall any news blogs that you have read lately?
- How do you think new media affects your reporting/your profession? Do you think that news reporting and media practices have shifted into new media? (Follow up question).

Part 4 - Potentials and strengths of development journalism, development communication and free press practices

- What do you understand by the terms 'development journalism' and 'development communication'?
- What do you understand by the term 'free press'? Are there any differences between 'development journalism', 'development communication' and 'free press'? What are they?
- Can you see any challenges, potentials and weaknesses in development journalism?
- With the rise of alternative media i.e. Internet, do you think development journalism practices will survive?
- What is the function of media in governing society?

Part 5 – Media reporting on Malaysia-Singapore relationship

- What do you think about Malaysia-Singapore relationship in general? Do you think Malaysia and Singapore are good neighbours?
- What issues are been reported in the media in Malaysia for the past 10 years on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship?
- Can you recall any issues that have been reported in the media on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship? Which is the most crucial issue in your views?
- With the current media/news reporting practices in Malaysia, do you think Malaysia will be able to handle the issues regarding its relationship with Singapore more effectively in future? Why? How?
- What do you think are the best features of news reporting from other sources on the Malaysia-Singapore relationship?
- Do you think this media/news reporting influences the relationship? How?
- How do you think Malaysian news reporting on issues with Singapore should play its role effectively? (Additional question for media practitioners).
- How do you handle the press? Do you find it difficult? As we know the news reporting about something has speeded up - so how do you manage the information? What is the function of the press office? (Additional question for policy makers).

Part 6 – Potentials and future of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia

- Do you see media as a positive force for Malaysia as a developing country? In what ways?
- What will be the future of news reporting and media practices in Malaysia? Do you have any suggestions?
- Do you have anything more to say/to add or perhaps you would like to give some other suggestions/comments pertaining to this study?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix Two (2): Respondents Selections

Academicians	Public Universities
• 1 Professors from • 1 Professors from • 2 Associate professors from • 2 Associate professors from • 2 Associate professors from • 1 Associate professor and 1 Dr. from • 1 retired professors	• University 1 (UTP) • University 2 (UPM) • University 3 (UUM) • University 4 (UKM) • University 5 (UiTM) • University 6 (USM) • From any public universities listed (UKM)
Media Practitioners	**Organization/Company**
• 2 top management/editor from • 3 top management/editor from • 2 top management/editor from • 4 top management/editor from	Electronic • Private Media Organization • Public Media Organization Print • Private Media Organization Electronic/Internet • Independent Media Organization
Media Related Policy Makers	**Government Institution/Body**
• 3 Policy Makers from	• 3 government ministries

The respondents were selected as follows:

- For public universities - I identified and selected the senior academicians (3 professors, 7 associate professors and 1 doctorate level) who teach and research, and/or set up media/communications programs/schools/ department/faculty, and/or holds certain position in the program/ department/school/faculty (such as heads, deans, and course coordinators) from six public universities which offer mass communication / journalism and communication subject/course in Malaysia (please refer to table 5.2). All interviews were held at the respondent's office.

- For media organizations - I combined the number of respondents from different type of organizations i.e. the private electronic and print media, public organization such as BERNAMA, the national news agency and Internet independent organization for a wider spectrum.

- For government institutions - I chose selected number of selected higher ranking government servants from relevant ministries involved in media policy making or contribute to the news reporting and media practices in Malaysia. There were three ministries involved in this project: Ministry of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Federal Territories. The Ministry of Federal Territories was chosen to identify the development journalism and news reporting and media practices from the internal insights. Meanwhile the other two ministries were chosen to see how government perceives the news reporting and media practices at the regional level.

- For face-to-face interviews, the maximum participation time was 45 minutes. All respondents/participants were advised that the interviews might be quoted in my thesis, published in journals and presented at conferences. All quotes would be fully attributed. However, in the event that a participant wished to remain anonymous, a pseudonym would be allocated and only non-identifying personal details would be used in the thesis. The organizational and institutional information would not be included in the quotations. Since the interview sample is relatively small, it is possible that their statements might be identifiable. None of the respondents has as yet requested a copy of the transcripts or wants to remain anonymous. All respondents were very supportive and participative. No payments

were made and each interviewee was given a small token of appreciation. After the interviews, all audio tapes were labelled carefully, ready for transcribing. The transcribing process was a very daunting one. The audio-taped interviews were transcribed word for word and summarised for easier qualitative analysis. The transcripts were made available to interviewees on request.

- Later, the interviews were analysed qualitatively and transcripts made available to interviewees upon request. The process of transcriptions of the interviews took at least three to four days for each interview.

Appendix Three (3): Practical Strategies: in depth Interview

Stage One: At this stage I considered identifying the respondents. The researcher has to put a lot of effort as respondents would be the main sources and the key answer to the research questions. Identify and get to know your respondents first upon your arrival. Do some preparations such as understand/master the questions by heart before you start the interview.

Stage Two: During the interview, some researchers might encounter problems like forgetting the key questions. At this stage, the important value of the research process is the thinking process during the interview. As a researcher I have to chew all the questions and make sure everything is in order for the interview. However, according to Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003, p.142) there are certain qualities that would make in depth interview successful:

> In-depth interviewing makes a number of demands on the mental and intellectual abilities of an interviewer. First the ability of the researcher to listen is fundamental to the art of interviewing. The researcher must hear, digest and comprehend the participant's answers in order to decide how to probe further. Second, good in-depth interviewing requires a clear, logical mind. The researcher needs to be able to think quickly to distil the essential points of what the participant is saying, exercise judgment about what to pursue, and simultaneously formulate the relevant question. Third, a good memory is an important attribute. It is often necessary to make a mental note of a point made earlier on by the participant and return to it at a judicious moment in the interview to seek further clarification or elaboration.

This is a vital aspect that every researcher should master in order to get a good result. I am putting this in because I believe every researcher should also be inquisitive to make sure they get certain answers from the interview.

Stage Three: Begin the interview with more substance material of your study. Brief the respondents of your study even if you have sent them the key questions earlier. At this stage researcher should not assume that the respondents are familiar with the information you have given them.

Stage Four: During the interview a researcher should consider preparing an info card which would help you to remember especially the difficult terms. Understand the questions well, as the respondents might repeat some questions. At this stage also the researcher should have the ability to probe questions in order to investigate further on your study. For example, "what do you mean with…..and could you explain further on that".

Stage Five: Ending the interview with critical questions can help you to get a whole perspective of your interview such as "Do you have any suggestions to improve this research?"

Stage Six: As a researcher, there are some other personal questions that could relevant and appropriate with your research. The respondent might have other suggestions on how to improve the study so you could get important hint at this stage.

As part of the practical strategies before proceeding with the interviews, researchers need to get the approval for their research (research ethics). As for my research ethics application, I submitted a copy of the interview guide, list of potential respondents, consent form and other details for the ethics committee's references.

Once the research ethics has been approved, it is important to approach the respondents as early as possible with the first email followed with the formal letter to them. The drawback that I faced during this process was to get the respondent confirmation. In my case, I had to wait for almost one month to get the respondents early consent. Each step was managed confidentially as the respondent needs to give their consent for the interview. Once the respondents have agreed with the interview, the interview scheduling would be sent out. This outline details of time, date and venue of the interview, consent form and some information guide about the research.

Then, during the interview, the respondent was given the interview guide/information guide for their references. Interview guide was used to provide further explanation on what the research is all about. The interview guide was designed as an outline or point of reference by the respondents and according to the category of questions. Some of the respondents have requested the interview guide earlier for their preparations. And at the end of the interview the respondents were once again asked to sign the consent form as the consent form is a valid documentation for the researcher.

After the interview, I listened again to the audio-tapes started transcribing them, during which, I coded the index and time for the reference purpose. Each transcribe was noted with the time coding. During the reading through of transcribed data, I did some cleaning and organizing the data according to index given.

Appendix Four (4): The Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviewing

There are some advantages of conducting the in-depth interviews. Through this method, I manage to get all the respondents to be interviewed and listed some potentials respondents as backup. This method also has given me a rich data and some valuable experience because I learnt to handle/manage difficult time during the interview when the respondents did not like to answer the questions given. However, the disadvantage of doing in-depth interview is that it is an expensive method to subscribe in a research (Denscombe 1998). As a researcher you might want to save budget and focus on the other aspects of the research. The most important thing during the interview is you need to be prepared all the time and you need to be a knowledgeable person and have to understand the respondents' feedbacks.

As what I have experienced, not all questions are suitable and not all answers are significant and important to the study. In order to get the gist of the interview, as a researcher, I need to have certain skills in conducting the interview especially when I need to put a stop to a long conversation with the respondent.

Appendix Five (5): The Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Analysis

Content analysis is also seen as a systematic reading of the meaning of texts. Content analysis is best used to evaluate journalistic practices and to test scientific hypotheses systematically (Berelson 1952). Since this research is studying news texts, content analysis is therefore, the best method to be used. Indeed, as Tuchman (2002) suggests using content analysis on news texts research can be considered as empirical evidence. This is because content analysis involves a "systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's or user's perspective" (Krippendorff, Klaus 2004, p.3).

This method defines relevant variables or dimensions and then on each variable, distinguishes the values, which yield categories of content that can be observed and quantified. It has been argued by Mus Chairil (2005, p.28) that each variable should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Another advantage of using content analysis is that it focuses on situated concepts as they connect to each other rather than counts of concepts (Carley 1993a, p.77).

As claimed by Jensen (2002, p.102), a main advantage of quantitative content studies is that they can serve to confirm or disconfirm intuitive impressions by performing a systematic description of a large set of media discourses through numbers that express the frequency and prominence of particular textual properties.

Therefore, looking at the purpose of this study, it is best to use content analysis because of its inquiry and systematic analysis that can establish a holistic understanding of the study issues and thus bring the best results out of it.

Carley (1993a) contends that content analysis is a time consuming method and will affect how texts are interpreted. It will also have an effect on the potential results where the content has been analysed by a coder. The coder should not be over/under-estimating, as this would contribute to a different level of analysis based on different experience and knowledge. The level of analysis and generalization would overshadow the results. To ensure the result is accurate, a reliability and validity test should be conducted. As the overwhelming volume of data would also be an obstacle to the research, the researcher should narrow the material down into a smaller selection of data based on the purposes of inquiry. As mentioned by Krippendorff (2004; 2008), the main thing about content analysis that any researcher should understand is that content analysis involves a systematic analysis. Researchers need to conduct their research accordingly in order to get the accurate analysis. Thus the documentation and access procedures are very important in this method.

BERNAMA NEWS

1997

SINGAPORE TO MANAGE RELATIONSHIP WITH MALAYSIA SENSITIVELY

SINGAPORE, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Acting Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said today Singapore must manage its relationship with Malaysia sensitively to avoid causing unnecessary offence, and cooperate pragmatically for mutual benefit wherever possible.

The Tang Liang Hong episode had shown how delicate relations with Singapore's neighbours could be, he said when opening an education forum, here.

The government's clash with Tang, a member of the opposition Workers' Party, over Chinese chauvinism had unexpectedly caused strain in Singapore's relations with Malaysia.

"A tempest may arise suddenly, even when things are apparently going well, and there is no intention of causing problems," he said.

"The recent traffic jams at the Causeway is another small example."

Lee said: "We must understand and accept this as being inherent in the bilateral relationship between Singapore and Malaysia.

"Yet, we must stand up quietly but firmly for ourselves and for Singapore, especially when challenged."

Singapore could not isolate itself from its neighbour's problems, Lee said, citing the recent haze problem in the region as another example.

Although a quick solution was impossible, Singapore had worked together with its neighbours to tackle the common threat, he added.

1998

MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE SET TO IMPROVE TIES

SEPANG, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia and Singapore have agreed to set aside their differences and focus on improving ties.

"I hope the two countries will be able to do that," he told a press conference at the Pan Pacific Hotel after holding talks with Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at the VVIP Room, Bilik Bunga Raya, of the KL International Airport.

He said both countries had agreed on resolving outstanding issues such as water supply and the customs, immigration and quarantine (ciq) facilities at Tanjung Pagar in Singapore.

Dr Mahathir said Singapore also agreed to help Malaysia overcome its financial problems.

Goh, who was also present at the press conference, said Singapore agreed to assist Malaysia in overcoming its financial problems but first it had to ascertain what was Kuala Lumpur's requirement.

He said Dr Mahathir had informed him of Malaysia's requirements. "The details will be worked out by the officials of the two countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia would need to raise funds in Singapore. He said Singapore had promised to negotiate on how best the republic could be of help in that area.

"Singapore can be of help to Malaysia during this crisis," said Dr Mahathir.

Follow up news

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AGREE TO IMPROVE TIES

SEPANG, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore agreed to work towards improving bilateral ties and set aside whatever differences between the two neighbouring countries.

"We hope so, unless somebody else say something. Not me, anyway," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told a joint news conference with his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong at the Pan Pacific Hotel next to the Kuala Lumpur Internatinal Airport (KLIA) here.

Goh arrived here today for a one-day visit. The two leaders earlier held bilateral talks at the airport's Bilik Bunga Raya, the fifth meeting between them so far this year.

Dr Mahathir was asked if the two countries would set aside their differences and work towards improving bilateral ties.

Goh told the news conference that differences between the two countries might arise.

However, he said the important thing was to narrow the gap between the differences and work towards maximising the common areas.

"And where we could agree, we will agree and where we disagree on certain things, we agree to come back tomorrow," he said.

SINGAPORE PM MEETS MAHATHIR

SEPANG, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, met today on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, less than a week after Goh said that the republic wanted to put its ties with Malaysia back on keel.

Goh, who arrived here today, met Dr Mahathir at the Bilik Bunga Raya VVIP room at the KL International Airport here.

After their meeting, the two leaders are expected to adjourn to the Pan Pacific Hotel next to the airport for lunch.

The last time the two leaders met was at the joint opening of the second Malaysia-Singapore crossing, in April this year.

Ties between Malaysia and Singapore have been strained in recent months over several issues including the location of Malaysia's rail, immigration and customs facilities at the Tanjong Pagar railway station, the request for more water supply from Malaysia and the status of pension savings of Peninsular Malaysians working in Singapore.

Malaysia was given an extension of another one-and-a-half months to present its legal argument to maintain its rail, immigration and customs facilities at Tanjong Pagar after asking Singapore for more time following the expiry of the deadline on Oct 31.

Goh was quoted as saying in Singapore last Sunday that Singapore wanted good relations with Malaysia and that it was not in the interest of either country to have poor relations.

The Singapore leader was commenting on the recent statement by Dr Mahathir that Malaysia-Singapore ties had taken a turn for the better.

Goh, who will be meeting Dr Mahathir again at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting in Kuala Lumpur this month, said he sensed that both sides wanted to get back on keel.

He also agreed with Dr Mahathir that they both had a sound relationship.

1998
KUAN YEW MANIPULATED HISTORY, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's claim in his memoirs that Malaysia had used "bullying and intimidation" during the two countries' brief federation was a manipulation of history.

"All sorts of old issues were raised racial sentiments were fanned as if he was the one who determined our history. He is good at manipulating the facts to make them appear as if that was what had actually happened.

"This is manipulation of history and historical facts which I feel is not healthy for a leader who has held the highest post," he said after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between his ministry and DRB-Hicom Defence Technologies, here.

Extracts of the former Singapore prime minister's memoirs, which also claimed that Lee still believed that Malaysia could use the water issue to cow its neighbour, were published in the Singapore Sunday Times last Sunday.

Syed Hamid said that such writing would aggravate instead of ease the strain between the two countries.

He said the way the memoirs were written showed arrogance and a lack of sensitivity for the republic's neighbours.

Syed Hamid's father, Syed Jaafar Albar, the former Umno secretary-general, was one of the Umno leaders accused by Lee in the memoirs of arousing racial passions in Singapore leading to the 1964 riots.

Meanwhile, Gerakan urged Singapore to look forward instead of harping on old sensitive issues regarding its relationship with Malaysia.

"Parti Gerakan urges Singapore to move beyond past issues which continue to "fester like an old wound" and instead to work towards improving bilateral relations," its deputy secretary-general Dr Tan Kee Kwong said in a statement.

In supporting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that Singapore was an insensitive neighbour, Dr Tan said Malaysia was always willing to cooperate with all its immmediate neighbours.

DAP deputy chairman Karpal Singh said Lee's decision to have his memoirs published in the wake of recent serious differences with Malaysia was ill-advised.

"Memoirs are usually written by one who has retired and takes the opportunity to mull over and reflect upon the events of the past. Lee Kuan Yew has not retired," he said in a statement.

He said Lee should not have trampled on the sensitivities of Malaysians by accusing Tunku Abdul Rahman of telling the then British High Commissioner on the day Singapore left the Federation that Singapore would be controlled through water supply and other levers of pressure.

Karpal Singh also said that whatever the cause of the racial riots in Singapore in 1964, it should not now be made the subject matter of memoirs "which Lee should perhaps keep to himself".

He said Lee should reflect upon the real reason for Singapore's expulsion from the Federation of Malaysia.

"He may well find he was the cause for Singapore being required to make a political island of itself which in the

final analysis, will not be in Singapore's best interests," he added.

1998
NEW DIMENSION IN MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Signalling a new dimension in their sometimes prickly ties, Malaysia and Singapore moved forward on several long-standing bilateral issues following talks between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong here.

A joint communique issued by the Foreign Ministry to wrap up Goh's 48-hour working visit here today said the agreements reached between the two prime ministers have laid a "firm foundation" for both countries to cooperate closely in the new millennium.

The two leaders also agreed that Malaysia and Singapore would intensify efforts to cooperate in banking and finance and work together with their Asean partners to restore stability to regional currencies.

Officials from both sides will study Malaysia's proposal of using regional currencies and other options to finance intra-Asean trade.

Malaysia announced that it agreed to continue supplying water to Singapore beyond 2061 upon the expiry of existing agreements signed in 1961 and 1962. This undertaking would be confirmed in an agreement in 60 days.

Met by reporters after accompanying Goh on a tour of the All-Asia Broadcast Centre (Astro) prior to his departure, Dr Mahathir said: "What we have done is to give an undertaking that we will not cut off water supply or terminate in any way. We'll continue to supply water."

Asked whether the new time-frame for the supply had been set, Dr Mahathir said the decision could not be made now as the "situation prevailing at that time is something that we do not know."

"So we cannot make a decision now which will commit the future government... so I think PM Goh has understood our position," said Dr Mahathir who drove Goh in a Proton Putra to Astro.

Asked what was Singapore's response on the matter, Dr Mahathir said there was some suggestion that both countries enter into an agreement now.

On Singapore's request for additional water supply, Dr Mahathir said a study was being done, taking into consideration Malaysia's own future requirement.

Malaysia supplies 214 million litres of raw water daily to the island republic and buys back treated water from Singapore-owned plants in Johor.

1998
SINGAPORE-MALAYSIA TIES ON RIGHT TRACK, SAYS GOH

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16 (Bernama) -- Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok
Tong, who arrived for a two-day visit today, said that Malaysia and Singapore are now on the "right track" to achieving better ties.

"I think we are now on the right track to achieving better ties. Certainly ties today are much better than last year," he told reporters

after visiting the Petronas Twin Towers, the world's tallest building, at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre here.

Goh said there would always be problems between the two countries and there were still some unresolved issues.

"You can't expect issues that have been there for years to be solved at one meeting. The important thing is we are making progress and we will look at the issues," said Goh who held talks with his Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in the morning.

Goh said Dr Mahathir and he had directed their officials to intensify efforts to solve differences between the two countries.

Goh also said Dr Mahathir had told him that he would agree to continue to supply water to Singapore beyond 2061, when the current agreement expires, on terms and conditions to be agreed upon by both sides.

1998
MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE SECOND CROSSING CAN ENHANCE TIES

JOHOR BAHARU, Jan 2 (Bernama) -- Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat said the opening of the Malaysia-Singapore second crossing today is a big start for 1998 in terms of promoting ties between the two countries.

"We hope that this second crossing will further enhance friendship, trade and tourism in the southern region between Malaysia and Singapore," he told reporters after observing the first day of operations at the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex in Tanjung Kupang, here.

Mohamed also chatted with Singaporeans entering Malaysia through the second crossing when it opened at 10am.

He believed that the crossing linking Tuas in Singapore and Tanjung Kupang in Johor would greatly benefit relations between Malaysia and singapore.

He said it would facilitate the entry of Singaporeans into Malaysia, thus promoting ties between the people,

besides facilitating trade between the two countries by further upgrading the entry and exit of goods.

The second crossing would also further enhance the tourism industry in Malaysia, especially Johor, because according to the Singaporeans he met today the crossing facilitated their travel and they would stay longer in Malaysia, he said.

"Where previously Singaporeans came for only a day, now I hope that they will enter and stay for several days because of this second crossing, he said.

He said the second crossing project was sentimental to him because he was directly involved in the acquisition of land for the project when Gelang Patah was under his parliamentary constituency of Pulai.

2000
STRAITS TIMES ARTICLE UNCALLED FOR, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today blasted an article by a Singapore's Straits Times columnist, describing it as trying to interfere in the internal affairs of Malaysia.

He said the columnist had commented on Malaysia in a very negative way and it showed a lack of understanding about Malaysia and its political system.

"The writer was not bothered to check the real situation. The article shows the narrow-mindedness on the part of the Singapore newspaper. We take a very strong objection on this and the motive behind it," he told Bernama in a telephone interview from Johor.

In the article, the columnist, Chua Lee Hoong had said that Malaysia was the only democratic government left in Asia that did not have a leadership change in the last decade.

"Japan, Thailand, the Philippines - prime ministers have come and gone like the changing of the seasons. Only in Malaysia have both ruling party and top dog remained unchanged," she said in her weekly political column today, focusing on the succession of leaders in several Asian countries including the latest Taiwan election.

Syed Hamid said that although the article did not necessarily reflect the view of the Singaporean government, Malaysia would ask its High Commissioner to express the government's view on the matter to the Singaporean government.

He said that while Malaysia accepted any kind of fair comments and reportings, neverthless it could not and would not tolerate such kind of reporting.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia had always been trying to find formulas and solutions for any unsettled problem with Singapore in a friendly manner, taking into consideration the close relationship between the two neighbours.

"But to me the article is beyond the boundary of a responsible journalism. She should have some decency. She did not have any concern about the feelings of the two close neighbours," he said.

Syed Hamid also commented on a paragraph which says that "Only in Malaysia have both ruling party and **top dog** remained unchanged", saying it was not only unkind but uncalled for.

LET'S MOVE FORWARD, MALAYSIA URGES SINGAPORE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today urged Singapore for both countries to move forward in solving outstanding bilateral issues.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said negotiations on the package of outstanding issues would remain at a stalemate unless Singapore show a willingness to make the necessary move.

"If there is none, then let us take a break and find an appropriate time when we can come and discuss something substantive," he told a press conference at Wisma Putra here.

Syed Hamid made the comments when he was asked whether negative reports by the Singapore media could hinder negotiations between the two countries on the package of outstanding issues.

The package includes withdrawal of Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions by Malaysian workers leaving Singapore, Malaysian water supply to Singapore and land belonging to Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd in Singapore.

He said Singapore should take the relationship between the private sectors of the two countries as a fine example of cooperation.

"The package of outstanding issues is not something that cannot be solved. Look at the good relationship between the private sectors of both countries ... Singapore is a strong partner in trade and commerce with Malaysia and it is a major investor in Malaysia," he said.

Syed Hamid said between 1997 and 1998, the prime ministers of both countries met 12 times.

"But, when discussing the details of the package of outstanding issues, both sides have met three times but we don't seem to be able to move forward," he said.

Asked about Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's comments over a recent Singapore Straits Times report against the Malaysian leadership, Syed Hamid said Malaysia welcome any move towards improving bilateral relationship.

"Let history be something we can learn from and move forward," he said.

Last week, an article in the republic's newspaper drew flak when it commented on Malaysia's leadership and

described Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as "top dog".

Syed Hamid said Malaysia was concerned about the content of the article which amounted to interfering in Malaysia's internal affairs.

-- BERNAMA ARA THG

2002

CLAIMS AND REGIONAL CONFLICT CAN THREATHEN NATIONAL STABILITY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 26 (Bernama) -- Overlapping claims over several islands in the region and geo-political uncertainty of its neighbours are the closest threats to Malaysia's stability, Chief of Navy (TLDM) Admiral Datuk Seri Abu Bakar Jamal said today.

He said the fracas between Chinese Naval Forces and Vietnam at the Spratly Islands some time ago proved that the hostilities on the South China Sea island had the potential of blowing up into armed conflict.

"The issue of overlapping claims needs to be handled with discretion, for if we fail to resolve it via negotiation, there could be a strong possibility of it turning into armed conflict, as had happened between the Chinese navy and Vietnam," he said.

"For this reason, we should be prepared to defend our sovereignity," Abu Bakar said in a special media interview in conjunction with the 68th TLDM Day celebrations tomorrow.

The Spratly Islands, believed to own massive mineral deposits including oil is located at the South China Sea and is a subject of partial or total claims by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia.

All the claimants with the exclusion of Brunei have despatched their respective army personnel on the smaller islands in the archipelago.

M'SIA TO ASK ICJ TO EXPEDITE CLAIM OVER PULAU BATU PUTIH

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is to ask the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to expedite the case involving the Pulau Batu Putih island, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today.

He said the island is claimed by both Singapore and Malaysia.

Hopefully the case could be expedited, he said when met by reporters here.

Malaysia is using the best avenue to resolve the issue, he said commenting on allegations by local fishermen that they were chased away by the Singapore authorities for fishing near the island.

According to a newspaper report, the incident allegedly occurred last week involving several fishermen from Kampung Jawa, Pengerang.

2003

"SOME-GAIN-SOME-LOSS" FOR BOTH MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AT HAMBURG

HAMBURG, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- It could be summed up as a "some-gain-some-loss" situation for both Malaysia and Singapore in Hamburg, where the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Itlos) ruled Wednesday.

While Singapore could continue its controversial land reclamation activities in the Straits of Johor, both sides should form a group of independent experts to monitor the land reclamation activities and that Malaysia should be kept informed on all changes and developments taking place in the region.

Apparently, the judges were not inclined to provide a clear ruling in either side's favour.

While Singapore got away with its disputed land reclamation work, it is required to fulfil some of the conditions asked by Malaysia.

Particularly in regard to full information about the details of the land reclamation activities -- a requirement which will to some extent make Singapore depend on Malaysia's own assessment of the work in the region.

Itlos president, Judge L. Dolliver M. Nelson, who emphasized that the Tribunal had reached a "unanimous" decision, read out the order, prescribing both Malaysia and Singapore to cooperate and enter into consultations forthwith in order to establish promptly a group of independent experts with the mandate to: -- conduct a study, on the terms of reference to be agreed by Malaysia and Singapore, to determine, within a period not exceeding one year from Wednesday, Oct 8, the effects of Singapore's land reclamation and to propose, as appropriate, measures to deal with any adverse effects of such reclamation; and to prepare, as soon as possible, an interim report on the subject of infilling works in Area D at Pulau Tekong;   -- exchange, on a regular basis, information on, and assess risks or effects of, Singapore's land reclamation works; -- implement the commitments noted in the Itlos order and avoid anyaction incompatible with their effective implementation, and, without prejudice to their positions on any issue; -- consult with a view to reaching a prompt agreement on such temporary measures with respect to Area D at Pulau Tekong, including suspension or adjustment, as deemed necessary, to ensure that the infilling operations, pending completion of the study, do not impair Singapore's ability to implement its commitments in its note of Sept 2 2003 to Malaysia.

2003
MALAYSIA, S'PORE START AFRESH ON RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today agreed to jumpstart talks on unresolved bilateral issues, with the republic's Senior Minister, Goh Chok Tong, stressing that future relations should not be held hostage by past issues.

Both Goh and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi concurred on the need to move the process forward for the sake of better ties across the Causeway.

Emerging from their meeting here, Abdullah told a joint news conference that they had tasked their respective foreign ministers and senior officials to try to thrash out the bilateral problems before he and Goh meet again within two months.

"There are a number of subjects. Those that can be easily discussed and resolved quickly, get done with it. Those that are going to take some time, maybe within two months, it's not possible to come back with the details.
They'll keep us posted as to the state of discussion that is going on," he said.

The issues include the review of the price of water sold to Singapore; the dispute over KTM Berhad land; the withdrawal of Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions by peninsular Malaysians working in the republic; the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore air force jets and the proposed new bridge to Singapore.

During his first official visit to Malaysia as Singapore's prime minister in October, Lee Hsien Loong announced that his predecessor, Goh, would continue dealing with Malaysia over the outstanding issues.

At today's news conference, Abdullah said discussions on the price of water would be conducted "on the basis of the agreements that we have".
Both countries signed two water agreements in 1961 and 1962. Singapore, which now pays 3 sen per 1,000 gallons for raw water from Malaysia, had insisted that Malaysia had lost the legal rights for a price review after 25 years of the signing while Malaysia stated otherwise.

On the water talks, Abdullah said: "We are asking the ministers and officials to discuss. They will come back to us with whatever suggestions they may have.

"Then, as Goh has said, it is for me and for him to decide what we are going to do. We are not going to preempt now in terms of what to do until we have some report coming back to us from the ministers," he said.

Abdullah said he formally presented to Goh Kuala Lumpur's proposals on the bridge to replace the old causeway, including an artist's impression of the structure.

"It is a straight bridge that we are proposing to Singapore, and Senior Minister Goh has said that he will look into that. Perhaps he has got some ideas that he may present to us later on," he said.

Previously, the idea of building a "crooked" bridge had been thrown about.

Abdullah felt that the issues of the flight passage for Singapore air force jets over Malaysian airspace and CPF contributions were not very difficult to iron out and could be resolved as quickly as possible.

Malaysia and Singapore, he said, also agreed to explore the possibility of developing idle pieces of railway land in Singapore with a view to getting financial returns.

"We believe that if these are developed on some kind of joint-venture basis, then it will bring the kind of benefits that will be good for both Malaysia and Singapore," he said.

Apart from resolving the outstanding issues, Abdullah said, efforts must be made to nurture good relations between the young leaders from both sides.

"We are emphasising the importance of young leaders at the level of deputy ministers, parliamentary secretaries and even parliamentarians to meet and have discussions among themselves," he said.

By so doing, they would be able to create an early network of friends who understood one another better, and this would certainly be good for the future of bilateral relations, he added.

Meanwhile, Goh said that whatever proposals both sides might have to unlock their problems must not be disadvantageous to the other party.

Reflecting Abdullah's comments on efforts to settle the water issue, the senior minister said: "We'll go in accordance with the water agreement(s)".

On the proposed bridge, Goh said: "This is the first time that I am looking at the bridge formally. I knew that there was a straight bridge but there was no formal submission to Singapore."

The former prime minister said that he was prepared to have a look at the bridge plan and see how both sides could have a balanced benefit before venturing further.

Goh said Abdullah had informed him that Malaysia would consider allowing Singapore air force aircraft to use Malaysian airspace.

"On that basis, which was a gesture of goodwill on the part of the Prime Minister, I immediately reciprocated by saying that if that could be done, I would have no hesitation in releasing the CPF funds of Malaysians.

"On that basis (too) we would be happy to consider a joint development of some land in Singapore," he said.

Describing his discussion with Abdullah as candid, Goh said that he was happy to come here and had made progress on the various issues at hand.

"We just wanted to touch base, get comfortable with one another again and then generally move the process forward. And more importantly, we have agreed that we must bring with us a new mindset.

"Let's not think how to resolve the issues wearing the old caps, let's put on some new thinking caps," he said.

Goh said that while discussions were underway to patch up their differences, at the same time both sides should forge closer links in other areas.

"Certainly we must not allow the future of the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore to be held hostage by past issues," he added.

The senior minister said that both he and Abdullah would be the final arbiters with regard to how to move the resolution process forward.

"Where issues can be resolved by the foreign ministers, they can resolve them. Where they think they cannot resolve them, they should not try and resolve them. Leave those to us," he said.

2004
M'SIA-S'PORE AGREE TO GO BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

SINGAPORE, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today agreed to go back to the negotiating table in resolving outstanding bilateral issues.

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, announced this at a joint media conference after a four-eye meeting at the Istana here.

"We acknowledge there are several oustanding issues that need to be resolved. We have taken a positive and constructive attitude towards finding amicable solutions to resolving such issues," said Abdullah.

"I believe we can move forward in resolving these issues in the spirit of good neighbourliness," said Abdullah, who is making his first working visit as Malaysia's Prime Minister to Singapore.

Malaysia and Singapore have had a testy relationship ever since the republic left the Malaysian federation in 1965 with ties strained by a number of unresolved issues, some dating back to the British colonial period.

They are locked in a legal battle over land reclamation works being carried out by Singapore in waters bordering Malaysia and the matter is now before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Other sources of tension include the price of water Malaysia supplies to Singapore, a prospective bridge linking the countries, the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore military aircraft and ownership of Pulau Batu Puteh.

2006
S'PORE-M'SIA TIES STRONGER, SAYS PRESIDENT NATHAN

SINGAPORE, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- Singapore and Malaysia have emerged stronger in their relations as both countries have not allowed unresolved issues to define their relations or prevent them from co-operating, Singapore President S. R. Nathan said tonight.

"As two neighbours who live and work as closely together as we do, differences of perspective and interests from time to time are natural.

"However, our relationship is stronger today because we have kept such differences in perspective," he said in his speech at a state banquet he hosted for visiting Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid. The royal couple arrived here today for a three-day visit after concluding a six-day visit to Indonesia.

President Nathan said the visit by the King and Queen symbolised and reaffirmed the warm and close ties between the two countries.

"The long-standing ties of history, geography, economics and kinship have endured the test of time and continue to bind us together. In recent years, our relations have broadened and deepened, marked by greater contact and cooperation between our leaders, officials and businesses," he said.

President Nathan also spoke of new challenges confronting both countries with the rise of globalisation.

"The growth of China and India unfolds new opportunities, as well as fresh challenges, to both our countries. We must take a more enlightened view and focus on this larger context, so that we can work together to respond to it," he said.

One important area where the interest of both countries coincide was the progress and prosperity of South East Asia, he said.

"We have always had vested interests in greater cooperation in this region. To achieve this, Malaysia and Singapore must play active roles to strengthen Asean and accelerate its integration. This is vital to ensuring Asean's competitiveness as a group.

"As two of the more developed economies in Asean, Singapore and Malaysia should work together to position Asean for the future," Presiden Nathan said.

-- BERNAMA   JS MGN

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE SHOULD CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS ON NEW BRIDGE

CAIRO, April 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore should continue negotiations to construct a new bridge to replace the Johor causeway,former Information Minister Datuk Sri Panglima Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said here

last night.

He said the negotiation should continue even if it took a long time.

Responding to a question from the floor at a gathering attended by more than 200 Malaysian students here, Abdul Kadir said the construction of the new bridge would benefit both countries and their people.

The Malaysian government announced on Wednesday that it was not going ahead with the bridge plan, citing legal complications and strong public sentiment particularly on the supply of sand and allowing Singapore to use Malaysia's airspace.

Negotiations to build the bridge began since Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed was Prime Minister but a consensus was never reached and this led to the proposal for a scenic bridge which would not involve Singapore in its construction.

Abdul Kadir is here as a Special Envoy of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Turkey.

Cairo is his third stop to meet Malaysian students before leaving for Riyadh and Damascus.

Abdul Kadir said Malaysia and Singapore should not give up on issues which would mutually benefit them.

Earlier in his speech, he said there was no favouritism in the government's channelling of aid to Malaysian students abroad.

"Barisan Nasional is a just government which is elected by the people for all the people and not only Umno," he added.

There are about 6,000 Malaysian students in Egypt.

Also present at the function was Malaysian Ambassador to Egypt, Datuk Zainal Abdin Abdul Kadir.

Appendix Seven (7) : The Advantages and Disadvantages of Textual Analysis

According to Tuchman, news is considered as texts which represents empirical evidence (Tuchman 1991). While Carley (1993a) mentions that the textual analysis often focussed on the situated concept. The situated concept for this study was the Malaysian government reactions towards Singapore on some critical issues involving these two countries as described in the news articles. Carley (1993b) also argues that the focus of the textual analysis is on connected concepts rather than counts of concepts. Thus this is a direct research because it focuses on the meaning of the text.

However, there are a few drawbacks of textual analysis. One is that it is time consuming in applying this method (Carley 1993a). Carley (1993a) also argues that somehow the process of analysis affects how texts are interpreted and the potential results. Besides that, textual analysis researchers, sometimes, tend to do level of analysis and generalization from the result derived.

While textual analysis is used to explore the news articles produced by BERNAMA, the news agency of Malaysia, in relation to the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore, in-depth interview is conducted to establish or strengthen the textual meanings from those news articles.

Appendix Eight (8): 19 News Article of Textual analysis - Analysis has been highlighted in grey shading

Row/Para/ Headlines	Bernama Online News – The Structure of news consists of Headlines, Main events/activity/ Sources/Indications of leadership influence/consequences/expectations	Analysis
1	**Date: 08-11-2008** **OUTSTANDING ISSUES WON'T AFFECT M'SIA-S'PORE TIES** KULAIJAYA, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore will not allow outstanding issues to hinder efforts at forging closer bilateral ties, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today. He said he and his Singapore counterpart, George Yeo, would continue to expand the bilateral ties and find ways so that economic and diplomatic ties between the two neighbouring countries could be further strengthened. "Both of us will not allow the outstanding issues (between Malaysia and Singapore) to become obstacles and together find ways of improving ties and comradeship," he told reporters on the last day of the 9th Annual Friendly Games between the staff of Wisma Putra and the Singapore Foreign Ministry, here. Rais said a positive approach was the best way in handling bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore. Meanwhile Yeo, who was also present during the media conference, said Singapore shared Rais's approaches of finding win-win solutions towards bilateral relation, working together and respecting each other's sensitivities. "Of course as foreign minister, we have to defend our own national interest, but it makes a big difference if there is trust, goodwill and mutual affection towards each other, because that enables us to find creative ways to evolve solutions which are mutually beneficial to us," he said. Cooperation within Asean, especially between Malaysia and Singapore, which according to him, was the single most important relationship in the regional grouping, had become more pertinent as both economies were affected by the global economic slowdown. "Where we can work together to keep each other's economy moving and thriving, we should try to do so," he said. On Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak becoming Malaysia's next Prime Minister in March and its impact on Kuala Lumpur's foreign policy, Yeo believed, bilateral relationship between them would remain very good and forward looking.	News Analysis: • News Agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discussion on Malaysia and Singapore will not allow any outstanding issues to hinder their efforts in forging closer bilateral ties. • Sources – Malaysia Foreign Minister, Datuk Rais Yatim • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs George Yeo • Consequences– Could affect the national interest and cooperation within Asean. Could slow down the economy if not working together. • Expectations – would continue to expand the bilateral ties. To find ways to strengthen the economic and diplomatic ties. Suggested using positive approach – win-win solutions, working together and respect each other. Datuk Seri Najib Razak will becoming Malaysia's next PM in March.
2	**Date:16-9-2008** **MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE REMAIN STRONG** SINGAPORE, Sept 16 (Bernama) - Military cooperation between the Malaysian and Singapore armed forces remains strong despite some occasional glitches in bilateral relations between the two countries, said Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N. Parameswaran. "The relations between the two militaries are at a very comfortable level," he said at a reception held on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Malaysian Armed Forces here tonight. He said though the two neighbouring countries were seen now and then at loggerheads, the two armies were quietly conducting bilateral military exercises somewhere in Malaysia. Singapores Chief of Defence Forces Lt Gen Desmond Kuek	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discussion on the status of military cooperation's (security) in bilateral relations is at comfortable level • Sources – Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N. Parameswaran and Singapores Chief of Defence Forces Lt Gen

	was the guest-of-honour at the reception, which was also attended by several Singapore top military officers, foreign military attaches and advisers, and diplomats. Defence Adviser to the Malaysian High Commission Kol Abd Rahim Sainon represented the Malaysian Armed Forces. The High Commissioner said since he was posted to the city-state more than five years ago, the cooperation between the two militaries was closer as many efforts had been made by both sides to strengthen it. He said many Singapore military officers had attended training and courses in Malaysia and vice-versa, and they also interacted with Malaysian personnel in various social and sports events organised jointly by both parties. Parameswaran said apart from bilateral exercises, both militaries were also active in multi-lateral exercises such as under the Five Power Defence Agreement and in peacekeeping missions. Meanwhile, Kuek said he was delighted with the cordial relations between the two armed forces, adding that he hoped they would continue to work closely together and develop a strong defence cooperation and friendship. He also said they should not only "strengthen the breath and depth of relations between the two armed forces but also further develop the relations between people to people of the two countries". Kuek said the two countries had a long history which was intertwined and they were inseparable.	Desmond Kuek • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – none • Consequences – none. • Expectations – To develop strong defence and further develop the relations between people to people of two countries. Reminding that both countries had a long history.	
3	**Date: 22-05-2007** **S'PORE SAYS WILL PROCEED WITH IDR PANEL ONLY IF M'SIA WANTS IT** SINGAPORE, May 22 (Bernama) -- Singapore has responded to the concerns voiced out by Malaysians over the setting up of a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), with the Foreign Ministry saying that it does not see how the establishment of the JMC is a "concession" to the republic. "The JMC will not be involved in the running of the IDR (Iskandar Development Region)," the spokesman said in a statement in response to the concerns by certain quarters in Malaysia over the formation of the committee. The spokesman said that Malaysian officials themselves have made clear the role of the JMC -- that it would not be "consultative" in nature and the setting up would not in any way affect Malaysia's sovereignty. "However, to avoid any misapprehension, Singapore will let Malaysia take the lead on the JMC. We will proceed with it only if the Malaysian and Johor authorities want us to do so," the spokesman said. The JMC was agreed to by the Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong at their retreat in Langkawi last week. The committee was to explore collaborations in the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) and ways in which Singapore could help it to succeed. The 2,217 sq km IDR -- about three times the size of Singapore -- is an area being earmarked for massive multi-sectoral development in south Johor, bordering the republic. The ministry also rejected suggestions in the Malaysian media that the JMC be used to discuss outstanding bilateral issues between the two neighbours. "The JMC is a forum with a specific purpose, that is, to	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discussion on the concerns which has been voiced out by Malaysian on the setting up of Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC). JMC is different from IDR • Sources – spokesman (unrevealed) • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – Both prime minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia) and Lee Hsien Loong (Singapore) • Consequences– The outstanding issues were not easy to resolve and will deal with IDR issues separately. Clearly state that IDR issues will bring more competitive pressure on Singapore. JMC will also benefits Singapore through concessions given to the republic. Once both	

| | | facilitate Singapore-Malaysia cooperation in the IDR. As for the outstanding bilateral issues, the two leaders had agreed to deal with them later and not let them hold back the bilateral cooperation in the IDR," it said.

The spokesman said Singapore shared Abdullah's views in Langkawi when he said that "we deal with the outstanding issues later... We don't want to get blocked while trying to resolve these issues, while there are other things that we would like to do".

The spokesman also reiterated Lee's statement in Langkawi that the outstanding bilateral issues were not easy to resolve.

"It is best to deal with them separately in a way that will be completely acceptable to both sides, and at the same time not affect the overall bilateral relationship," it said.

It said that Abdullah had invited Singapore to support and invest in the IDR project and Singapore studied the project papers it was given.

"We decided to do so because although the IDR will mean more competitive pressures on Singapore, there are also complementary aspects that will benefit Singapore."This mutual benefit is the only basis for sound long-term cooperation because every project means both cooperation and competition," it said. The statement stressed however that once an agreement was reached, both parties would have to abide by what had been agreed to."The terms cannot be subsequently changed for whatever reasons," it added. | parties had agreed to the terms and conditions, it cannot be changed for whatever reasons.

- Expectations – the committee of IDR to explore collaborations and which Singapore could help it to succeed. To deal with the outstanding bilateral issues later. Singapore will proceed with JMC unless Malaysia agrees. |
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| 4 | **Date: 15-03-2007**
S'PORE CAN START A NEW COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH M'SIA - GOH
SINGAPORE, March 15 (Bernama) -- Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong said he believed the island state can start a new "cooperative relationship" with Malaysia, a report here said.

He said that Malaysia's plans for the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) in Johor could bring about real cooperation between both countries.

IDR, also known as the South Johor Economic Region (SJER), is a 2,200 sq km development region in Johor and expected to create 800,000 jobs over 20 years.

The services and manufacturing sectors are the two main pillars of IDR's economy.

Goh said that in the new cooperation "we would not be counting who wins more".

"I think a very dangerous way of cooperating is if we start to count who wins more; is it A who wins more or is it B who wins more in the cooperation?" Channel NewsAsia reported him as telling Singapore media covering his visit to Iran.

Goh said that if one was to count on who wins more in a cooperation, then "there will be no cooperation".

"In any venture, sometimes A benefits a bit more and B benefits a bit less," he said.

Goh said that Singapore would want to cooperate if it was welcome, adding that such cooperation must go on, despite possible ups and downs in future bilateral relations.

Goh's remark came after a recent statement by Foreign Minister George Yeo in Parliament that the relations between both countries were "good and getting better".

In May, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will be visiting Malaysia where he is scheduled to hold a retreat with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his cabinet colleagues. | News Analysis:

- News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discussion on new cooperative relationship.
- Sources –Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong remark came after a recent statement by Foreign Minister George Yeo
- Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Singapore Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong
- Consequences – If thinking about winning it may jeopardize the cooperation.
- Expectations – Not to count who wins more. In May Singapore's PM will hold a retreat to Malaysia with Malaysia's PM and his cabinet collogues. |

5	**Date: 30-11-2005** **NOW'S THE TIME TO RESOLVE ISSUES, SAYS M'SIAN ENVOY** SINGAPORE, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore must now seize the moment to resolve outstanding bilateral issues now that a window of opportunity has presented itself in the form of warmer relations across the Causeway, Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N Parameswaran said. He said that Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had genuinely wanted to make the relationship between the neighbouring countries, work. "We must make the best we can...he (Abdullah) has been very sincere to make it work," he told reporters after launching a book titled "Malaysia: Recent Trends and Challenges" published by the Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS) at the outset of a Roundtable on Singapore-Malaysia Relations: Mending Fences and Making Good Neighbours here today. Parameswaran cautioned the possibility that "other views" might surface if both sides do not seize the opportunity quickly. "The longer we delay in moving the relationship forward, the most likely it is that others, those that do not share the views (of the current leadership), will come forward to articulate themselves," he said. The Prime Minister, he said, had made many overtures to move the negotiations forward. "He had said about 'plucking the low-hanging fruit first' (tackle the easier problem first). When he said that, there was a change in the relationship. The whole mindset changed...everybody is now encouraged to visit and interact with each other," he said. Chairman of Sabah's Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia said that although friendly for most parts, the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore was often described as an "uneasy" one. "But underneath all the smoke, I believe that leaders in both countries fully understand that friendly neighbours make for a stable and peaceful region and regional stability is the key to economic prosperity," he said in his working paper "Singapore-Sabah Ties". "I believe the leaders of Singapore and Malaysia are now deliberately downplaying the issues that affect both countries, rather than bringing them to the fore. Both governments are also displaying better skills at managing information flows, especially to the press," he said, adding that there was a quiet optimism that the issues can be resolved. Malaysia and Singapore still have a number of unresolved issues including Malaysia's proposal to build a bridge to replace the Causeway linking both countries, the price of raw water sold by Malaysia to Singapore, the dispute over Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd land, the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore military's jet-fighters and the withdrawal of Central Provident Fund contributions by Peninsular Malaysians. ISEAS Chairman, K Kesavapany, formerly Singapore High Commissioner to Malaysia, said that there has been "a greater ease" in the way the people interact over the past three years. "I am an optimist...This is not to say that all the issues have disappeared. What has happened is (a change) in the way we resolve the issues," he said. He said that while the scope and advantage of working together were enormous, the prospect of downturns in bilateral relations in any two close neighbours cannot and should not be precluded. "It is in the interest of both countries and their peoples to guard	News Analysis: - News agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- Discussion on to resolve outstanding bilateral issues. - Sources – Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk N Parameswaran and Chairman of Sabah's Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia - Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - Consequences – 'Other views' might surface on both relationship and could tarnish the current leadership. Reminding on the long outstanding issues. - Expectations – genuinely wanted to make the relationship work as Abdullah has been very sincere to make it work. The relationship on both countries often described as an uneasy one. Malaysia and Singapore leaders are deliberately downplaying the issues that could affect both countries. Quite optimism that the issues can be resolved.

	against such downturns by careful management of the relationship," he said.	
6	**Date:24-1-2005** **GOVT CAN'T ABORT MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE BRIDGE PROJECT, SAYS SAMY VELLU** KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 24 (Bernama) -- Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today the government could not cancel at will the project to build a RM2 billion bridge to replace the Johor Causeway. "Any decision to cancel the project cannot be made in week or a month," he told reporters here. He said the project had proceeded smoothly on the Malaysian side and the government had approved a RM30 million tender to build a temporary road. Samy Vellu was commenting on a suggestion by Johor Baharu Member of Parliament Datuk Shahrir Samad to abort the project as it had become a burden for Malaysia in its negotiations on long-standing issues with Singapore. The minister said there was no point for the project to be aborted now as its objective was to overcome traffic congestion on the causeway and water pollution in the Johor Strait. In MUAR, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said the new bridge should not be made a bargaining chip in the negotiations between Malaysia and Singapore. "Building the bridge is the final project between the two countries and it is not related at all to the long-standing bilateral issues such as the use of air space and the development of KTMB (KTM Berhad) land," he said. He said the project was not a burden, considering its benefits to both countries. He said the existing Johor Causeway had blocked water flow in the Johor Strait and badly affected marine life in the area. "The strait should be opened to traffic between the Straits of Melaka and the South China Sea, and we have to take into consideration the need for a bridge to ensure that waters in the Johor Strait flow freely," he said.	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on cancellation of bridge project to replace the Johor Causeway. • Sources – Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Member of Parliament Datuk Shahrir Samad and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman • Consequence – the existing Johor Causeway had blocked water flow in the Johor Strait and badly affected marine life in the area. • Expectations – to find a solution to reduce congestions at the causeway. Cancellation cannot be done immediately. Abort the project as it has become a burden for Malaysia.
7	**Date: 27-07-2004** **MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE MOVE AHEAD WITH NEW LEADERSHIP** KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore are on a honeymoon, with Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi taking the reins in Kuala Lumpur last October and Lee Hsien Loong following suit in the city state on Aug. 12. Experts on both sides of the Causeway see this year as a transition for bilateral relations and a time to take stock before moving forward. Malaysia is already Singapore's largest trading partner but bilateral trade has grown by another 12 per cent during the first six months of this year to S$41.34 billion, compared to S$36.92 billion during the same period last year. Total bilateral trade last year was S$77.2 billion. "Lee is younger and free of the Lee Kuan Yew baggage, while Datuk Seri Abdullah is free of the (Tun) Dr Mahathir Mohamad baggage and rhetoric," Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies' senior fellow Dr K. S.Nathan told Bernama. "Abdullah is not interested in hyperbole and verbal gymnastics and both countries are taking a business-like approach while the media on both sides are also not playing up issues," the Malaysian academic said. "The atmosphere has definitely improved," he said, pointing to	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discussion on the transition power for both countries. • Sources – Experts, Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies' senior fellow Dr K. S.Nathan and the Malaysian academic • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - UMNO Youth's International Affairs Bureau, Dr Shamsul Anwar Sulaiman, Singapore's Institute of Policy Studies research associate Chang Li Lin,

more bilateral meetings --starting with Abdullah's official visit to Singapore on Jan 12.

During that visit, Singapore had recommended referring "dead knot" issues to a third party. These include the supply of water to Singapore;the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) status at the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) station in Tanjong Pagar; the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore Air Force and the withdrawal of Central Provident Fund (CPF) accounts by Peninsular Malaysians who have worked in Singapore.

Abdullah persuaded Singapore to give dialogue another try, promising, "I will come back with some very, very specific issues and some suggestions on how we can resolve these issues."

To break the deadlock and find fresh approaches, Nathan suggested both of the new prime ministers reshuffle their bureaus.

"The same people have been handling the files on Malaysia/Singapore relations for 10 to 15 years and tend to take a fixed position which does not enable movement," he said.

As he put it:" The bureaucrats are in control of the information and data and can use them to derail the process."

"We hope water, CPF, KTM and the other issues can be solved through discussion and not by going to the International Court of Justice," said the chairman of UMNO Youth's International Affairs Bureau, Dr Shamsul Anwar Sulaiman.

"Both leaders are new and both will try to strengthen relations with each other," he predicted.

Meanwhile, disputes which have already been referred to a third party are being given time to run their course, said Singapore's Institute of Policy Studies research associate Chang Li Lin.

The disputed island of Batu Putih (known in Singapore as Pedra Branca) which is claimed by both countries has been referred to the International Court of Justice while Malaysia's protest that Singapore's reclamation works around Pulau Tekong and Tuas had encroached into its waters is being heard by a United Nations convention on the Law of the Sea tribunal.

Neither side is trying to get political mileage out of either case, Chang said, adding that she expects both sides to give the various issues a "breather".

"There are positive overtures on both sides and a constructive approach to improving relations," she said.

"Both countries are taking time to review and think of new approaches before making concrete steps forward."

Recent positive developments include the Singapore government's investment arm Temasek Holdings' purchase of a five per cent stake in Telekom Malaysia in March and a reported interest in Malaysian Plantations Bhd., which owns Alliance Bank.

The proposed cross-trading link between Bursa Malaysia, formerly known as Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, and the Singapore Exchange also shows that "the level of comfort has definitely improved on both sides," said Asian Centre for Media Studies fellow Ong Kian Ming.

Malaysia is Singapore's fifth largest investment destination. According to latest statistics, direct investment in Malaysia totalled S$11.8 billion in 2002, while Malaysia is the 11th largest investor in Singapore with direct investment totalling S$5.9 billion in 2002.

But the head of the University of Malaya's Department of International and Strategic Studies, Dr Mohamad Abu Bakar, predicted that Lee might try to enhance Singapore's relations with the West and with the United States in particular.

"I am worried if Singapore becomes preoccupied with the need

Asian Centre for Media Studies fellow Ong Kian Ming and the head of the University of Malaya's Department of International and Strategic Studies, Dr Mohamad Abu Bakar

- Consequences – Long outstanding issues has been mentioned again. On the reclaimed of dispute island (Pulau Batu Putih). Singapore becomes preoccupied with the need for the presence of outside powers. Is there any new approach to mend the relationship?

- Expectations – Abdullah is described as not interested in hyperbole and verbal gymnastics. Expects that the media from both countries will also not play any issues Abdullah expects Singapore to have another try on discussing the outstanding long issues. Nathan giving suggestion that both PM reshuffle the cabinet. Both countries take time to review and think of the new approaches.

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	for the presence of outside powers," he said. "While both countries are neighbours, members of ASEAN and committed to regional stability, they come from two different worlds," he said. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia,Laos, Malaysia,Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore,Thailand and Vietnam. "Singapore is party and privy to what the U.S. is doing while Malaysia has stronger ties with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)."	
8	**Date: 27-01-2004** **M'SIA-S'PORE TIES: SO FAR SO GOOD FOR PAK LAH** SINGAPORE, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- There was a sense of optimism all round as Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, met last Sunday for the third time this month. So far so good for Pak Lah -- as Abdullah is affectionately called -- as he has accomplished more than would be expected of a new Asean leader on his customary courtesy round. Of the visits to his immediate neighbours, it was his visit to Singapore -- twice in two weeks -- that is of symbolic importance, coming on the heels of a difficult period over the past two years. "His combination of competence and modest demeanour may even give him superior credentials in a South-East Asia where leadership is either lacking or lacks appropriate modesty. So far so good for Pak Lah," the International Herald Tribune reported in its Jan 12 edition. As the newspaper put it: "Pak Lah, as he is colloquially known, does not make the international headlines.... But Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi is so far making the most of his reputation as a modest man, surprising those who believed that to be inoffensive was to be ineffective." Indeed, it was his modest demeanour that warmed Malaysia's friendship with Singapore, with the media giving all three occasions, including the mega Chinese New Year celebration, the thumbs up. Singapore accorded Abdullah a full ceremonial welcome on his working visit to the republic on Jan 12 and accepted his invitation to the 'Kongsi Raya' in Johor Baharu last Saturday. Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Puan Goh, together with Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Puan Ho Ching, and nine other ministers and their spouses, turned up for the event. "We are very happy with this mammoth turnout, including visitors from Singapore. This is undoubtedly the dawn of a new beginning in Malaysia-Singapore relations," said Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir at the mega Chinese New Year celebration. Despite the inclement weather, some 300,000 people, including 10,000 Singaporeans, gathered at the former Lido Beach for the festivities at Danga Bay, a multibillion ringgit development programme initiated by the Johor government to transform the waterfront commercial, residential and entertainment spot along the Tebrau Straits. Last Sunday, Goh returned the gesture by hosting a round of golf at Sentosa. The Straits Times described the weekend visits as indicative of an informal approach both sides are taking to strengthen ties between the two countries including at the social and personal level. That was apparent last Sunday from the comments of both Prime Ministers and their deputies, who spoke of the value of	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- Discuss on the sense of optimism on the ties. • Sources – Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Singapore Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir, Singapore's PM Goh Chok Tong and Malaysia's PM, Abdullah Badawi • Consequences – none. • Expectations – that Abdullah will not make further debut on issues as he been claimed by the International Herald Tribune colloquially known, does not make the international headlines. His reputation as a modest man. Abdullah was expected/seen to be less offensive as compared to Mahathir.

	socialising and building friendships as a way to help unravel knotty bilateral issues that still need to be dealt with, it said.

The Today newspaper said there were signs of fair weather in bilateral ties as the Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia took to the fairways of Sentosa on Sunday to improve relations between the two countries.

Camaraderie and the warmth of friendship was the message that emerged from the receptions given to Goh and Abdullah as they exchanged social visits over the weekend, said the newspaper.

"Our approach has been to enhance and strengthen our personal relationship first," said Goh, looking clearly relaxed after the round of golf at the Sentosa Golf Club.

The two leaders started their game in a drizzle, but the weather lightened. "We are blessed. The rain stopped and we had a good time today," Goh said.

Goh said he was touched by the welcome he received from politicians and ordinary citizens in Johor and the chance to play host not once but twice in the space of two weeks to 'Pak Lah'.

"Last time, when Pak Lah came to Singapore on Jan 12, we agreed that we should socialise more often and last night, I was happy to go up to Johor Baharu. Despite the rain, a huge crowd turned up and the mood was exuberant.

"They were well-wishing Pak Lah and I could see the rapport between the PM and the people. And they were also very friendly towards me, shouting 'Mr Goh Chok Tong, welcome to Malaysia'. So I was very pleased," he said.

The warm sentiments were echoed by Abdullah. "I think this is an excellent opportunity to socialise and meet our friends here. For me it has been a long time since I came to this course to play golf. I really enjoyed myself very much today, playing golf on this course in the company of old friends."

At the 'Kongsi Raya' event, Abdullah said in his welcoming address that the presence of "Singapore leaders led by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at this function is greatly appreciated".

"Their presence, we hope, is a good sign for ties between our countries," he said, adding that good ties would help leaders on both sides resolve any problem.

"That is what we hope," he said, as he also described his Jan 12 visit to the republic as a "good sign" for exploring ways to resolve issues of bilateral cooperation.

Thousands braved the rain to gather at the 'Kongsi Raya'-- one of the largest gatherings ever held in the state -- watched by millions in Malaysia and across the Causeway via live telecast by RTM and TV3.

As The Straits Times put it: "If the Chinese belief that water brings good fortune is anything to go by, then Saturday's torrential rain must have signalled an auspicious start to the year for Singapore-Malaysia relations." | |
| 9 | **Date: 13-07-2003**
HIGHLIGHT OTHER MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE ISSUES AS WELL, CALL
JOHOR BAHARU, July 13 (Bernama) -- Several Johor politicians want other issues affecting Malaysia-Singapore relations apart from water to be advertised as well so that Malaysians will be familiar with the tactics of "distortion" employed by the republic.

"We hope the government will also highlight our tolerant attitude over the issue of the use of our airspace, land reclamation, Pulau Batu Puteh and others,"Johor Umno Youth Chief Ayub Rahmat said when contacted here today. | News Analysis:

- News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on advertisement by Singapore on water issues. Johor politician's thinks should highlight other issues affecting Malaysia-Singapore |

	He said Singapore's way of solving problems by making public confidential official correspondence between leaders was difficult to accept and was not within the framework of international relations. "Their (Singapore) method such as publishing booklets and making public official letters is uncivilized," said Ayub when asked to comment on the move by the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) to take out advertisements to portray the truth in the water negotiations between the countries. The advertisements taken out in all major newspapers in the country disclosed that Malaysia only received RM2.39 million from Singapore for the water it supplied to the republic compared to the RM662.5 million profit the republic made from the untreated water it obtained from Malaysia. Johor Baharu Umno Youth Chief, Abu Talib Alias, urged the government to be firm on fixing the new price for water. "It must be based on market price and should not be negotiable," he said. Singapore obtained almost its entire water supply from Johor under two agreements which provided for untreated water to be supplied at the rate of three sen per 1,000 gallons. Johor Baharu MCA Youth Chief, Wee Ka Siong, said the republic's government should be blamed for restoring tension in diplomatic relations which were earlier peaceful. He said no problems were apparent in Malaysia-Singapore relations lately with both of them cooperating closely to control the spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrom (SARS). "However when the republic published its booklet on water negotiations in March, the situation became tense once more and no one but Singapore should be blamed," Wee said. In MUAR, Umno Vice President, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the agreement to supply water to Singapore was drawn based on this country's compasionate policy and the republic should be thankful to Malaysia. Singapore should not adopt a hostile attitude when negotiating the new price, he said. "Singapore does not have the ultimate say on Johor water. It is kindness on the part of Johor or Malaysia to the republic. When something is given out of kindness, Singapore should be thankful," he told reporters after opening a petroleum safety course. Muhyiddin, who is Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, and former Johor Menteri Besar, said Malaysia would not remain idle or be silent or bow to the political game being played by the Singapore Government which only made a solution to the issue all the more difficult.	relations to be advertised apart from water issues. To highlights issues like use of airspace, land reclamation and others. • Sources – Johor Umno Youth Chief Ayub Rahmat, Umno Youth Chief, Abu Talib Alias, Johor Baharu MCA Youth Chief, Wee Ka Siong, Umno Vice President, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin he is also Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, and former Johor Menteri Besar • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, and former Johor Menteri Besar • Consequences – Malaysia would not remain idle and silent on this issue and only made the solution to the issue more difficult. • Expectations – Water price should not be negotiable.
10	**Date: 07-03-2003** **MALAYSIA SEES NO CONFLICT WITH SINGAPORE, SAYS SYED HAMID** DUBAI, March 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore realise the dangers of instability in the region and the Pulau Batu Puteh dispute will not interfere with long-term relations between the two countries, Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said. "Historically and geographically Pulau Batu Puteh has always been part of Malaysia. When Singapore built a lighthouse on the island, we started talking (about the issue)," he said. He said Malaysia's policy was to seek third-party mediation if issues could not be resolved through two-way talks. "We want to have good neighbourly relations with Singapore and maintain stability in the region," Syed Hamid told Bernama	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on need to maintain stability in the region. Identified what could harm the instability in the region. Pulau Batu Puteh (Pedra Branca) dispute will not interfere long-term relations. • Sources – Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed

	Thursday during a stopover here on his way home to Kuala Lumpur after attending an extraordinary meeting of Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Doha, Qatar. Asked if he saw any possibility of provocation from Singapore over the issue, he discounted fears of a military conflict. "Both countries value peace and stability and that's why we have agreed to refer the issue to the ICJ (International Court of Justice). The dispute should not interfere with long-term relations between Malaysia and Singapore. "We have our differences from time to time but that would not provoke us into physical confrontation. It would be a mistake for anyone to try and test their military might because the results are not going to be good for both countries," he said. Asked to comment on the reported presence of Israeli military advisors in the neighbouring country, Syed Hamid said Malaysia was not worried about such matters. He emphasised that Malaysian and Singaporean interests were "intertwined" and both countries needed to know how to manage their differences.	Hamid Albar • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong • Consequences – Needed to know how to manage their differences. • Expectations – to seek third party mediation if issue unresolved through two way communication.
11	**Date: 01-07-2002** **MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE MEET TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES** PUTRAJAYA, July 1 (Bernama) -- The Foreign Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore today began a meeting to discuss all outstanding issues between their countries and arrive at an amicable settlement. The two-day meeting, at Wisma Putra, here, would discuss the issues in a single package, consistent with the understanding reached between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong on the sidelines of the Asean Summit in Hanoi in December 1998. The issues are the supply of water to Singapore, Malayan Railway land in the republic, the location for the stationing of Malaysian Customs, Immigration and Quarantine officials, withdrawals from the Central Provident Fund by Peninsular Malaysians and the use of Malaysia's air space by the Singapore Air Force. Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar in his opening remarks hoped the meeting, being held on the basis of mutual trust, sincerity and commitment, would result in a win-win situation. "We need to be creative, not with a view to further complicating the already difficult set of issues but to contribute to resolving them," he said. "We need to be constructive and not inject elements which will derail the very process of reaching a settlement," he said. Syed Hamid said the satisfactory outcome of the effort from both sides would have a positive impact on Malaysia and Singapore relations for the benefit of the present and future generations. "Malaysia and Singapore are close neighbours. Our mutual interest demand that we learn to live with each other." "There is simply too much at stake. Conflict and confrontation will not bring us anywhere," Syed Hamid said. Singapore Foreign Minister Prof S.Jayakumar expressed the hope that the meeting would enable both sides to identify the areas of agreement and disagreement, find common ground between their respective positions and work towards presenting an overall agreement on the package for endorsement by the Prime Ministers of both countries. "After all our efforts, in this and future talks, if major	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on outstanding issues arriving amicable settlement. • Sources – Syed Hamid Albar, Foreign Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore Foreign Minister Prof S.Jayakumar • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Dr. Mahathir, Prime Minister of Malaysia • Consequences – Settlement should be done now as it will bring impact to the future generations. • Expectations – Both countries want to stop conflicts and confrontations and to stabilize the relationship. To have win-win relationship for the future generations.

	differences remain, we will have to refer them to our two Prime Ministers so that they can give their directions accordingly," he said. Jayakumar said more than three years had passed since the two Prime Ministers met in Hanoi and although officers from both sides had met thrice and Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew had also travelled to Kuala Lumpur twice and held discussions and corresponded with Dr Mahathir, there has not been much progress on the issues. "Dr Mahathir wrote to Singapore Senior Minister on March 4, 2002 and Goh replied on April 11." "I believe this latest exchange of letters has established the basic framework for our current negotiations," he said. Jayakumar said it was important for both sides not to lose sight of the bigger future and so must accommodate each other's interests and strike a deal even as both Malaysia and Singapore promoted their respective national interests. "We should regard agreement on the package as a way forward of clearing the table of outstanding issues so as to stabilise relations for the long term." "If we can do so, we will send a strong signal to present and future generations that both sides want a mutually beneficial and enduring relationship, what you referred to as a win-win relationship, and bring Malaysia and Singapore ties forward into a new era of cooperation and development," he said When Lee was entrusted with the task of holding talks with Dr Mahathir last September, he had announced that Singapore would pay 45 sen per 4,540 litres of raw water up to the year 2061, and 60 sen per 4,540 litres after the year, subject to revision every five years. Under the 1961 agreement, Singapore can draw 88 millions gallons daily (mgd) from the Pulai catchment area as well as from the Tebrau and Skudai rivers in Johor until August 31, 2011. The 1962 agreement allows Singapore to draw another 50 mgd from Sungai Johor until Sept 28, 2061.	
12	**Date: 11-03-2002** **SINGAPORE AGREES TO ACCEPT NOTE ON MALAYSIA'S CONCERN** PUTRAJAYA, March 11 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Singapore has agreed to accept any notes from Malaysia regarding the latter's fears about the possible negative impact of the land reclamation works at Pulau Tekong, bordering Malaysian waters. Briefing the media after an hour-long meeting with his Singaporean counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong, here, Abdullah said that Lee expressed the republic's willingness if Malaysia has any proof that such activity is detrimental to Malaysia's interests. "He said that Singapore is prepared to accept a note from Malaysia explaining all matters that are viewed as affecting our stand or the areas bordering Singapore and Malaysia," Abdullah said. Yesterday, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said that Singapore should not just brush aside fears on the effects of the reclamation works in its waters. He was replying to an earlier statement by the Singapore Foreign Ministry which appeared to dismiss Malaysia's fears on the negative affects of the reclamation. Over the past week, the reclamation issue had added to a list of bilateral issues between the two countries with Malaysia voicing fears that Singapore's activities may narrow the waterway that separates the two countries and also affect the ecology and	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- discussion on Singapore has agreed to accept any notes from Malaysia regarding the latter's fears about the possible negative impact of the land reclamation works at Pulau Tekong, bordering Malaysian waters. • Sources – Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Lee Hsien Loong, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments – Dr. Mahathir, Prime Minister of Malaysia and Goh

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	livelihood of fishermen in the area. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that Kuala Lumpur wanted an assurance from Singapore that the reclamation would not affect the deepest point of the straits which was vital for shipping. Abdullah said Malaysia had already started surveying the area and would provide any proof to Singapore on the possible effects. "If there is anything that confirms our fears, we will tell them and they are prepared to accept the note," he said. Abdullah said that prior to this, Malaysia, through the Foreign Ministry, had sent a note to Singapore stating that the reclamation works had encroached into Malaysian waters but Singapore had rebutted this claim. He said that at today's meeting, Lee maintained Singapore's stance that the reclamation was within its territorial waters, that it would not affect the ecology and that it was Singapore's right to carry out such activity. "But I have also specified the points, of the concern of Malaysia of the possible side affects as the result of the reclamation. It may also have some other affects, we don't know," he said. Asked whether the issue will affect bilateral relations between the two neighbours, Abdullah said: "If we don't manage any issue properly, then it will sour relations. At the moment, I don't believe it has soured relations." On the sale of water to Singapore, Abdullah said Malaysia had already replied to Singapore on the matter. He said Malaysia hoped that both sides could have a meeting soon. "As far as Malaysia is concerned, I think more or less we already have our negotiating position, something which serves as the basis for negotiation," he said. In January this year, Singapore said that it had asked Malaysia to set out its position on outstanding issues, including water supply, and was still awaiting a reply. Both sides have yet to reach a new price for the water which Malaysia had been supplying since the 60s. Malaysia only charged the republic three sen per thousand gallons (one gallon equals about 4.5 litres) of raw water and had asked for a reasonable price. Lee is on a three-day visit here at the invitation of Abdullah, who made an official visit to the republic last year. Later, Lee called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office, here.	Chok Tong. Prime Minister of Singapore - Consequences – Malaysia will face negative affects over the reclamation and Lee maintained Singapore's stance that the reclamation was within its territorial waters, that it would not affect the ecology and that it was Singapore's right to carry out such activity - Expectations – Singapore should not just brush aside fears just like that and Malaysia wanted an assurance from Singapore that the reclamation would not affect Malaysia. Claimed by Abdullah that "I think more or less we are already have our negotiating position. Both sides have yet to reach a new price for the water which Malaysia had been supplying since the 60s.
13	**Date: 04-09-2001** **MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE AGREE TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES** PUTRAJAYA, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore today agreed in principle to resolve all outstanding issues between the two countries. The agreement was reached during a bilateral discussion jointly chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Speaking at joint news conference later, Dr Mahathir said the two countries agreed that officials from both sides would be working out the details of a final agreement to be signed later by the prime ministers of both countries. The outstanding issues include the sale of water to Singapore,disagreement over the points of agreement for the development of railaway land owned by KTM Bhd, and the status of the Malaysian Customs, Immigration and Quaratine facility at	News Analysis: - News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on mutual problems. - Sources – Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew - Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok

	the KTM station in Tanjung Pagar. Two other issues concern the use of Malaysian's air space by the Singapore air force and withdrawals from Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF) by workers from peninsular Malaysia. Both sides also agreed to an additional proposal by Malaysia to construct a new bridge linking the two countries and demolish the Johor Causeway after the completion of the bridge in 2007. No time frame was given for the signing of the final agreement. Lee said today's agreement arose out of Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's proposal to treat the outstanding issues as a package. "We have reached an agreement on the basic skeleton...as far as it goes just a little step further." "We have reached a point now where the details can be worked out, put into a form of words by official from both sides so that the two prime ministers, once they had agreed upon the draft, can finalise it and then sign," he said. Outlining the sketch of the agreement, Lee said Singapore would get 350 million gallons (one gallon equals about 4.5 litres) of water per day from Malaysia beyond 2061. He said after 2061, Malaysia would sell 100 million gallon of raw water per day and 250 million gallons of filtered water per day which would be processed on a joint venture basis. Singapore, he said, was offering to pay 45 sen per 1,000 gallons of raw water from Malaysia up to 2061, 15 times more than the current price of three sen. After 2061, Singapore would be paying 60 sen per 1,000 gallons, and the rate would be revised every five years, he said. On the CPF issue, the two countries have agreed in principle that people from peninsular Malaysia who had returned after working in Singapore could withdraw their CPF savings within two years after the final agreement is signed. Lee said that Singapore had offered, in exchange for the KTM land in Tanjong Pagar, a piece of reclaimed land of equal value. Singapore has also agreed to Malaysia's proposal to move the KTM station in the republic from Tanjong Pagar to Kranji. The republic also agreed to move the the customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) facilities for railway to Kranji, but the CIQ facilities for road travel would remain at Woodlands, said Lee. "I would say it's been a tough deal because Dr Mahathir is not somebody that you can take for granted. He has driven me back as far as I can go," he said. Lee hoped today's agreement would end the engagement at high level to settle the issues. Lee then met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi at the latter's office. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the agreement reached today should not be viewed as a victory or defeat for any of the two countries "I think in this particular case, it cannot be looked in terms of whether Malaysia got more than what it wanted or Singapore got less than what it wanted. "I think there is no such thing as concession. There is such a thing as both sides have acted on the basis of reciprocity to find a solution to this outstanding issues. "We are happy to see that we are working on the details of this outstanding issues," he said. – BERNAMA AFY HK SK	Tong's • Consequences – settle the issue arising and possibility of withdrawing two other issues concern the use of Malaysian's air space by the Singapore air force and withdrawals from Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF) by workers from peninsular Malaysia.on KTM • Expectations – reached an agreement on the basic skeleton

14	**Date:13-3-2001**	News Analysis:
	SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA CLOSER TO RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES	
	SINGAPORE, March 13 (Bernama) -- Singapore and Malaysia have taken a step forward towards resolving their package of outstanding bilateral issues, Singapore Foreign Minister S.Jayakumar told Parliament today.	• News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on priority on Singapore and Malaysia have taken a step forward towards resolving their package of outstanding bilateral issues
	He said ties between both countries have also improved.	
	Jayakumar said his ministry had received a letter dated Feb 21 on the matter from Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.	• Sources – Singapore Foreign Minister S.Jayakumar
	"We are still studying it. Our preliminary study shows that there are variations on some points between Dr Mahathir's reply and Senior Minister's understanding with Dr Mahathir during his visit to Kuala Lumpur last year,"said Jayakumar.	• Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad
	But the differences "do not appear that great", he said in reply to queries from seven Members of Parliament on Singapore-Malaysia bilateral ties which dominated the debate on his ministry's budget estimate.	• Consequences – bilateral issues is holding.
	Jayakumar said Singapore will examine the proposed price of continued water supply from Malaysia which currently sells raw water under two existing agreements expiring in 2011 and 2061, respectively.	• Expectations – to resolve the water issue pakage.
	"We have to study the proposed price at which we purchase water from Malaysia under a new agreement that will cover the period 2011 and 2061 and for the period after 2061 when the Johor river agreement ends.	
	"Another matter is the mix of treated and raw water although the volume and quantum will remain the same," he said.	
	On when the package will be resolved, Jayakumar said he hoped it will be finalised in the coming months through a give-and-take policy which has drawn both sides closer to a settlement.	
	"Both sides are keen to resolve the package of bilateral issues as soon as possible so that we can put these issues behind us. Although there is no specific timeframe set, I wish to assure this House that there is a sense of urgency on both sides, this is a step forward," he said.	
	The water issue is a crucial component of the package which has weighed down ties over the last few years.	
	It also includes the relocation of a Malaysian customs checkpoint at the Malaysian-owned Tanjung Pagar railway station here, development of railway land in Singapore owned by Malaysia, pension savings of Malaysians in Singapore and also the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore air force.	
	He said Singapore had agreed in principle to Malaysia's proposals to move the railway station in Tanjung Pagar to Kranji, also located here, and the construction of an underground rail link between Johor Baharu and Kranji.	
	Jayakumar, who described bilateral ties as "holding" a year ago, said the atmosphere has improved not only after Lee's visit to Kuala Lumpur but also by the recent visit of Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to the island republic last month.	
	He said there was a hiccup over Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's recent comments on Malays but "it did not change the overall tone of the improving relationship."	
	Goh caused outrage across the causeway when he said Malays in Singapore were better off then their Malaysian counterparts.	
	Meanwhile, two members of Parliament asked the government to step up exchanges not only between top officials but also between young groups and civil servants to promote better understanding of each other.	

15	**Date: 01-11-1998**	News Analysis:
	SINGAPORE WANTS RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA BACK TO NORMAL	
	SINGAPORE, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said today Singapore wants to put its relations with Malaysia back on keel.	• News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on relationship ties.
	Singapore wanted good relations with Malaysia and it was not in the interest of either country to have poor relations, he told reporters after attending the People's Action Party's (PAP) Community Day, here.	• Sources – Both prime ministers
	He was commenting on recent reports quoting Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as saying that bilateral ties had taken a turn for the better.	• Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Dr. Mahathir,
	Goh agreed and said that the two countries were cooling down from a period when relations were a little tense.	Prime Minister of Malaysia and Goh Chok Tong. Prime Minister of
	Goh, who will be meeting Dr Mahathir before the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting in Kuala Lumpur this month, said he sensed that both sides wanted to get back on keel.	Singapore
	On Dr Mahathir's comment that they both had a sound relationship, Goh said: "Yes, we have no problem at a personal level. But he has got to look after Malaysia's interest, I have to look at Singapore's interest. On a personal level we get on very fine,"	• Consequences – Further crisis could lead to more in despair on economic crisis in Asean as both are among the main contributor to Asean.
	Bilateral ties between the two countries have been strained in recent months over several issues including the location of Malaysia's rail, immigration and customs facilities at the Tanjong Pagar railway station, the request for more water supply from Malaysia and the status of pension saving of peninsular Malaysians working in Singapore.	• Expectations – relationship should cool down and make regional relations more cohesive.
	Malaysia has another one-and-a-half months to present its legal argument to maintain its rail, immigration and customs facilities at	
	Tanjong Pagar after asking Singapore for more time following the expiry of the deadline yesterday.	
	Singapore moved its customs, immigration and quarantine centre from Tanjong Pagar to Woodlands last July but Malaysia refused to do so, Goh and Dr Mahathir last held a warm bilateral meeting when Goh visited Malaysia in February.	
	Goh also said that he would discuss Asean matters with Dr Mahathir during their meeting this month.	
	"I think Asean is going through a crisis because of the economic crisis, and if Asean is not keen to work together as a cohesive unit, Asean will lose some stature internationally," he said.	
	He said he would discuss how Asean leaders could make the regional grouping more cohesive and retain its influence at the Asean summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, next month.	
16	**Date: 14-09-1998**	News Analysis:
	MALAYSIA HAS NEVER USED WATER ISSUE TO PRESSURE SINGAPORE, SAYS NAJIB MACHANG, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has never used the water supply issue to pressure Singapore, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak said today.	• News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on to improve relationship in future if cooperation among the younger generation of both countries is forged from now.
	He said that actually it was Singapore which had dwelled on the issue until it was unable to separate it from other issues.	
	"We do not act hastily nor are we inhuman but we want to safeguard Malaysia's interests in everything that we do and negotiate with Singapore," he told reporters before opening Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Temangan, near here.	• Sources – Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein
	Najib was asked to comment on news reports on Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs serialised in the Singapore Straits Times yesterday which claimed that Malaysia	

	had used "bullying and intimidation" during the two countries' brief federation. According to the memoirs, Lee still believed that Malaysia could use the water issue to cow its neighbour. Najib, who is an Umno vice-president, said Singapore should look at every problem rationally and realise that neighbours must have a good relationship. Malaysia would not take hasty action against its neighbours, including Singapore, although the republic had constantly acted without caring for its neighbours, he said. "They should look at the wider perspective and not just want to win all the time. What is important is not to hurt its neighbours' feelings in any matter that arises," Najib said. He said the country's dignity could not be compromised in any action or decision relating to issues raised by Singapore.	• Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments - Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong • Consequences – none. • Expectations – the Singapore leader expressed his hope that ties between the young people of both countries could be enhanced to strengthen bilateral relations
17	**Date:12-03-1997** **MALAYSIA DEMANDS AN APOLOGY FROM SINGAPORE** KUALA LUMPUR, March 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has demanded that Singapore make a public apology and withdraw the negative statement on the country by Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi said today. He said this after a meeting with acting Singapore High Commissioner Vanu Gopala Menon who was summoned to his office this afternoon. He handed over a protest note to Menon at the meeting which lasted only eight minutes. Menon arrived at the ministry at 5.30pm. Abdullah said that the action was decided by the Cabinet at its weekly meeting this morning. He said that the statement made by Lee could adversely affect the existing cordial relations between the two countries. If Singapore feels that good ties with Malaysia was vital, it should withdraw the statement and apologise, he said. Abdullah said: "We are apalled on reading the statement by Lee, Singapore's Senior Minister. The statement shows that he does not appreciate whatsoever...not sensitive of whatever efforts being made to ensure that the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore remains cordial." He said that from Lee's statement, it appeared as if Malaysia is not a safe place for foreign visitors. "That is why we are surprised and we fail to understand why a Singapore senior minister who has headed the republic as Prime Minister for such a long time could make a statement like that," he said. Abdullah said that such a statement would erode confidence towards efforts to maintain good relations between the two neighbouring countries. He said a negative statement like that would surely affect the good ties which had existed between both countries for a long time. When asked what would happen if Singapore refuse to withdraw the statement and apologise, Abdullah said: "That's enough for now...there is no need to elaborate".	News Analysis: • News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity- discussion on Malaysia has demanded that Singapore make a public apology and withdraw the negative statement. • Sources – Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi • Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi said • Consequences – the statement made by Lee could adversely affect the existing cordial relations between the two countries. • Expectations – to make public apology and withdraw the negative statement

18	**Date:15-03-1997**	News Analysis:
	REVIEW MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES, SAYS UMNO YOUTH	
	KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 (Bernama) -- The backlash over Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement over Johor continued today with some calling for a review of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Singapore.	• News agenda/Condition/Event/ Activity - discussion on The backlash over Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement over Johor continued today with some calling for a review of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Singapore.
	Some were also not satisfied with yesterday's apology made by the former Singapore Prime Minister, demanding instead that he retracted the offending statement from his affidavit.	
	Lee, in a sworn affidavit on Jan 27 filed in a defamation suit against Singapore opposition figure Tang Liang Hong, had described Johor as a place "notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings". Tang, who lost in the recent Singapore general election, went to Johor after that alleging that death threats had been made against him in the republic.	• Sources – Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi
	In IPOH, Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi called on the government to review the "basis of agreement and diplomatic relations" with Singapore over the statement.	• Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Singapore opposition figure Tang Liang Hong
	The government must make a decision on the matter at the next Cabinet weekly meeting as Lee was being too much, he said.	
	"We urge the Cabinet to review the basis of the agreement with Singapore as it seems that we have been very accommodating and this has been misinterpreted by Singapore," he said after addressing an the Perak level Umno Youth convention.	• Consequences – to review the "basis of agreement and diplomatic relations" with Singapore over the statement.
	Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia must display its sensitivity towards many agreements signed with Singapore especially on the supply of water to the republic state and the use of air space, which according to him, are outdated and should be reviewed.	• Expectations – apology made by the former Singapore Prime Minister
	The Umno Youth also proposed that the government takes immediate action to stop exports of Malaysian goods through Singapore since the country has many ports of its own.	
	He said it is not enough for Lee just to tender his apology for the offending statement on Johor since the affidavit has become court document and if Lee is sincere in preserving ties with Malaysia the reference to Johor should be retracted and expunged.	
	Last Thursday, Lee said he had no intention to cause offence and apologise unreservedly for the offence caused to the government and the people of Malaysia by his statement on Johor in his affidavit.	
	In LANGKAWI, MCA International Bureau chairman Chor Chee Heung urged Lee to file a second affidavit as his apology was not enough.	
	Chor said the bureau felt Lee should submit a fresh affidavit since there was no truth to the statement on Johor made in the first affidavit.	
	As a lawyer, Lee should know that affidavit is a sworn and signed document, he said.	
	"If Lee sincerely regrets his statement then he should apologise openly to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the people of Malaysia", said Chor who is also Transport Ministry Parliamentary Secretary.	
	PAS Youth secretary Haji Mahfuz Omar felt Lee's apology was not the answer to the controversy since Singapore had on many occasions being rude to the people in this country.	
	In ALOR GAJAH, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani said the Singapore government must introduce a code of ethics for its leaders, banning them from making negative remarks on neighbouring countries.	
	Lee's statement on Johor also surprised Indonesian leaders and the people, said Mohd Zin who returned yesterday from a six-day	

	working visit to Sumatera. "They expressed disbelief and did not agree with (Lee's) view," Mohd Zin said. Indonesian leaders, in Sumatera, interviewed said Lee's statement was hard to believe as they had been to Johor and it was certainly not true. If Johor was unsafe, as claimed by Lee, then why would Tang escaped to such a country, he said. "Is it to show that it is worse in Singapore to the extent that its people are willing to escape even to an unsafe place like Johor?" Koh said. Koh, who is Gerakan vice-president, believed many Singaporeans did not share Lee's view on Johor or they would not have visited or invested in properties in Johor.	
19	**Date:18-03-1997** **CABINET TO DECIDE ON MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE ROW OVER KUAN YEW** KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet weekly meeting tomorrow will be much awaited as it will decide whether the week-old diplomatic furore between Malaysia and Singapore will be laid to rest. Since the row broke out following Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement on Johor, the former Singapore premier has tendered an unreserved apology and moved to expunge his remarks which were contained in a court affidavit. However, it remains to be seen if the government will accept Lee's overtures after his description of Johor as being "notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings" in the affidavit filed in his defamation suit against Singapore opposition figure Tang Liang Hong on Jan 27. Today, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad deferred comment when asked on Lee's statement yesterday that he had instructed his lawyers to seek the court's permission to delete "the offending sentences" from the affidavit. "We will tell you after the Cabinet meeting tomorrow," said a smiling Dr Mahathir when asked if he was happy with Lee's statement. Speaking to reporters in Jerantut before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a two-visit to Pahang, the Prime Minister said he was informed of Lee's latest move through a letter sent to him last night. Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, however, remains unsatisfied. "Is this also the stand adopted by Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong?," he said to reporters after opening a seminar on "Malaysia and Canada Working Together in Smart Partnership" in Johor Baharu. Abdul Ghani said: "We believe that Malaysians in general and the Johor people in particular want to know the stand taken by Hsien Loong (on this matter)." The affidavit was filed in a defamation suit by Lee and his son Hsien Loong who are the first and second plaintiffs in a defamation suit against Singapore opposition figure Tang Liang Hong. Tang crossed the Causeway to Johor after being defeated in the recent Singapore general election alleging that he had received death threats. Asked whether the positive attitude of the majority of the people of Singapore towards their neighbouring country had eroded, the Menteri Besar said: "This matter began in the 60s	News Analysis: - News agenda/Condition/Event/Activity- discussion on decide whether the week-old diplomatic furore between Malaysia and Singapore will be laid to rest. - Sources – Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman - Leadership influence/involvement – statement/comments made by Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement on Johor. - Consequences – Insulting remarks by Lee Kuan Yew has left the Malaysian leaders unsatisfied. However Dr. Mahathir won't give his further comments. - Expectations – apology made by the former Singapore Prime Minister, however, remains unsatisfied for the Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman. To delete the offending sentences

during the period following separation. It recurred last year and again this year."

Abdul Ghani would, however, wait for the outcome of the Cabinet meeting.

In his own statement yesterday, Lee repeated his unreserved apology. He said it was never his intention to cause offence and he had instructed his counsel to seek the court's permission to have the offending sentences deleted.

Lee had apologised before this through a statement by his press secretary but he failed to quell the outrage among government leaders and politicians who said Lee should retract his insulting remarks on Johor as well to indicate his sincerity.

In Kuala Terengganu, Umno Youth Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi welcomed Lee's latest move and said the movement did not want the issue to be prolonged.

"We hope what happened will serve as a lesson to everyone and the spirit of good neighbourliness should be upheld," he said and expressed the hope that relations between Singapore and Malaysia would continue to be strengthened.

Opposition leader and DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang also welcomed Lee's action and said it should put to rest an unpleasant episode in Malaysia-Singapore relations.

Appendix Nine (9): BBC News

BBC NEWS
Sunday, 23 November, 1997, 13:59 GMT **New tension between Malaysia and Singapore** A government minister in Singapore has urged people there not to over-react to Malaysian accusations that rumours about its economic problems are being started in Singapore. The Singapore home affairs minister, Wong Kan Seng, said Singaporeans should understand the difficulties Malaysia was facing, and take such comments in their stride. The accusations came from the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, who said the two countries had competing economies. But Mr Wong said they were so interlinked that any problems in one country would be reflected in the other. Correspondents say Malaysia and Singapore, which was once part of Malaysia, have a long history of government and media squabbling. From the newsroom of the BBC World Service
Thursday, November 5, 1998 Published at 16:19 GMT **Malaysia and Singapore agree to make up** Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, and his Singaporean counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, say they have agreed to try to settle their differences following a surprise meeting in Kuala Lumpur. They also discussed Malaysia's need to raise funds in Singapore to ease its financial crisis. The unexpected meeting was proposed by Dr Mahathir and follows months of discord over such issues as airspace and border controls. Dr Mahathir said airspace restrictions would be eased and moves were afoot to resolve the sensitive issue of sharing water. Malaysia supplies about half of Singapore's water under two treaties which are due to expire by the middle of next century. **'Narrow the differences'** "We talked about how we can improve relations with each other," Dr Mahathir told a news conference after their talks. He said the two leaders agreed their officials would curb the heated attacks on each other. "The two of us will not say anything," he said. Mr Goh said problems would remain: "But the main thing is to narrow the differences." He left for Singapore soon after lunch with Dr Mahathir. Comments from BBC Asia affairs analyst

BBC Asia affairs analyst Angie Knox believes the reason behind Malaysia's sudden change of heart is both economic and political.

Malaysia is facing its worst-ever recession and needs Singapore's open markets to raise capital for its spending plans.

There has also been criticism by regional officials of the trial of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Malaysia will need friends at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation summit it is hosting in two weeks time.

Friday, September 18, 1998 Published at 11:53 GMT 12:53 UK

Malaysia and Singapore: A rocky relationship : By Rob Gifford of the BBC's Asia-Pacific unit

The restrictions imposed on Singapore Air Force planes by Malaysia on Thursday are the latest in a long line of disagreements between the island state and its neighbour to the north.

But many analysts see this as less an issue of airspace and more a matter of diplomatic pique in Kuala Lumpur at the recent publication of Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs, which contained passages critical of Malaysia.

Disputes between Singapore and Malaysia are by no means a new phenomenon.

After initial attempts at integration within a post-colonial federation of Malaysia in the early 1960s, political and ethnic tensions forced Singapore to secede in 1965.

Relative political stability and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's aggressive policy of economic growth enabled the island state to punch above its weight in South East Asia.

On the back of Singapore's rapid development, Prime Minister Lee acquired a reputation as a political heavyweight, but he has been accused of taking a condescending attitude towards Malaysia.

Intellectual leadership

Although Mr Lee stepped down as Prime Minister of Singapore in 1990, he has continued to exert significant influence and remains an influential figure across the region.

He and Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamed are sometimes seen as engaged in a battle for intellectual leadership of the region.

Yet ironically, the two leaders have seen eye-to-eye on the controversial issue of 'Asian values'. Both share the belief that Asian societies differ fundamentally from Western societies in their structure, priorities and morality.

However, they have crossed swords more frequently than they have joined hands.

Last year, Dr Mahathir made fun of a Singaporean initiative to prevent vandalism of public property by accusing Singaporeans of being the sort of people who "urinate in lifts".

For his part, Mr Lee created indignation in Malaysia for describing the Malaysian town of Johor Bahru as "notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings."

Analysts and diplomats say that Malaysia's decision to exclude Singaporean military planes from its airspace has more to do with Lee Kuan Yew's criticism of Malaysia in his memoirs than with anything else.

The memoirs, published earlier this week, contain several passages critical of Malaysia, which once again has seen Mr Lee's remarks as deliberate provocation.

With the Malaysian economy still reeling, and Dr Mahathir coming under unprecedented criticism from his sacked deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, Mr Lee's comments may seem to have given the embattled Dr Mahathir a rallying point for Malaysian opinion.

Uncertain climate

But Mr Lee may be more concerned about driving home one of the main points of his book: that Singapore is vulnerable, and that the younger generation of Singaporeans should not take anything for granted in the current uncertain climate of South East Asia.

Malaysia's reaction will only serve to confirm that point.

This latest friction could also have broader implications. Lacking security institutions like Nato, further political tensions between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore could affect security in the East Asian region.

ASEAN's natural leader, Indonesia, is paralysed by its own internal problems, and so Singapore's relations with Malaysia have become increasingly important to provide some kind of firm security foundation for a weakened ASEAN.

This dispute could further weaken the idea of ASEAN cooperation. And it could dilute the credibility of what is already a rather toothless political body.

But if Singapore-Malaysian relations have been rocky, they have usually managed to come back to some sort of even keel.

With South East Asia needing all the stability it can get at present, many in the region will be hoping that, despite the macho rhetoric, the two neighbours can overlook their differences and continue to co-operate.

This is a follow up news by BERNAMA

Monday, 16 February, 1998, 08:43 GMT From the newsroom of the **BBC World ServiceSingapore, Malaysia in fence-mending talks**

The Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, has been having talks in Malaysia with his counterpart, Mahathir Mohamad.

They were expected to focus on the regional financial crisis and the often strained relationship between their countries.

The BBC South East Asia Correspondent says relations hit a particularly rocky patch last year when Singapore's elder statesman, Lee Kuan Yew, had to apologise for disparaging remarks he made about the Malaysian state of Johor An official communique is due later but the Malaysian foreign minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, told reporters after the closed-door talks in Kuala Lumpur that relations were back to normal and the two countries had agreed to strengthen bilateral ties.

Friday, 2 January, 1998, 10:38 GMT From the newsroom of the BBC World Service

Malaysia-Singapore road bridge opens

A new bridge spanning almost two kilometres has opened between Malaysia and Singapore to provide the second road link between the two countries.

Malaysian officials say there will be no tolls for the bridge connecting the southern Malaysian state of Johor Baru with the district of Tuas in Western Singapore for one month until they agree the level of charge with the bridge operator.

Singapore has said it will match the toll levied by Malaysia.

Thursday, 6 April, 2000, 09:05 GMT 10:05 UK

"Top dog" row hits Malaysia, Singapore

A furious row has broken out over the description in a Singapore newspaper of the Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohammad, as his country's "top dog".

The BBC Kuala Lumpur correspondent says the description has caused grave offence in Malaysia, where dogs are regarded as unclean, and the word itself is a particularly bad insult.

Malaysian ministers have denounced the article as insensitive and an intrusion into their country's affairs -- though Dr Mahathir himself has said his government takes no notice of such things.

The Singaporean prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, has urged journalists in both countries to be circumspect.

From the newsroom of the BBC World Service

Tuesday, 23 April, 2002, 02:57 GMT 03:57 UK

Singapore land plan irks Malaysia

By Mangai Balasegaram

In Kuala Lumpur

Ever since Singapore broke away from Malaysia in 1965, the two nations have competed with each other in what could be seen as good, old-fashioned sibling rivalry.

In recent weeks however, that relationship has become increasingly strained by a series of trade disputes.

Both sides have accused each other of not playing fair and of being a bad neighbour.

The latest spat is over a project by Singapore to reclaim land.

Malaysia alleges the project will sabotage its plans to expand its ports, and will also cause pollution, ecological damage and flooding.

Singapore says that checks by various agencies show those fears are unfounded.

So tense is the relationship now that Malaysia's recent multi-million dollar arms purchase caused a stir in the media, which even raised talk of war, pushing the two nations' leaders to dismiss the significance of the purchase.

The two governments have agreed on the need for bilateral talks soon, but no plans have been made.

Rival ports

Singapore has long held the competitive edge over Malaysia. But in recent years, Malaysia has been steadily gaining ground, and is now even a threat in some areas.

Singapore's status as one of the world's busiest ports - a position that it has long held due to its strategic geographical position - has been slightly usurped.

Across the border, the Malaysian port of Tanjung Pelepas, in Johor state, is now one of the world's fastest growing ports.

With its cheaper costs, Pelepas is slowly stealing big shipping customers from Singapore - the latest of which was Evergreen Marine, the Taiwan shipping giant.

Copenhagen-based Maersk Sealand International, the world's biggest shipping line, has done more than switch to Pelepas - it has taken a 30% stake.

Boycott

Singapore has complained about a "torrent of slanted and inaccurate reports" by the Malaysia media, Singapore's Straits Times newspaper says.

On Saturday, Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said some Malaysian newspapers were "just interested in creating mischief between Singapore and Malaysia."

There have been calls for a boycott of Malaysian goods in response to the perceived Singapore-bashing. In a poll in the Straits Times, 60% of respondents said Singaporeans should boycott Johor Baru, the Malaysian border town where many Singaporeans go shopping.

The dispute turned more acrimonious after the Malaysian press brought up thorny old issues such as water. Under a 1961 agreement, which holds for another 60 years, Singapore buys water from Malaysia at less than 1 US cent per 1,000 gallons. Malaysia has long complained that the price is unfair, and negotiations are continuing over a new price.

"The water issue has become an emotional issue, almost bordering into a racial issue. Malaysia seems to think that we give all the time," said Nur Jazlan, a leader of the youth wing of Umno, the key party in Malaysia's ruling coalition, from a division in Johor Baru.

"But to Singapore, they feel bringing up the water issue is blackmail," noted political science lecturer P Ramasamy.

Despite the caustic climate, analysts have said relations will eventually smooth over. According to Razak Baginda, director of the Malaysian Strategic Centre, relations have always been "sweet and sour since 1965."

"I think the approach is the cause of the problem. Singaporeans want to treat the relationship as something very formal and structured, but Malaysia wants something more informal," he explained.

"At the end of the day, the relationship is very close, in terms of trade. Both sides know what's at stake."

Thursday, 9 October, 2003, 11:18 GMT 12:18 UK

Singapore land row rumbles on

A long-running dispute between Malaysia and Singapore over land reclamation is to be settled by independent arbitrators, a United Nations tribunal has ruled.

But Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Singapore should not be allowed to continue the work while the arbitration process was under way. "If they continue their work, it would be too late," said Mr Mahathir.

"By the time we have a final decision, the reclamation might have just done permanent damage," he said.

Malaysia insists that the Singaporean reclamation work in the Straits of Johor, which separates the two countries, will damage the area's marine environment. After two months of unsuccessful bilateral talks, Malaysia brought the case to the International Tribunal of the Sea, based in Germany, saying that negotiations without outside help had proved futile. Judge Dollier Nelson said the two nations should establish a group of independent experts to monitor the project.

He did not grant Malaysia's request to halt the work for the duration of the proceedings, but ordered Singapore "not to conduct its land reclamation in ways that might cause irreparable prejudice to the rights of Malaysia".

Both countries claimed the ruling was a victory for their side of the argument.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told the Associated Press on Thursday: "Now Singapore cannot brush us aside and say that Malaysia has no case."

Singapore's foreign ministry also welcomed the ruling, saying: "The decision supports Singapore's position that there was no need for Singapore to stop its reclamation works."

"It upholds the position which Singapore has maintained all along... that Singapore's reclamation works, which are carried out strictly within its territorial waters, are in full compliance with international law."

Singapore insists it needs to go ahead with the reclamation to accommodate its growing population.

Since separating from Malaysia in 1965, Singapore has reclaimed more than 100 square kilometres (40 square miles) of land.

Monday, 13 December, 2004, 10:37 GMT
KL, Singapore tackle disputes

Malaysia and Singapore have agreed to tackle a series of disputes that have long soured neighbourly relations.

The issues include the price of water Malaysia supplies to Singapore and the use by Singapore's air force of Malaysian military airspace.

Bilateral relations have been improving since Abdullah Badawi took over the Malaysian leadership from Mahathir Mohamad a year ago.

Mr Badawi is considered far less confrontational than his predecessor.

"It was a candid discussion and we were able to enjoy that because of our personal relationship and our desire for better relations between both sides," Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong told a press conference after his talks with Mr Abdullah.

He said that the Malaysian leader had agreed to consider allowing Singapore's air force into Malaysian airspace. Mr Goh said that if this went ahead, he would in turn allow Malaysians who have worked in Singapore to have access to their pension funds, which are at present locked inside the city state.

Regarding another dispute - a proposed new bridge to link the two countries - Mr Goh said he would study a design given to him by Mr Badawi.

But Monday's proposal did not touch on the biggest sticking point - the price of water Malaysia supplies to Singapore.

The two leaders, however, were upbeat about future ties.

"[The issues] are not very difficult," Mr Abdullah told the news conference.

"We believe they can be resolved as quickly as possible. We are aware that we do not have a definite agreement in terms of details but the agreement we have together is that we have to more forward," he said.

Monday, 12 January, 2004, 09:28 GMT From the newsroom of the **BBC World Service**
Malaysian PM visits Singapore
Malaysia's prime minister, Abdullah Badawi, has held talks with his Singaporean counterpart in an attempt to ease long running tensions between the two South East Asian neighbours.

Mr Abdullah's less confrontational style may help relations

Relations were "far from satisfactory" and a source of "a lot of concern," Mr Abdullah said before the visit.

The five-hour visit, Mr Abdullah's first since he became Prime Minister last October, presented the two countries with an "opportunity to try and establish a new relationship," said Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

After their meeting, Mr Goh described the talks as "very good, frank and friendly".

He said he had suggested to his Malaysian counterpart that those issues that had repeatedly proved impossible to resolve - what he called "dead knot issues" - should be referred to a third party for arbitration.

Malaysia and Singapore have bickered for years over everything from regional leadership and territorial claims to the price of water that Malaysia supplies to Singapore and the use by Singapore's air force of Malaysian military airspace.

Complicating an already difficult relationship is a dispute over a new bridge to connect the two sides of the Causeway. Abdullah Badawi is considered less confrontational than his predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad, and there are hopes on both sides of a new approach.

"For neighbours we have too many disturbing issues. And issues that are sensitive. If it cannot be managed properly it potentially can create tension," Mr Abdullah told a Singapore newspaper before the visit.

But analysts cautioned against expecting too much from the trip.

It was billed as a courtesy call rather than an official visit and no major announcements should be expected of any early breakthroughs on the various unresolved issues, said Hussin Mutalib, a political scientist at the National University of Singapore.

"He had visited Indonesia, and it's logical that he popped over to Singapore to say 'hello' to PM Goh and his Cabinet colleagues," professor Mutalib told BBC News Online.

Malaysia plans 'crooked' bridge
By Jonathan Kent
BBC News, Kuala Lumpur
January 27 - -Malaysia says it will go ahead with controversial plans to build a crooked bridge across half the strait it shares with Singapore.

It took the decision unilaterally after talks about replacing an existing causeway failed to produce agreement.

The plan for the bizarre bridge was first put forward by Malaysia's former leader Mahatir Mohammad.

The bridge is one of many issues to strain ties between Malaysia and Singapore since their union ended.

The Malaysians want to replace the causeway that links it to the island state with a bridge.

The causeway hampers access to ports on the Malaysian side, benefiting Singapore whose economy relies heavily on its port.

So the Malaysians now say they will simply replace their half of the causeway.

But because the span is short and the bridge will need to gain height to allow shipping to pass beneath it, it will have to be crooked.

The Malaysians are calling it the "scenic bridge", but say if the Singaporeans want it to be straight and less scenic they will have to come back to the table and agree to replace the whole causeway with a single span.

One Malaysian politician told the Star newspaper that the shape of the bridge would be a reflection of relations between the two countries.

Singaporean sources told the BBC that this statement implies the Singaporeans are straight while the Malaysians are crooked.

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